Copala Triqui Exceptive-like Constructions

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Contents

1 The basics

1.1 Language name

Copala Triqui (ISO code: trc)[1] is a Mixtecan language of the Otomanguean language family that is spoken in Oaxaca, Mexico (Espinoza 2022, Eberhard et al. 2019).[2] Speaker estimates vary significantly between different works. For example, Hollenbach (1992) estimates that there are 15,000 speakers according to an informal survey from Triqui officials, and Eberhard et al. (2019) estimates that there are 30,000 speakers. According to Hollenbach (1992), Copala Triqui is a variety of Triqui spoken near San Juan Copala. The other two varieties are Chicahuaxtla Triqui and Itunyoso Triqui.

1.2 Morphological type

Copala Triqui is an analytic language (Espinoza 2022). It has inflection for aspect and mood, as well as possessive morphology (for details regarding verbal and nominal morphology, see Hollenbach 1992).

1.3 Word order

Sources such as Hollenbach (1992) claim that the basic word order for Copala Triqui is VSO, with other word orders possible through focus constructions (see Section 1.5). In elicitation contexts, however, my consultant primarily used SVO word order for matrix declarative sentences.

All sentences in Copala Triqui also end in sentence final particles (Hollenbach 1992). While Hollenbach (1992) lists *a* as a declarative particle, my consultant also used this final particle in questions. For statements that contain negation, my consultant used *ma'*, the negative sentence final particle.

1.4 Case-marking

Copala Triqui typically does not mark case, although there may be exceptions for dative and accusative arguments. According to Broadwell (2022), the word *man* can be used not just to mark dative arguments, but also accusative arguments in modern Copala Triqui. For my consultant, *man* could indeed be used to mark both dative and accusative arguments. However, I also found that my consultant can omit the complement of *man*.

1.5 Focus constructions

According to Hollenbach (1992), constituents may be focused if they are fronted to a preverbal position. It is worth noting that the basic word order for Hollenbach's consultants is VSO, so any DP or PP that occurs before the verb is clearly in a focus position. However, for my consultant, SVO was much more commonly used. As a result, it is less clear in my consultant's variety of Copala Triqui when a subject is focused and when it is occurring in a default preverbal position. In this section, I will be providing examples of focus constructions that were elicited by Hollenbach.

[2]For data that I acquired through elicitation sessions, I will be utilizing Bruce and Barbara Hollenbach's practical orthography, which is also used in the online Copala Triqui dictionary (Lopez & Broadwell 2013). Examples from other works will be repeated verbatim and will therefore use the orthography in the work that is cited.

The examples in (1) demonstrate the use of subject focus, object focus, and adjunct focus. In each translation, small caps indicate focus.

(1) a. gwaa^{4} otox^{32} a^{32}
John CON:sleep DEC
'JOHN is sleeping' (Hollenbach 1992:206).

b. na^{32} ho^{32} zhoh^{3} a^{32}
water CON:drink it:AML DEC
'It (the animal) is drinking WATER' (Hollenbach 1992:207).

c. tayox^{3} kahanx^{32} zoh^{3} a^{32}
Juxtlahuaca COM:go he DEC
'He went to JUXTLAHUACA' (Hollenbach 1992:207).

Focus constructions may also strand prepositions or locative nouns. In (2a), the preposition *riaan^{32}* (or *rihaan* in the practical orthography) occurs in the clause-initial focus position with *ma^{3}rya^{4}*, and in (2b), *riaan^{32}* is stranded after the direct object. Although *riaan^{32}* is glossed as 'face', it functions more as a preposition meaning 'for' or 'to'.

(2) a. riaan^{32} ma^{3}rya^{4} naruhwee^{32} gwaa^{4} sahanx^{32} a^{32}
face Mary COM:repay John money DEC
'John paid the money back TO MARY' (Hollenbach 1992:209).

b. ma^{3}rya^{4} naruhwee^{32} gwaa^{4} sahanx^{32} riaan^{32} a^{32}
Mary COM:repay John money face DEC
'John paid the money back TO MARY' (Hollenbach 1992:209).

In addition to fronting a focused constituent, a cleft construction is also available (Hollenbach 1992:212). These cleft constructions use the copula *me^{3}* and optionally include the complementizer *ze^{32}*.

(3) ni^{3}ka^{2} zoh^{3} me^{3} ze^{32} kunanx^{5} nanx^{1} a^{4}
spouse his CON:be CMP COM:run indeed PERS
'It was his wife who ran away for sure' (Hollenbach 1992:212).

2 Basic exceptive constructions

2.1 Exceptive markers

Copala Triqui does not have a word that directly translates to 'except' and therefore does not have true exceptives. When searching for 'except' in English or 'excepto' and 'menos' in Spanish, the online dictionary did not yield a word which directly translates to 'except' (Lopez & Broadwell 2013). My consultant also confirmed that her variety of Triqui does not have a word which directly translates to 'except'.

