10 Person reference in Tzotzil gossip: referring dupliciter

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10.1 Gossip in the Who's Who

Zinacantecs gossip continually about the doings of their kinsmen, their neighbours, local officials, ritual officeholders, their friends and their enemies. Among Zinacantecs the great bulk of conversation is just this kind of gossip, targeted at specific people. Stories told 'on' a person may be scandalous or innocent, but they are most delectable when interlocutors know who the person is.

Soon after arriving in Chiapas with the help of George Collier I compiled a Who's Who of Zinacantán by recording groups of Zinacantecs as they gossiped about their compatriots (Haviland 1977). We assembled groups of five to eight Zinacantec men from various hamlets around the township. Each group would march mentally down the paths of one village at a time, conjuring up images of each house and its inhabitants, and trying to think of anything interesting to say about people encountered along the way.

I revisit these Who's Who conversations and some of their sequels to consider the shared theme of this volume: linguistic and cultural resources, competing social motivations, and interactive prerequisites for 'referring to persons'. Several ethnographic themes – 'triangular' kinship, social geography, the semantics of names, and the nature of biographical representations, among others – arise in considering Zinacantec ways of referring to one another. I will argue for the essential multiplex nature of person reference, which in collaborative interaction always involves the indexicalities of stance.

The inhabitants of Zinacantán, Chiapas, speak a distinctive dialect of the Mayan language Tzotzil, which is the most widely spoken indigenous language of the state, with over 300,000 speakers (see Map 10.1). In the village where I work there were about 1200 inhabitants in 1966, but the number has grown to well over 3000 in the intervening years. Whereas it used to be normal for people from opposite ends of a town to know each other, and usually to know the names of each others' children as well, this has long since ceased to be the case. In 1970, the Who's Who panels identified about 170 people from my village – mostly heads of household – about whom there was something notable, usually scurrilous, to say.
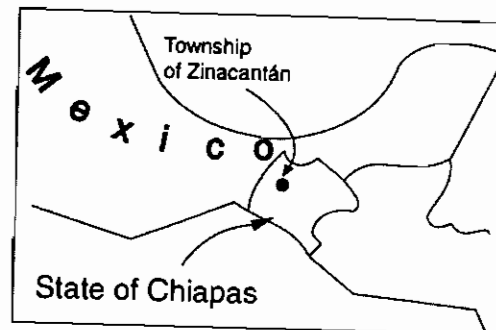
Map 10.1

10.2 An initial metadiscourse of names:: the new son-in-law, 1970

One of these people was identified in the Who's Who sessions by the nickname *ch'aj Romin* 'Lazy Domingo', which called for an explanation.[1]

Example (1) 'Lazy Domingo'[2]

```
07 cn:   ch'aj romin    x-  ut  -ik un-e
         lazy Domingo ASP-tell-PL PT-CL
         They call him 'Lazy Domingo'.
              [
18 p:                    ch'aj romin    x-  ut  -ik
                         lazy  Domingo ASP-tell-PL
                         They call him 'Lazy Domingo'.
                              [
19 x:                                   num
20 cn:   j-ejj
         ((Laughing))
              [
21 p:                    y-  u'un    oy    to    jun mol romin   te   ta
                         3E-agency exist still  one old Domingo there PREP
                         j- na tikotik    un-e
                         1E-  house-1PLX PT-CL
                         Because there is another 'Old man Domingo' there in our
                         village.
                                                                       [
23 cn:                                                                aa
                                                                      yes
```

```
24 p:    mol un
         old PT
         He is the old one.
              [
25 cha:       ja`
              !
              Right.

26       ja` s-
         !   3E-
         He is the ---

27       ja` s- muk'ta tot    nan
         !   3E-big   father perhaps
         He is (the younger man's) grandfather, perhaps.
                   [
28 p:            s- ban-
                 3E-
                 His older ---

29       s- ba
         3E-
         His older ---
            [
30 ca:   s- bankil        nan      s- tot    ya'el
         3E-older_brother perhaps  3E-father it_seems
         The older brother of his father, I think.

31 p:    ja 's- bankil       ti  s- tot    un-e
         !   3E-older_brother ART 3E-father PT-CL
         Yes, the older brother of (the younger man's) father.

32 ca:   mjm

33 p:    ja`  bankilal li   ali
         !    older     ART  ART
         The older brother was ...
                           [
34 ca:                    ja` s- tot    li  lol     romin  -e
                          !   3E-father ART Lorenzo Domingo-CL
                          He is the father of Lorenzo Domingo.

35 p:    ti    s-tot    li  lol     romin  -e
         ART   3E-father ART Lorenzo Domingo-CL
         .. the father of Lorenzo Domingo.

36       ja` mol  un
         !   old  PT
         He is the one they call 'Mol'.

37       mol romin   un
         old Domingo PT
         He is 'Old Domingo'.

38       bweno le`      un ja` k'ox  romin  ch- y- al -be-ik-e
         good  that.there PT !  small Domingo ICP-3E- say-AP-PL-CL
         Ok, so the other one they call 'Little Domingo'.

39 g:    mjm

40 p:    ch'aj romin   ch- y- al
         lazy  Domingo ICP-3E-say
         They say, 'Lazy Domingo'.

41       k'ox ch'aj romin
         small lazy  Domingo
```

```
         'Small Lazy  Domingo'.
              [
42 ma:        y- u`un     batz'i vokol      nan    i- s- tz'ak lum
              3E-agency   real   difficult perhaps CP-3E-join earth
              ta   j- mek
              PREF one-NC
              Because perhaps he had a very hard time starting to grow.
```

Talking about people, as exemplified here, not only involves referring to them but also characterizing them. Both dimensions will be relevant to this chapter.

