

Nikulín, Andrey & Javier Carol. 2022. *Historical phonology of Mataguayan*. (Topics in Phonological Diversity). Berlin: Language Science Press, 601 pp.

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The Mataguayan family comprises four languages—Chorote, Maká, Nivaçle and Wichí—which are spoken in the Gran Chaco region (South America).<sup>1</sup> Within this language family, Chorote and, especially, Wichí exhibit important internal diversity.

While there have been previous attempts and proposals for the reconstruction of the Proto-Mataguayan phonology (Najlis 1984, Viegas Barros 1993, 2002), their results do not seem to be conclusive, and systematic sound correspondences and etymologies in the four languages are not (thoroughly) presented. For example, Najlis (1984) did not include Maká data because her work predates Gerzenstein's (1994) grammatical sketch and dictionary (1999) on this language, as well as some early pioneering works (e.g., Gerzenstein 1989). In this vein, it is worth mentioning that the documentation and description of Mataguayan languages and varieties have made significant progress during the last two decades (Chorote: Carol 2014a,b, 2018; Nivaçle: Gutiérrez 2014, 2015, 2016a,b, 2019a,b,c, 2020; Fabre 2016; Campbell, Díaz & Ángel 2020; Maká: Tacconi 2015; Wichí: Avram 2008; Cayré Baito 2015; Claesson 2008, 2016, 2017; Fernández Garay & Censabella 2009; Terraza 2009; Nercesian 2014a,b, 2019, 2020, 2021; Nercesian & Amarilla 2021, among others), as well as comparative work on these languages (see, for instance, Nercesian 2014a, Gutiérrez & Nercesian 2021). Particularly important are the advances on the phonological analyses of Chorote (Carol 2014a, b), Nivaçle (Gutiérrez 2015, 2016a,b,c, 2019a,b) and Wichí (Nercesian 2014a,b, 2021), as well as an internal reconstruction proposal of Nivaçle (Campbell & Grondona 2007), and a comparative study of the glottal stop and glottalization phenomena in Mataguayan languages (Gutiérrez & Nercesian 2021).

Drawing on recent advances and a significant amount of published sources (and one of the author's field data on Chorote), as well as a carefully organized comparative corpus, this book elegantly applies the comparative method to the extant Mataguayan varieties in order to propose a reconstruction of the Proto-Mataguayan phonology and lexicon. It shows the main developments from the protolanguage to the four daughter languages, as well as two intermediate proto-branches: Proto-Chorote and Proto-Wichí.

Totaling eleven chapters, this book is structured in three parts. After an introduction (Chapter 1), Part I contains four chapters that advance a reconstruction of different aspects of the Proto-Mataguayan phonology: namely, consonants (Chapter 2); vowels (Chapter 3); prosody (Chapter 4); and morpho-phonological alternations (Chapter 5). Part II proposes the phonological evolution of each Mataguayan language: Maká (Chapter 6); Nivaçle (7); Chorote (8); and Wichí

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<sup>1</sup> This language family is also known as Matacoan (Loukotka 1968; Greenberg 1987; Kaufman 1990) and Matacoan-Mataguayan (Tovar 1961).

(Chapter 9). For the latter two languages their internal diversification is analyzed as well. Part III contains the etymological dictionary (Chapter 10) and the conclusions (Chapter 11).

Overall, this is a robust and systematic historical-comparative study that makes a number of outstanding contributions to the historical understanding of this language family and its internal groupings.

First, it reconstructs the full Proto-Mataguayan consonant and vowel inventory while stating the arguments behind this analysis. On the one hand, it provides further evidence for some previous works regarding the reconstruction of three “dorsal” fricatives *\*x*, *\*χ*, *\*h* (Viegas Barros 2002), the distinction between velar and uvular stops *k\**, *q\** (Viegas Barros 2002), and the reconstruction of *\*ʔ* (Gutiérrez & Nercesian 2021). On the other hand, it makes a number of novel proposals. For example, regarding the consonant inventory, *\*ϕ* rather than *\*xʷ* is reconstructed, based on the reflexes between Nivaêcle and Maká and a posited symmetrical relationship between the reconstructed plain stops *\*p t ts k q* and fricatives *\*ϕ l s x χ*. On the vowel inventory, besides the six vowels *\*i e a â o u*, a seventh vowel *\*ã* is posited, based on the correspondence between Nivaêcle *a* and Maká/Proto-Chorote/Proto-Wichí *\*e*.

Second, primarily drawing on Chorote and Weenhayek data, and following Dybo’s (2000) *accentual valencies* framework, this research advances an unprecedented reconstruction of the Proto-Mataguayan prosodic system<sup>2</sup>. This proposal makes a number of predictions for the stress patterns of this language family, and it also delineates important venues for future research on other varieties of Wichí, Nivaêcle, and Maká.

Third, the historical phonologies and innovations of the individual languages are presented. The main focus is again put on Chorote and Wichí/Weenhayek, given their internal diversity. For these two languages, it analyzes the changes that took place from Proto-Mataguayan to Proto-Chorote and Proto-Wichí, respectively, and then from Proto-Chorote and Proto-Wichí to contemporary varieties.

Fourth, the results of a lexicostatistics survey conducted in this research, and the innovations that are proposed to be shared by Chorote and Wichí, confirm the Wichí-Chorote clade posited in previous works (Tovar 1964; Fabre 2005; Campbell & Grondona 2007; Viegas Barros 2013). However, this study concludes that the likewise Maka-Nivaêcle clade is not as well supported. In this context, the position of Nivaêcle remains a bit ambiguous with respect to the position with the Wichí-Chorote clade and Maká. This proposal, which was firstly suggested by Fabre (2005), receives more compelling evidence here and merits further investigation.

It should be highlighted that this study clearly lays out the methodology used—the comparative method, following a bottom-up top-controlled approach, and a rigorous etymological analysis of the comparative corpus. The authors do a meticulous job in the presentation, analysis, and discussion of the data. Tables are legible and illustrate the results in a satisfactory manner, and the conventions used in the representation of the linguistic data are clearly stated. In addition,

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<sup>2</sup> See Hill & Hill (1968), Crowhurst (1994), and Alderete (2001) for a description and analysis of a dominant/recessive language like Cupeño (Uto-Aztecan).

a Mataguayan etymological dictionary is included (made available in the form of a robust chapter, 142 pages), as well as contact etymologies, a very useful resource to disregard false cognates.

In sum, this book constitutes a solid and unprecedented historical-comparative study on the Mataguayan language family, a much-needed enterprise. Not only does it offer a reliable reconstruction of the Mataguayan varieties, but it also provides comparative data for future research on this language family, as well as hypotheses to be tested in the field. In addition, this work contributes to historical-comparative studies with other Chaco (and South American) language families as well.

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