Rather than using a word meaning 'except', my consultant instead used two sentences joined together by *tz̲aj n̲e* 'but'. In the remainder of this questionnaire, I will be referring to constructions with *tz̲aj n̲e* as 'exceptive-like constructions.' As an example, the sentence in (4a) is equivalent to the sentence 'everyone is eating rice, except Juan' but literally translates to 'everyone is eating rice, but Juan is not eating rice'. (4a) tests an associate in subject position, (4b) tests an associate in object position, and (4c) tests an associate in adjunct position.

(4) a. Cunudaj nij chá aruú, tzaj ne Juan ni chá ma'.
all PL eat rice but Juan NEG eat NEG
'Everyone is eating rice, but Juan is not eating'/'Everyone is eating rice, except Juan.'

b. Mariá que-ne'e man cunudaj nij, tzaj ne ni que-ne'e man Juan ma'.
Maria COM-know ACC all PL but NEG COM-know ACC Juan NEG
'Maria knows everyone but doesn't know Juan.'

c. Mariá chá rexti'no ra cunudaj nij tzaj ne ni chá rexti'no ra Juan ma'.
Maria eat dinner with all PL but NEG eat dinner with Juan NEG
'Maria ate dinner with everyone but did not eat dinner with Juan.'

The exceptive-like construction typically contains a full clause and does not seem to allow clausal ellipsis like English exceptives. For example, (4a) is ungrammatical without a full clause, even if the sentence final negative particle is included.

(5) * Maria que-ne'e man cunudaj nij tzaj ne Juan (ma').
Maria COM-know ACC all PL but Juan NEG
Intended: 'Maria knows everyone but Juan.'

For more details, see Section 6.1.

I found that exceptive-like constructions do not allow clausal ellipsis that reduces the exceptive phrase down to the exceptive marker and the exception. However, I did find that VP ellipsis, object drop, and stripping are possible in the exceptive-like construction. These constructions are available more generally and are not unique to exceptive-like constructions.

2.1.1 VP Ellipsis

VP ellipsis is possible, as shown in (6). Here, the auxiliary verb *vee* 'can' is used in both clauses, and in the second clause, it does not require a VP to come after it.

(6) Cunudaj nij vee 'yaj chuvii aruú tzaj ne Juan ni vee ('yaj chuvii aruú) ma'.
all PL can make food rice but Juan NEG can make food rice NEG
'Everyone can cook rice but Juan cannot (cook rice).'

VP ellipsis is not unique to exceptive-like constructions and can be used in contexts without exception and quantified DPs.

(7) Juan vee 'yaj chuvii tzaj ne Jose ni vee ('yaj chuvii) ma'.
Juan can make food but Jose NEG can make food NEG
'Juan can make food but Jose cannot (make food).'

2.1.2 Object Drop

According to Hollenbach (1992), it is possible for a 3rd person object of a sentence to be dropped in Copala Triqui if it can be inferred from context. In exceptive-like constructions, object drop is possible.

(8) Cunudaj nij 'yaj chraa tzaj ne Juan ni 'yaj (chraa) ma'.
all PL make tortilla but Juan NEG make tortilla NEG
'Everyone is making tortillas, but Juan is not making tortillas.'

Evidence that object drop has taken place comes from the fact that the verb *'yaj* 'make' cannot be used intransitively.

(9) * Juan ni 'yaj ma'.
Juan NEG make NEG
Intended: 'Juan is not making.'

It is worth noting that our consultant stated that (9) is acceptable if the object can be inferred from context.

Similar examples are listed below as well. In (10), our consultant used *man* before the object in the first clause. This *man* seems to be the accusative *man* described in Broadwell (2022). Interestingly, when the object is dropped, the accusative marker *man* still remains.

(10) Cunudaj nij ran' rá man Juan tzaj ne Maria ni ran' rá man ma'.
all PL like ACC Juan but Maria NEG like ACC NEG
'Everyone likes Juan but Maria does not like Juan.'

In (11), the direct object of the verb *rqué* 'give' is omitted.

(11) Juan rqué sa'anj man cunudaj nij tzaj ne ni rqué man Maria ma'.
Juan give money DAT all PL but NEG give DAT Maria NEG
'Juan gave money to everyone but did not give money to Maria.'

2.1.3 Stripping Constructions with *Taj*

The exceptive-like construction allows what appears to be a stripping construction that uses the negative marker *taj*.

According to the Copala Triqui online dictionary (Lopez & Broadwell 2013), *taj* means 'there is not'. However, when I tried to confirm this with my consultant, she instead noted that *taj* has a different meaning and functions more like a negative marker. We also noticed that *taj ma'* can function as a negative response to yes/no questions for our consultant.