10.3   Economies of reference: triangularity

Reference always invokes a universe of possible referents, access to which is inherently asymmetric, interested and multimodal. That is, only some people can be known, and there are only certain ways to know them, some direct, others indirect, involving multiple kinds of knowing, not equally available to all. The Who's Who in Zinacantán was designed to uncover the universe of possible person referents in the community, and to exploit these asymmetries of access by building them into the discovery process: Different people knew different things about friends, enemies, neighbours and associates, and it was the interactive merging of different sets of knowledge and perspectives that gave the resulting conversations ethnographic and social richness.

I take person reference to be inherently triangular. Every act of person reference is grounded in a speech situation: Minimally, speaker S refers to referent R for hearer H. Necessarily relevant therefore are at least three social relationships: between S and R, H and R, and S and H. Moreover, insofar as S and H may be differently positioned to understand these relationships (S may understand R to stand in a certain relationship to H, for example, whereas H may understand this relationship differently), each of them comes with a perspective or diacritic. There may be further perspectives, but minimally these two are involved in any socially situated act of person reference, because of their immediate relevance to the interactants at hand. Moreover, any given social situation will privilege certain perspectives and relationships, setting parameters for potential reference formulations. Finally, choice of one perspective or another for formulating reference will creatively energize other expectations, helping to define the act of reference (and the activity within which it is embedded) in a particular way.

Enfield (this volume) speculates about the properties of an unmarked or 'default' reference 'formulation [which] is virtually automatic, in the absence of any special consideration to selection of that manner of formulation as opposed to some other conceivable one . . . . It's the format you pick when you

Indef.NP -> Def.NP -> Name -> Pron.-> 0

Figure 10.1 Putative hierarchy of referring expressions.

don't have any special reason to care how the thing you want to say gets said'. If interactants routinely refer to persons in a standard way, with a certain sort of formulation, then the formulation itself may not, as it were, instruct interactants to do anything more than calculate the referent. If a professor *always* refers to students and eolleagues as 'Mr. X' or 'Ms. Y' (as was the tradition in the Reed College Anthropology Department, in an explicit allusion to alleged custom at the University of Chicago) then such a formulation from that professor inspires no special inference about the professor's relationship to the referent (except perhaps that it is of an academic sort, the sort that activates the specific usage); it simply stands as an instruction to the hearer to pick out the individual so-named.

However, my claim that all acts of reference are inherently triangular suggests that there can in fact be multiple defaults in a given social formation. The professor may adhere to the default just described, whereas the professor's students may routinely refer to other students by first name alone, and to professors by some combination of title and last name – both defaults can coexist, and they may reflect aspects of the difference between professors and students, while still being, on any given occasion, unremarkable linguistic formulations for picking out individuals.

That a social formation might have default ways of performing reference to persons that calls no attention to the formulation used and does nothing more than (attempt to) achieve reference appears to be part of the underlying motivation for Schegloff's notion of 'do[ing] reference (or 're-reference')– simpliciter, i.e. referring and nothing else' (1996: 440). Further motivation comes from the well-studied phenomenon that a referent can be introduced into a patch of discourse via a complex expression, but that subsequent references to the same referent can be progressively abbreviated (Fox 1987). Students of syntax have long recognized a hierarchy of referring expressions in connected discourse, from a kind of maximal form – typically a complex noun phrase, perhaps an indefinite descriptor – through various intermediate reduced forms, including simpler, usually definite nominal expressions, and proper names – to maximally reduced pronominals, including, in some languages, a zero or completely elided or 'unpronounced' form (see Figure 10.1).[3] The gradual reduction of form and content in the referring expression is argued to correspond to a reduced functional need, as discourse proceeds, to fully specify a referent that can be identified from context (Givón 1993).

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[3] Notably, such a hierarchy itself represents a default in that failing to minimize non-initial references ordinarily provokes inferential work. See Oh (this volume) for a related discussion. See also Schegloff (1996a).

The following narrative extract begins by introducing an individual at line 2 with an indefinite NP *jun yamiko* 'a friend of his' coupled with an explicit existential predicate. The referent then reappears in line 3 in the guise of a definite NP, subject of a locative predicate 'there', which in turn becomes the link[4] in line 4 to a further new referent, first existentially inserted into the universe of discourse, then named in line 5. But note that the reference to 'the friend' in line 4 is zero.

Example (2)   A cowboy's brother (WW26.17, #1)

```
1   a    ti    vo'ne
    ART CONJ long_ago
    Long ago

2   oy    la    s-ta    jun y- amiko ta    kolonya
    exist QUOT  3E-find one 3E-friend PREP colony
    They say he met a friend in the Colony.

3   ali te    li  y- amiko un -e   vakero
    ART there ART 3E-friend PT -CL cowboy
    The friend was there, a cowboy.

4   oy    ali s- bankil
    exist ART 3E-older_brother
    He had a brother. (Lit., Existed his older brother.)

5   chep s- bi    li  s- bankil     -e  chep meko
    Joe  3E-name ART 3E-older_brother-CL Joe fair
    José was the name of his older brother, 'Fair José'.
```

Similarly, one of Schegloff's examples of 'referring simpliciter' is the pronoun 'she' in the second sentence of the following (schematized) example:

'I got something planned on Sunday with Laura. She and I are gonna go out and get drunk'

where 'Laura' introduces the referent (with a form that, by Schegloff's analysis, 'invites the recipients' recognition of the one who is being talked about as someone they know' (1996a: 440)), whereas 'she', according to Schegloff, 'does . . . referring and nothing else'[5] [Schegloff 1996a: 440].

