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to take deer,¹⁵ and a single year of trading by the Pynchons yielded 2,000 skins of beaver alone.¹⁶ Any significance which may repose in the number of months recognized, in the spring new year, or in the mid-winter date must be extracted from a comparative study beyond the scope of this note.

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THE VOWELS OF MEZQUITAL OTOMI

H. RUSSELL BERNARD

During the last two decades there have been a number of papers dealing with the phonemes of Otomi, and especially Mezquital Otomi.¹ Recently, some of the aspects of Otomi phonology have come under re-examination.² In this spirit I should like to offer the following revision of Otomi vowels:

	Front	Central	Back
High	i	i	u
Mid	e	ɛ	o
Low	æ	a	ɔ

Previous analyses of Otomi vowels have been in substantial agreement with the above with one exception: in every case³ ɔ was analyzed as a, or nasalized a. Nasalization was also noted to occur in i, u, and e. Wallis⁴ noted that the nasalization of i and u occurs so frequently as to make it uneconomical to write these sounds separately. In fact, in all the publications of the Summer Institute of

¹⁵ Harry Andrew Wright, *Indian Deeds of Hampden County* (Springfield, Mass., 1905), 12.

¹⁶ Wright, *Story of Western Massachusetts*, 1.41.

¹ E.g. Donald Sinclair and Kenneth Pike, *The Tonemes of Mezquital Otomi*, *IJAL* 14.91-98 (1948); Victor Manuel Arroyo, *Elementos de Gramática Otomi*, *Patrimonio Indígena del Valle del Mezquital* (Ixmiquilpan, 1955); Ethel Wallis, *Simulfixation in Aspect Markers of Mezquital Otomi*, *Lg.* 32.453-459 (1956).

² E.g. Frances Leon, *Revision de la Fonología del Otomi*, *Anales del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (Mexico, D.F., 1963); H. Russell Bernard, *Otomi Tones*, *AL* 8:9.15-9 (1966).

³ Sinclair and Pike 98, fn. 6; Arroyo 1; Wallis 453, fn. 2; Leon 317.

⁴ Personal communication, 1962.

Linguistics dealing with Bible translation, the only nasalized vowel given separate status is a, written a.⁵

That the phoneme a, or nasalized a, was somehow peculiar was obviously recognized by Arroyo and his associates in 1955. He states: "La a nasalizada tiene un sonido especial y se pronuncia recogiendo la lengua, por lo que algunos la confunden con la o."⁶ I would agree fully that nasal and non-nasal i and u should not be written separately since they appear to occur in free variation in Mezquital Otomi, conditioned by certain entirely predictable environments as well (i.e. following nasals). I would not agree that a or nasalized a is phonemic, for examination of the data collected in the field at Ixmiquilpan during 1962 shows that this low, unrounded, nasalized vocoid is not central but backed. I would therefore suggest that this phoneme is ɔ and has the peculiarity of ALWAYS being nasalized.

In addition to this, we notice that the vowel e also takes nasalization. In certain environments it appears to be conditioned; in others it appears to occur in free variation with non-nasalized e; in still other environments the nasalization of e appears to be distinctive and phonemic. These observations lead to a rather unusual conclusion for languages of the world: although Otomi utilizes nasalization in four of its vowels, it appears to be phonemic only in one of them, e. The remaining five vowels, a, o, i, æ, ɛ are NEVER nasalized.

Our suggestion concerning this interesting peculiarity is the following: nasalization is now in the process of losing its phonemic value. That is, nasalization was once phonemic and is simply disappearing. In Newman and Weitlaner's reconstruction of Proto-Otomian phonemes, the following vowels were posited: a, a, e, e, æ, i, i, o, o, ɔ, u, u, ɛ. Following this reconstruction we can

⁵ See, for example, *El Evangelio de San Lucas en el Idioma Otomi del Mezquital* (Mexico, D.F., 1959).

⁶ Arroyo 1.

examine modern Otomi in perspective of change. Some interesting patterns emerge from this examination.

In all cases where **ɔ* occurred in the proto-language, it has been replaced by a today (e.g. **məkha* → *maxɔ* *priest*; **pɔ* → *paa* *to sell*). Assuming that *ɔ* is phonemic, in every case where a reconstructed word contained **a* it has become /*ɔ*/. This constitutes a regular switching of position between the low-central and back vowels. Thus we may state the occurrence or absence of nasalization for six vowels: *ɔ* is always nasalized; *i*, *ʌ*, *o*, *æ*, *a* are never nasalized.

In the case of *e* the situation is not so clear. When followed by *i*, *e* is always nasalized. When followed in close conjunction with nasals it is nasalized consistently in some words and occurs in free variation with *e* non-nasalized in others. Wallace and Arroyo give some examples of minimal pairs for *e* and *ɛ* and this is probably true for some speakers of Mezquital Otomi. My own data show that the people who consistently nasalize *i* and *u* and *e* were either elderly or were from small, outlying villages away from the Cabecera or Ixmiquilpan. My own principal informant repeated *i* nasal *i*, *u* nasal *u*, *e* nasal *e* in free variation, often in repetitions of the same utterance.

Among certain speakers, notably with younger, Spanish speaking Ixmiquilpanefios, the nasality of *ɔ* was very weak and often lost in some words. This situation gives us the opportunity to witness and record rather rapid linguistic change in the making. The problem of nasalization in Mezquital Otomi, it is suggested, will probably work itself out within a generation or so by ceasing to exist as a phenomenon or as a problem.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE. By Jerrold J. Katz. New York and London: Harper and Row, 1966. Pp. xiii, 326.

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It is not always easy to decide what philosophers of language are doing, and it

is good to have it set forth clearly in this book that what they are aiming at is the utilization of information about language for a higher purpose: an understanding of what Katz calls 'conceptual knowledge'. One might argue that if we once understood conceptual knowledge in any systematic way, that understanding would then become the property of scientists rather than philosophers. But it is the classic fate of philosophy to explore the frontiers of understanding, only to turn over to science whatever territories come to be accessible to more systematic investigation. Katz believes that philosophers of language have never penetrated beyond the fringes of what they are after because they have not based their explorations on any systematic knowledge about language. Twentieth century philosophy of language has in particular, he says, assumed "that natural languages are highly unstructured and unsystematic conglomerations of verbal constructions." His big point is that philosophers can succeed only if they look to descriptive linguistics for the basic information on which to base their further studies of conceptual knowledge. He and Fodor have made the same point before,¹ but this book is Katz's most extensive documentation of it.

Aside from some introductory remarks, the book has three main sections. First there is a discussion of what has been done in the philosophy of language during the twentieth century, and how and why it has failed. Then there is a presentation of what descriptive linguistics has discovered about language. Finally there is a demonstration of how these findings can throw light on the nature of conceptual knowledge.

The first section (Chapter 3) is a clear and rational presentation of the failings of both the 'logical empiricists' and the 'ordinary language' philosophers. This excellent

¹ E.g. in the Introduction to Jerry A. Fodor and Jerrold J. Katz, *The Structure of Language: Readings in the Philosophy of Language* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964).