When used in exceptive-like constructions, *taj ma'* comes after the exception and *tzaj ne*. Two examples are shown in (12a) and (12b).

(12) a. Cunudaj nij 'yaj chraa tzaj ne Juan taj ma'.
all PL make tortilla but Juan NEG NEG
'Everyone is making tortillas, but not Juan.'

b. Cunudaj nij ran' rá man Juan tzaj ne Maria taj ma'.
all PL like ACC Juan but Maria NEG NEG
'Everyone likes Juan but Maria doesn't.'

While these constructions may look like VP ellipsis constructions, this arguably is not the case, since the negative marker *ni* is used to negate verbs. For example, (13a) is similar to (12b) but instead uses an unreduced clause in the exceptive-like construction. In the second clause, the negative marker *ni* negates the verb. Attempting to remove the verb and the object in the second clause results in ungrammaticality, as shown in (13b).

(13) a. Cunudaj nij ran' rá man Juan tzaj ne Maria ni ran' rá man Juan ma'.
all PL like ACC Juan but Maria NEG like ACC Juan NEG
'Everyone likes Juan but Maria does not like Juan.'

b. * Cunudaj nij ran' rá man Juan tzaj ne Maria ni ma'.
all PL like ACC Juan but Maria NEG NEG
Intended: 'everyone likes Juan but Maria does not.'

Additional evidence that *taj ma'* does not involve VP ellipsis comes from the fact that the negative marker *taj* cannot be used to negate verbs. For example, if (12b) involved VP ellipsis, then we should be able to insert a VP after the negative marker *taj* and before the negative sentence final particle *ma'*. As shown in (14), this is not possible. The word *taj* cannot come before a full VP.

(14) * Cunudaj nij ran' rá man Juan tzaj ne Maria taj ran' rá man Juan ma'.
all PL like ACC Juan but Maria NEG like ACC Juan NEG
Intended: 'Everyone likes Juan but Maria does not like Juan.'

Because *taj* cannot negate verbs, I conclude that reduced clauses containing *taj ma'* are not examples of VP ellipsis, and I will assume that they are instead cases of stripping.

The use of *taj* in stripping constructions is not unique to exceptive-like constructions and can be used in other contexts where a contrast is present. For example, (15) contains two clauses joined by *tzaj ne*, and these two clauses contrast the fact that Juan is eating with the fact that Maria is not.

(15) Juan chá tzaj ne Maria taj ma'.
Juan eat but Maria NEG NEG
'Juan is eating, but not Maria.'

2.2 Lexical category investigations

Lopez & Broadwell (2013) and Hollenbach (1992) both categorize *tzaj ne* as a conjunction. In exceptive-like constructions, *tzaj ne* must come between two clauses and cannot come before the first clause in a coordinate structure. For more details, see Section 3.1.

Because *tzaj ne* is a conjunction, it is not confined to exceptive-like constructions. As shown in (16), we can use *tzaj ne* to coordinate any two contrastive clauses.

(16) Juan ni ne'e quii tzaj ne Juan ne'e cuan' a.
Juan NEG know yesterday but Juan know today DECL
'Juan didn't know yesterday, but Juan knows today.'

3 Word order in exceptives

3.1 Position of exceptive structures

The exceptive-like construction must occur after another clause, and *tzaj ne* must come between two clauses. As shown in (17), attempting to place the exceptive like construction in clause initial position results in ungrammaticality. Moreover, (17) is ungrammatical even if the negative sentence final particle *ma* comes after the first clause.

(17) * Tzaj ne Juan ni chá (ma'), cunudaj nij chá aruú a.
but Juan NEG eat NEG all PL eat rice DECL
Intended: 'Except for Juan not eating, everyone is eating.'

(17) is still ungrammatical if *tzaj ne* comes before an elided clause. In this case, (18) is ungrammatical even if the negative sentence final particle *ma* is present after the elided clause.

(18) * Tzaj ne Juan (ma'), cunudaj nij chá aruú a.
but Juan NEG all PL eat rice DECL
Intended: 'Except for Juan not eating, everyone is eating.'

3.2 Connected exceptives

Connected exceptives are not possible in Copala Triqui. Example (19a) shows that a connected exceptive with a DP exception is ungrammatical. Similarly, (19b) indicates that a full clause is not possible in connected exceptives either.

(19) a. * [Cunudaj nij tzaj ne Juan] chá aruú a.
all PL but Juan eat rice DECL
Intended: 'everyone but Juan is eating rice.'

b. * [Cunudaj nij tzaj ne Juan ni chá (ma')] chá aruú a.
all PL but Juan NEG eat NEG eat rice DECL
Intended: 'everyone is eating rice, but Juan is not eating rice.'

4 Constituency evidence for connected exceptives

Not applicable, since Copala Triqui does not have connected exceptives.