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[4] Via a non-zero but highly reduced Tzotzil third person possessive prefix *s*-, thus [[s-]₁*bankil*]₂ 'his₁ older-brother male₂' where two distinct referents are in play: the original cowboy₁ and his older brother₂.

[5] An anaphoric device like 'she' may be the least elaborated possible referring form; but, note that the exigencies of English require that the pronoun be singular and gendered (i.e., that it agree in gender with Laura) – something that would not be true of the analogous Tzotzil formulation, for example, which would simply involve a third person cross-reference with neither gender nor number specified. Thus even highly reduced referring devices like pronouns index previous talk directly, and rely partly on their inherent predicative value to disambiguate potential referents.

The nugget of my argument is that a socially embedded act of person reference is *never* simple, and that it always – perhaps in devious and underhanded ways – depends on multiple indexical projections, including those involving the social triangle between S, H, and R. Such non-simple referential action I will dub 'referring *dupliciter*'.[6]

The fragment of gossip (Example 1) about Lazy Domingo depends upon conceptually simple acts of reference – picking out the relevant individual – to talk *about* him. The two sorts of activity are rarely divorced, however, and the gossip displays both a Zinacantec economy of reference with respect to knowledge about social alters, and also an ecology of its use. What is known about 'Lazy Domingo' by different interlocutors (and perhaps more importantly, what they care about) is unequally distributed and differentially displayed. In the first lines, for example, the participant CN shows that he has at least heard the nickname applied to the individual in question. By contrast, in lines 21–38, PV and CA collaboratively and competitively assert genealogical and onomastic expertise. Finally, at line 42, echoing an earlier joking theme (about how despite being called 'small' the man is really older than he looks), MA adds the further detail that Lazy Domingo grew up as an orphan. These revelatory displays not only contribute to the growing dossier about Lazy Domingo, but also indexically position each speaker in respect both to Lazy Domingo and to the overall economy of social knowledge. Thus, CN locates himself as a senior man from a distant hamlet, who has observed Lazy Domingo's political shenanigans over a considerable span of years (thus knowing that he must be of a certain age). P and CA reveal themselves to be privy to further genealogical facts, and P also displays at least some claim to knowing about how nicknames come to be distributed in Lazy Domingo's hamlet (which he shows to be his own by the first-person plural exclusive *ta jnatikotik* 'in our [excl] hamlet' – that is, the hamlet that both he and Lazy Domingo inhabit, by contrast to his interlocutors, at least some of whom are excluded from the pronominal range). And MA displays potential sympathy for Lazy Domingo by invoking the latter's childhood hardships.

A further genealogical link, in fact, lurks in the interactional scene, and it eventually finds its way explicitly into the discourse. As all the gossipers know, P, the most senior man present, is also Lazy Domingo's father-in-law, having (in 1970) recently bestowed his daughter's hand on the younger man after a difficult courtship. P therefore speaks from a privileged and not disinterested position, and his fellow gossips carefully monitor his remarks to learn how the new marriage is going.

[6] Although equally awkward, another possible label would be 'referring *multipliciter*'. My neologism, though it de-emphasizes the multiple factors involved, deliberately suggests the often conspiratorial or duplicitous nature of choosing one referring expression over another.

In fact, P soon elaborated further on the nickname, revealing exactly the sorts of worries a father-in-law might be expected to have. He confesses that even before Lazy Domingo became his son-in-law he had learned of the boy's laziness from this same uncle.

Example (3)   'lazy' means lazy (1970)

```
 1 p:   komo    le`-e   che`e
        because that-CL  then
        'Because that one ... '

 2      y- al  li  s- muk'ta tot    ya` el  -e  mol  romin  -e
        3E-say ART 3E-big    father it_seems-CL old  Domingo-CL
        His grandfather - Old Man Domingo - used to say.

 3 ca:  jmm

 4 p:   kere
        'Damn!'

 5      pero le`  -e  batz'i mu  x-  ve`
        but  that-CL  real   NEG ASP-eat
        'But that one just can't feed himself.'

 6      batz'i ben ch'aj xi li  mol  romin  -e
        real   well lazy say ART old  Domingo-CL
        'He's just totally lazy,' said old man Domingo

 7 ca:  mm

 8 p:   aa  x-  k-  ut
        yes ASP-1E- tell
        'Oh,' I told him.

 9      muk'  to'ox      bu   och  -em tal   li  romin  un-e
        NEG   at_that_time where enter-PF DIR[core] ART Domingo PT-CL
        At that point Domingo had not yet started his courtship.

10 ca:  mm

11 p:   aa  x-  k- ut
        yes ASP-1E-tell
        'Oh', I told him.

12 ca:  mm

13 ma:  mu to` ox       bu   jak'olaj   -er ya`el
        NEG at_that_time where ask_for_bride-PF it_seems
        So he hadn't yet asked [for your daughter'?
                              [
14 p:                         mm

15      i`i
        No.

16 ma:  a

17 p:   ch'aj nox
        lazy  only
        'He's just lazy.'

18 ca:  ja` s- biin   -oj o taj
        !  3E-to_name-PF REL that
        So that's how he got that name.
                      [
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```
19 p:        mu 'oy   -uk
             NEG exist-IRREAL
             Not yet.

20 m:    ch'aj romin    un che'e
         lazy  Domingo  PT then
         so he really IS 'Lazy Domingo'!
```

Thus, the epithet 'lazy' was more than a mere moniker and had already passed into the younger man's public reputation by being institutionalized as his nickname even before he married P's daughter and went on to grow into a *bik'it mol* 'sort of an elder'.

In the next few sections, I outline the repertoire of elements for person reference in Zinacantec Tzotzil.

10.4   Names and nicknames

Zinacantecs frequently use 'names' to refer to one other. In an early study Collier and Bricker (hereafter C and B), citing Goodenough's observation (1965) that names serve both a classificatory and an individualizing function, summarize the Zinacantec situation as follows:

Every Zinacanteco has a surname that identifies the lineage to which he belongs, and most lineages are further subdivided by nicknames that identify individuals belonging to lineage segments. (1970: 290)

If one Zinacantec asks another *k'usi abi* 'what is your name?' the sort of answer he or she will get depends heavily on the circumstances. The question itself is not always appropriate, being the sort of thing normally addressed by an adult to a child (or other semi-person, like a foreigner), or perhaps by a person in authority to an ordinary citizen. In the first case, the answer is likely to be simply a first name – traditionally one of a small number[7] of Tzotzilized Christian names like *Xun* 'John' or *Maruch'* 'Mary'. The original question might then be followed up with a further query like 'Who is your father' or 'John what?' In the second case – an authority to a private citizen – the answer is invariably the full official Mexican name. There are effectively two systems of official names in Zinacantán, which combine one of the limited set of baptismal first names (normally simply called, in third-person possessed form, *s-bi* 'his/her name') with an equally limited set of last names (*s-jol s-bi* 'lit., the head of his/her name'). In the

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[7] In the 1960s, C and B counted 'twenty-seven personal first names for men and sixteen for women' (1970:290). The inventory has grown slightly, with a few 'non-traditional' names emerging and others falling out of use. but even when a child is baptized with an unusual name, a traditional name usually takes over for ordinary use.

traditional system, a Spanish derived surname combines with one of several possible Indian surnames, both inherited from one's father: There is effectively a double patronymic, with both Spanish-derived and Tzotzil parts (see also Brown, this volume). In the official Mexican system, which has all but supplanted the traditional one, the first name combines with a patronymic and a matronymic, both drawn from the limited inventory of Spanish derived surnames with no surviving reference to the second Tzotzil patronymic. Thus, the individual under discussion in Example (1) has a 'full' or official name in Spanish, which would appear on official documents and which he himself would give as Domingo Pérez Gómez.

The difficulty with such a name is that it serves *neither* an individualizing nor a classificatory function. Since there may be many people with the same name, and also several different Pérez lineages, the name identifies neither the man nor his lineage. Commenting on the 'traditional' system of double patronymics, C and B observed that the limited name inventory and the tendency for lineage names to cluster in individual hamlets meant that several individuals frequently share even the same full traditional name making it difficult to differentiate individuals on the basis of first names and surnames alone (C and B 1970: 291).With the still less differentiated Mexican system of patronymic and matronymic, almost exclusively used in dealings between Zinacantecs and the Mexican bureaucracy, the individualizing difficulties only increase, and any residual classificatory function – for example, a reference to traditional exogamous lineages – is completely lost.

10.5   Nicknames

In fact, in the Who's Who conversations, discussion of surnames seemed rarely to be about identifying individuals, and more about establishing – and displaying knowledge of – relevant genealogies. Typical is an exchange like the following:

Example (4)   46.24:

```
a:   Maruch Papyan li  s-bi-e.
     Mary   Fabian APT 3E-name-CL
     Her name is Mary Fabian

     Santis li  s-jol   s-bi-e.
     Santis ART 3E-head 3E-name-CL
     Her surname is Santis.

     ja' Papyan li s-tote
     !   Fabian ART 3E-father
```

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Because her father was Fabian [whose Spainsh surname, as all present
know, was Santis]
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b: *Pero ja` a`i-bil   li Papyan-e*
     but   I   understand-PP ART Fabian-CL
     But 'Fabian' [as her name] is what people understand.

This woman's official Spanish name would be something like María Santis Pérez (where Santis is her father's Spanish surname, and Pérez her mother's). But the Who's Who gossipers, after showing that they know the appropriate surname, point out that such a woman would commonly be identified via her first name plus her (prominent) father's first name. This is what C and B dub a 'nickname', which supplements the non-identifying official name.

'There is ... an elaborate proliferation of nicknames *nearly always used for reference but never for direct address*. Nicknames reduce the ambiguity of reference significantly' (C and B: 291, italics added).

In Zinacantán a nickname is a conventionalized, socially bestowed moniker, frequently originating in some notable personal characteristic of an individual and then 'often extended in application to his offspring or siblings' (C and B 1970: 291). Nicknames uniquely identify individuals in a way that their 'official' Zinacantec names cannot. Thus Example (1) shows that one of the nicknames of Domingo Pérez Gómez is *Ch'aj Romin*; 'Lazy Domingo' is a quite particular Domingo Pérez Gómez.