4.1 Coordination

N/A

4.2 Displacement

N/A

4.3 Other

N/A

5 Characteristics of the associate

5.1 Quantificational associates

The exceptive-like construction in Copala Triqui allows any kind of associate, including numerically quantified associates and indefinite associates.

(20) Universally quantified associate:

a. Cunudaj nij chá aruú tzaj ne Juan ni chá ma'.
all PL eat rice but Juan NEG eat NEG.
'Everyone is eating rice, but Juan is not eating.'

(21) Non-universal quantifier:

a. Medondo'o nij yuvii chá aruú tzaj ne Juan ni chá ma'.
many PL person eat rice but Juan NEG eat NEG
'Many people eat rice but Juan is not eating rice.'

(22) Indefinite quantifier:[3]

a. Se chá ta'aj nij yuvii tzaj ne Juan ni chá ma'.
COMP eat some PL person but Juan NEG eat NEG
'Some people are eating, but Juan is not eating.'

(23) Numerically quantified associate:

a. Se chá vij nij yuvii aruú tzaj ne Juan ni chá ma'.
COMP eat two PL person rice but Juan NEG eat NEG
'Two people are eating rice but Juan is not.'

5.2 Implicit associates

An overt associate is not necessary, since the exceptive-like construction only involves a coordinating conjunction between two clauses.

(24) Juan 'yaj suun tzaj ne co'ngo ni 'yaj suun ma'.
Juan do work but Monday NEG do work NEG
'Juan goes to work, but on Monday he doesn't go to work.'

The stripping construction can also be used in the exceptive-like construction when there is no overt associate. Below, (25) is equivalent to (24) but instead uses *taj ma'* in the second clause.

(25) Juan 'yaj suun tzaj ne co'ngo taj ma'.
Juan do work but Monday NEG NEG
'Juan goes to work, but not on Mondays.'

6 Characteristics of the exception

6.1 Categorical options

In Copala Triqui, *tzaj ne* typically comes before a full clause. As the examples in (26) shows, it is not grammatical to have a DP exception.

(26) a. * Cunudaj nij chá aruú tzaj ne Juan.
all PL eat rice but Juan
Intended: 'everyone is eating rice but Juan.'

[3]When I originally elicited this example, my consultant used the particle *se*. I have tentatively glossed them as COMP based on the entries for *se* in Lopez & Broadwell (2013).

b. * Maria que-ne'e man cunudaj nij tzaj ne Juan.
Maria COM-know ACC all PL but Juan
Intended: 'Maria knows everyone but Juan.'

c. * Maria chá rexti'no ra cunudaj nij tzaj ne Juan.
Maria eat dinner with all PL but Juan
Intended: 'Maria eats dinner with everyone but Juan.'

6.2 Case marking on nominal exceptives

If the exception and the associate occupy parallel positions within their respective clauses, then they will receive the same case. Thus, if the associate and exception are both in object position, then the accusative marker *man* can be used. For example, in (27), the exception *Juan* is preceded by *man*, and similarly, the associate in the first clause is also preceded by *man*.

(27) Maria que-ne'e man cunudaj nij tzaj ne ni que-ne'e man Juan ma'.
Maria COM-know ACC all PL but NEG COM-know ACC Juan NEG
'Maria knows everyone but does not know Juan.'

7 Clausal exceptives

As we saw previously, exceptive-like constructions do now allow ellipsis that only leaves behind the exception. Thus, the tests for clausal structure are not applicable to this language.

7.1 Possible expression of full clause exceptions

All exceptive-like constructions in Copala Triqui contain clauses.

7.2 Multiple exceptions

Not applicable

7.3 Sluicing interpretations

Not applicable

7.4 Clausal/speaker-oriented adverbs

Not applicable

7.5 Preposition stranding

Not applicable

7.6 Internal reading with 'same, different'

Not applicable

7.7 Binding diagnostics

Not applicable

7.8 Island sensitivity

Not applicable

8 Problematic data

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9 Additional observations and comments

Copala Triqui does not seem to have true exceptive phrases, and instead, the coordinating conjunction *tzaj ne̲* 'but' is used. This conjunction must come between two clauses, and the exceptive-like construction cannot occur before or within another clause. As a result, connected exceptives are unavailable.

The exceptive-like construction in Copala Triqui does not allow ellipsis that reduces the clause down to the exception and nothing else. At the same time, VP ellipsis, object drop, and stripping are still possible in the exceptive-like construction. The stripping constructions use the negative marker *taj* followed by the negative sentence final particle *ma'*. These reduced clauses appear to be stripping rather than VP ellipsis, since the negative marker *taj* cannot be used to negate verbs.

10 Consultant

Our consultant is a native speaker of Copala Triqui. In addition to Copala Triqui, she is also fluent in English and Spanish. She is from San Juan Copala currently resides in Oaxaca.

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