C and B count as a nickname any 'non-traditional' name – that is, a conventionalized formula meant to refer to the person not by characterizing him or her but as a label, in Jakobson's terms, 'code about code' (1957). C and B enumerate various kinds of Zinacantec nicknames (usually combined with the individual's 'first name') that involve:

1. Mother's Spanish surname;
2. Mother's Indian surname;
3. First name of well-known relative;
4. Reference to an individual's occupation;
5. Reference to a geographical location with which the individual is associated;
6. Humorous reference to an individual's aberrant appearance or behavior;
7. The nickname of a near relative (p. 291)

going on to elaborate as follows:

The first three classes of nicknames need no explanation. They come into use only in situations of ambiguity. Nicknames belonging to the next three classes all refer to distinctive characteristics of the person to whom the nicknames refer. If a person has distinguished himself by assuming a social position few other Zinacantecos attain, he

may acquire his role name as a nickname. He may be called 'curer' ... 'mayordomo' ... , 'cowherd' ... , or 'musician' ... When a Zinacanteco moves from one hamlet to another, he may be called by the name of his former hamlet. If he builds his house near an important natural feature in the landscape such as cliffs ... , a sinkhole ... , a rocky place ... , the edge of a waterhole ... he may be given, as a nickname, the name of that feature. (p. 291)

C and B take as given that referential adequacy is a primary function of names, and 'measure ... the communicative efficiency of naming components' (C and B: 299). They conclude that nicknames are much more efficient in differentiating individual referents than are official names. They further link nicknames, which tend to be passed down somewhat in the manner of official names, to gradually emerging socially relevant lineage segments – in principle, exactly what the traditional dual patronymic system (which by native theory distinguished exogamous groups) also labelled.

The Zinacantec interlocutors in Example (1) themselves clearly take the issue of disambiguation seriously. One explanation they suggest for Lazy Domingo's nickname is that it distinguishes him from another man, his senior uncle, who is simply known as *mol Romin* 'old man Domingo'.[8] By contrast the nephew is called 'little' (or 'lazy') Domingo, or even 'little lazy Domingo' – the discussion suggests that part of the significance of the added qualifiers was simply to order the two identically baptized relatives generationally (like 'Senior' or 'Junior' in English naming).

10.6   The indexicality of names

Except for noting that many nicknames 'have their origin in the ridicule of an individual' (p. 292) C and B do not develop the implications of their own striking observation about the *use* of nicknames in Zinacantán: that they are, in their experience, never used for direct address – and one could add, only rarely used at all in the presence of their bearers. Such restrictions pose a puzzle for interactants in this community especially if names are thought of as the most efficient way to identify individuals. Moreover, such restrictions suggest that names are never doing 'only' referring. Rather, they are inherently indexical, pointing via the restrictions on their appropriate use to the identities of S, H and R, and perhaps to other aspects of the speech events in which they appear. You may use a Zinacantec nickname potentially to identify its referent uniquely, but only to an addressee who is in a position to recognize the name (the minimal

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[8] By C and B's definition in this case the baptismal name *Romin* Domingo serves itself as a nickname, a proto-surname that identifies an entire lineage associated with a notable ancestral individual so named. Thus, 'old man Domingo' is the paternal uncle of 'Lazy Domingo' and father of another individual known as *Lol Romin* or 'Lorenzo Domingo'.

necessary common-ground condition on any felicitous recognitional), and only in the absence of the referent him or herself. Like a T/V pronoun, a nickname operates on two simultaneous planes: both picking out or referring to an individual, and projecting relationships between the name-user and others (typically including addressee and referent). In this sense, its use always involves 'referring *dupliciter*'. Moreover, in the case of Zinacantec nicknames, the nature of the baptismal event (ridicule or at least some sort of non-standard or non-official dubbing) itself suggests something about the main restriction on usage: that one does not use the nickname in earshot of the nicknamed.

Building on remarks of Putnam (1975), Silverstein (2004, 2005) elaborates on the multiple indexical properties of Wasco names.

[T]raditionally, names were not used in casual face-to-face or other kinds of reference; definite descriptions, such as kinship expressions, were preferably used. Rather, the essence of proper names is like that of heirloom antiques of relative ordinal economic value as investment property: everyone wanted a collection of them, as many as possible ... (Silverstein (2005: 15).

Names normally both categorize and individuate their referents, in a systematic and sociologically penetrating way. On the other hand, names have the familiar duplex nature of other referential indexes.

The name as type, as underlying regularity in a semiotic sense, is its position in the system of name-values; the name as token, as instance of use after initial baptism, is the display of someone's wealth, regardless of who does the displaying (uttering of the name-form) (Silverstein 2005: 20).

The baptismal events that can produce Zinacantec nicknames thus necessarily produce as well different kinds of restrictions on their use. Nor are individuals limited to just one, so that multiple nicknames partition the social universe into people in a position to employ (or recognize) one nickname as opposed to another, and, in fact, allow interactants to distinguish nicknames that CAN be used in the bearer's presence from those that cannot. A single man called *Xun* may have the joking nickname *Mamal* (reference to a comic fiesta figure) that reflects his supposed propensity to lie; his schoolmates may also know him, both jokingly and affectionately, as *Troni* (short for Spanish *electrónico*) because of his penchant for acquiring such gear. Neither nickname would ordinarily be used to his face, nor obviously will either work for people too far outside his circle of acquaintances, although the first nickname has travelled farther than the second.

Many if not most Zinacantecs will enjoy several names – at least two official names, with distinct parts, plus a collection of nicknames – each with varied conditions of unmarked use. Such multiplicity of names clearly complicates the notion of a 'default' formula for person reference, despite the fact that

Zinacantec conversation does make extensive and routine use of names. A name may be the unmarked first choice for referring to another Zinacantec in many circumstances, but since there are many names, the choice of one over another is never neutral. That names may not be used in the presence of referents and that the use of a particular name may vary by addressee both support the claim that names in Tzotzil do not do referring simpliciter.[9]

Tzotzil syntax allows two further diacritics on names, which previsage the second major device for achieving person reference, kinship, to which I shortly turn. First, Tzotzil proper names frequently occur with (demonstrative) determiners, notably both proximal and distal definite articles. Thus the same delicacy about presupposed and presupposable reference that applies to ordinary nominals also applies to proper names, suggesting something of the classificatory function that a small repertoire of names must necessarily have. If, without preamble, a man refers to another as *li Lol-e* 'DEF Lawrence+CLITIC' he presumes that his interlocutor will be able to work out *which* Lawrence is involved; further the use of the proximal definite article suggests a direct and close connection between the speech act participants and the referent (see Oh, this volume) – the speaker's son, for example, or perhaps his son-in-law, that is, the most relevant Lawrence to the speaker (or to the addressee). Such a form contrasts both with the use of a distal determiner, *ti Lol-e* – which would suggest that the Lawrence in question is remote in time or space – or of an indefinite determiner *jun Lol* 'a certain Lawrence' which in effect presumes that the interlocutor cannot be expected to know the person in question.

Personal names are also frequently possessed, so that the choice of name also implies the choice of a mediating kinsman. An adult may say *k-Antun* 'my Anthony' to refer to his or her son or grandson named Anthony; an unmarried person might use the same term to refer to a sibling. In both cases the possessed form may serve both to disambiguate the referent – for example, when several people named Anthony are in the discursive universe – and to assert a particular proprietary relationship between the possessor and the person named. When the possessor is third person, inference is thus required to decide exactly what sort of relationship is implied between possessor and referent. Similarly, the full range of Tzotzil person affixes allow further marked specificity: *k-Antun-tikotik* – 'our Anthony' with a first-person exclusive plural possessive, for example, identifies this particular Anthony as linked to the speaker and his or her group, and also explicitly excludes the hearer from that same group, a characteristic if simple example of 'triangular kinship'[10] where a single kinship term requires the triangulation of multiple relationships between Speaker, Addressee and Referent(s).

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[9]   A further caveat: as genealogical distance decreases, so too does the unmarked possibility of using names as a referential default.

[10]   For classic cases from Australia see Nick Evan's discussion of 'kintax' (Evans 2003).

10.7   Kinship terms

Kinship relations, even in a fragmented peasant community like the Zinacantec hamlet where I work, provide the most general idiom for identifying and referring to social alters. Though names anchor certain easily identifiable referents – the well-known people of the Who's Who, for example – many people in the community are not easily nameable, both because their names may not be generally known, or because they cannot be appropriately used. Instead, kinship formulas are an alternative reference formulation. That there are alternatives is part of 'referring *dupliciter*': Using one kind of referential device, when another one is equally 'efficient' at picking out the referent and equally appropriate in the circumstances, triggers unavoidable inferences about why this as opposed to that.

A classic problem in kinship studies – how to delimit the boundaries of who are 'kinsmen' and who are not – also arises in describing how kinship formulas figure in person reference in Zinacantán. There are Tzotzil terms for four generations of consanguines and two generations of affines. There are terms for step-kin. There are also a variety of fictive kinsmen, from people married to your siblings, to godparents and co-parents (the relationship between godparents and the parents of their godchildren). There are respectful address forms that transparently incorporate kinship terms: *totik* ('our father', i.e., 'sir'), or *jtatatik* (lit., 'our grandfather', i.e., a conjointly known older man.) There are terms for illicit lovers, for second (or subsequent) spouses, and for adopted orphans. There is a term – *chi'il* 'companion' – that can stand for just about any sort of distant relative (or a hamlet mate or fellow Zinacantec).[11] The difficulty posed by this proliferation of relationship terms for person-reference is that there are *too many* ways to calculate one person's relationship to another, so that from any given social origo there are alternate 'kinship' routes to a given alter, and it would be difficult and arbitrary to try to specify a default path, because much depends on why one wants to refer to that person at all. Is it more relevant that A is B's son's 'wife' or that she is B's own 'daughter-in-law'? Does a story tell better if we learn that X and Y are cousins or *compadres*? Consider the following preamble to a story about a loose woman from the Who's Who conversations (where, given the composition of the panels of gossips, a male perspective pervades the talk). The woman's lover – normally *y-ajnul* (literally, her 'sin-person [of a woman]') – is characterized instead by his relationship to her 'old man', that is her husband.

---

[11]   A standard, non-committal form for talking about a Zinacantec as opposed to someone from another Indian community is *jchi'iltik* 'our (inclusive) companion'.

Example (5)   a lover

```
ja`o  la   ch-`och    s-k'exol        li  mol k'al ch'abal tey
then  QUOT ICP-enter  3E-replacement  ART old when none     there
The old man's substitute entered when he was absent.
```

The lover is identified as 'the husband's replacement' and stands in no named relationship at all to the wife.

The specifics of the Tzotzil kinship system – which includes consanguineal, affinal and pseudo-kin links (prominently those of the system of *compadrazgo*, cf. Hanks, this volume) – go beyond the scope of this chapter, but there are two semantic components worth mention. First, the system celebrates relative age (cf. Enfield, this volume) between siblings, and it also differentiates sex of ego with respect to both siblings and offspring.[12] Both facts mean that the choice of ego from whose perspective to construct a kin chain to a referent – something that must always be negotiated contextually – can radically restructure the kin formulation used.

Kin formulations are relational in the familiar sense that they always involve both 'ego' and 'alter'. They also involve a choice of perspective, since there are always multiple ways to construe the relations that lead to a given referent. (Minimally, for example, given the gender specificity of ego in terms for children, everyone is either *x-ch'amal* of his or her father or *y-ol* of his or her mother.) There are two further interrelated tendencies in Tzotzil use of kin formulas for person reference that add indexical complexity: alterocentricity and gender asymmetry.

The first is a polite Zinacantec convention that if possible one will begin a kin chain with one's addressee. A default choice, that is, is to construct the shortest path from addressee to referent, given what you, as speaker, know, as in Example (6).

Example (6)   Alterocentricity

```
ja` s-tot     y-ajnil a-kumpare   Manvel.
!   3E-father 3E-wife 2E-compadre Manuel
He is the father of the wife of your compadre Manuel.
```

The referent involved could, in fact, stand in a much closer relationship to the speaker, but he might still propose to use a complex formulation like this one to start the chain with his addressee. (The strategy is reminiscent – though with a different interactive valence – of a mother saying to her husband, 'Do you know what your son did today?') The second-person possessive prefix on *a-kumpare* 'your compadre' makes explicit the indexical link between the

---

[12]   There are asymmetric neutralizations of both relative age and gender of propositus and propositum in the sibling terminology, cf. Haviland (2006).

referring expression and addressee. As with possessed names, precise person marking on kin terms projects a partitioning of the social universe that typically includes S and H as well as R. To mention *j-tot-ik* 'our (INCL) father' explicitly invokes a relationship to the referent shared between speaker and addressee; to say *k-itz'in-tikotik* 'our (EXCL) younger brother' encodes S as part of a collectivity standing in the same 'older brother' relation to R and explicitly excludes addressee from the same relationship (see Stivers, this volume, for a related discussion), and so on.

In the Who's Who sessions, exclusively between adult men, 'anchor points' or the starting points of kinship chains are usually well-known men, identified via their nicknames. Other main protagonists – often never named at all – are introduced by their kinship connections to the anchors.

Example (7)   Kinship link to anchor individual

```
oy      la      y-alib              taj Chep Meko x-k-al-tik,
EXIST QUOT 3E-daughter-in-law DEIC Jose Fair ASP-1E-say-PLINC
Joe Lightskin has a daughter-in-law, as we say

ach' to    i-y-ik'    y-ajnil jun s-krem
new  still CP-3E-marry 3E-wife one 3E-boy
Recently one of his sons married a wife.
```

'Gender asymmetry' refers to presumptions about how best to calculate kin relative to the gender of interlocutors. In the Who's Who conversations, women are largely non-persons, and the anchor points of kinship-based referring expressions are nearly always male, even if the gossip has to do with women.

Example (8)   64.31

```
a:  lek  xa      s-maj   s-me'lal ....
    good already 3E-beat 3E-woman
    He really beats his wife

b:  an much'u s-tzeb        le'e
    why who    3E-daughter that-CL
    Whose daughter is that?

a:  ja'  s-tzeb       Xun kasya ajensya
    !    3E-daughter John Garcia magistrate
    The daughter of John Garcia the magistrate

c:  x-cha` = tzeb
    3E-two = daughter
    His step-daughter
    y-ol              xa      x-cha` = va'al  me'el
    3E-child_of_woman already 3E-two =person wife
    The child of his second wife

    ti  s-tot    ja`  li  s-bankil      j-sakil  isim   Mat-e
    ART 3E-father !    ART 3E-older_brother AGN_White whisker Mateo-CL
    The (real) father was the older brother of 'White Whiskered.
    Matthew'
```

Example (8) presents a genealogical discussion of exactly who a particular beaten wife is; she is never named, and all of the kin chains are calculated starting from male origos.

In Example (9) the speaker constructs two applicative clauses to construe the male 'anchor', old man 'Juan K'at'ix' (the nickname of a well-known man), as grammatically prominent. He is formally the grammatical object of 'marry' in the first clause (see Aissen 1987), and the grammatical subject of the passive 'be married' in the second. He is construed, that is, as the one who 'had his daughter married on him' – that is, something that happened to him, grammatically, rather than to the daughter.

Example (9)   Gender asymmetry

```
ja`to`ox  i-y-ik'-be      s-tzeb ti   jvan k'at'ix-e
!  then   CP-3E-marry-AP 3E-girl ART  John Hawthorn-CL
He recently married Juan K'at'ix's daughter.

ik'-b-at        s-tzeb        taj mol-e
marry-AP-PASS 3E-girl DEIC old-CL
The old man had his daughter married on him.
```

By contrast, women seem to prefer (though by no means exclusively) to calculate kin chains via women: *y-ol s-muk li Xunka'e* 'the child [of a woman] of the younger sibling [of a woman] of Jane'. Such usage involves an implicit and inferable indexicality that projects the interlocutors as female, by contrast with the way men normally talk.

10.7.1   Address

Further complications arise for referential formulas from rules about **address**, which ordinarily also involve both names and kin links. Just as there are conventions of politeness about how people greet one another – men, for example, shake hands if they are of the same age, or the younger man bows and presents his forehead to the older man, who in turn touches it with his hand – there are related conventions about how people should address one another. Men of roughly equal age will address each other by first name, if they know them, or use a variety of name substitutes (e.g., *ompre*, from Spanish *hombre* 'man'). They will address a boy by name, with the affectionate *tzuk'* if he is very small, or with the less affectionate, somewhat dismissive *kere* (from *kerem* 'boy'). They will address an older man, by default, as *totik* 'our father'; but if he is sufficiently well known to them they will add a name, *totik Xun* (or perhaps substitute an honorific, *mol Xun* 'old man John' – see the next section). If they want to claim a closer relationship they can reduce the address term to *tot Xun* 'father John' or *jtot Xun* 'my father John'. And if he really is kin, or

pseudo-kin, or if they want to treat him as kin (and perhaps be treated as kin in return), this will reduce simply to *tot* 'father'. And if the other is a *compadre* as a result of one of many sorts of reclassifying rituals (a baptismal meal, a wedding, nowadays even a school graduation) any other possible address term is supplanted by *kumpa* 'compadre' – a formula that can only rarely be supplemented by an added name when one of several co-present compadres is to be singled out, *kumpa Xun*.

These considerations highlight the unavoidable and multiple indexical nuances of kin formulas, the most common form of Tzotzil person reference after naming, and in some circumstances preferable to naming. The choice of a particular formulation responds both to narrative or referential facts – what is relevant to be told – and to contextual facts about who is doing the talking, to whom, about whom, and how all are related.

A Zinacantec is partly constrained by how he or she (or the addressee) ought to address that person. Should the interlocutors' own relationships be privileged, and if so which? X talking to Y about Z, named *Antun*, who is X's father but Y's compadre, cannot choose simply to say *Antun*, but instead must say *jtot* 'my father' to emphasize her own relationship with Z, or *akumpare* 'your compadre' alterocentrically to emphasizes Y's, or perhaps *akumpare Antun* if there is more than one potentially relevant compadre (say X's husband as well as her father). If one speaks of an elder woman, considerations of respect, the identity of one's interlocutor, or one's own relationship to her, may variously require that one say, for example, *jme'tik Mal Akov* 'our mother Mary Waspnest', rather than simply to give the name. Interlocutors may often explicitly correct – or at least supplement – another's referential formulation, to specify an alternate preferred referring formula, and this correction may have consequences for all subsequent reference to the individual. I may say to you, *li jmeme'tik ta ak'ol* 'the honorable lady [living] up above', not knowing her name, and you may supply it; or you may say *jkumale* 'my comadre' after which I will refer to her as *akumale* 'your comadre'.

10.8   Titles (honorific and dishonorific), geographic monikers and affect

In their classic study of American address terms, Brown and Ford (1964) distinguish two common forms of English address, one involving use of addressee's 'first name' and the other 'title and last name', though they say little about the precise indexical properties of the choice of one title over another when there are alternatives. Tzotzil speakers use kinship and pseudo kinship terms as titles in both address and reference, as we have just seen, and there are a small number of title-like non-kin qualifiers often added to names or

nicknames in reference formulas. They are mostly indicators of age: *k'ox* for a child, *mol* for a senior man, *me'el* for a senior woman. The qualifier *anima* is also used when the referent is deceased.

As C and B note, nicknames are frequently built from places with which the bearer is associated or from 'occupations' (including ritual offices or *cargos*[13]) they may have held. In a similar way, geographic and especially cargo specifications are often added to referring expressions, both to narrow the possible referential range in the case of ambiguity, but often to give guidance tailored for particular interlocutors in working out who is being referred to. Frequently, for example, S adds cargo information in reference to R knowing that H's own cargo career is likely to have brought H and R into contact.

These various further elements can combine, so that initial references of the following form are rather common in Who's Who conversations:

Example (10)   A non-minimal reference form

```
anima    j-mol   kumpa    Maryan Valik ta    Elan Vó
deceased 1E-old  compadre Mariano Valik PREP Place name
lok'-em j-  ch'ul-me'tik.
exit-PF AGN- holy-mother.
My late compadre, Mr. Mariano Valik, from Elan Vo', the former
mayordomo of the Virgen of Guadalupe.
```

With such a form it is unclear how much of the information offered in the referential formulation is strictly intended to guide interlocutors in picking out the referent, and how much to index S's or H's social networks and knowledge: about distant places, about cargo histories, about kinship and so on.

C and B note that frequently Zinacantec nicknames incorporate characterizing descriptors, often humorous or derogatory. The line between an established appellation and a true descriptor – perhaps on the way to becoming a nickname, perhaps merely a nonce characterization – is of course hard to draw. When people are identified as *koxo' Xun* 'lame John', or *tzonsat Petul* 'hairy-faced Peter', or *bix-'akan Lol* 'bamboo-legged Lawrence' it is not clear whether the speaker has simply added an affect-laden qualifier to a name (because most Zinacantecs do not limp, are beardless, and do not have notably skinny legs), or whether he is, as it were, proposing a candidate humorous nickname, perhaps one whose lifespan will be just this single conversation. In either case, however, the speaker is adopting a specific indexical stance towards the referent, and this is, again, a ubiquitous feature of Zinacantec referring expressions.

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[13] See Cancian (1965).

In a more formulaic way, Tzotzil provides a series of affective diacritics on person reference. One might imagine them as functioning like tiny 'pre-narratives' in the sense that the affective inflection they cast over a referential expression cries out for narrative expansion. In the Who's Who narratives names and titles are frequently preceded by forms like the following:

> *prove* (> Sp. *pobre*) 'poor'
> *j-kobel* (lit., 'fucker' – a derogatory agentive term)
> *j'a'yel* (lit., 'hearer' – a less offensive derogatory agentive term)
> *mu* (lit, 'tasty', i.e., disgusting)
> *yil* (> *yijil*) (lit., 'thick', i.e., disgusting)

Each such form not only indexes something about the speaker's stance towards the referent, but also previsages some further clarification about why the referent has been introduced into the discursive universe with such an affective taint.

I have spoken about a local economy of referents, shorthand for the obvious fact that knowledge about people in a community of any size is unequally distributed, and moreover that some people are easier to recognize than others. Any instance of person reference implicitly indexes this economy: Even the simplest of reference forms (perhaps a pointing gesture in someone's direction, or a bare pronoun) presumes interlocutors' access to the referent via the expression chosen in the given context, whereas more complex expressions index higher degrees of potential inaccessibility. Direct evidence for the local economy of reference can thus be gleaned from naturally occurring referential expressions.

It would be possible from the Who's Who conversations to assemble a list of what we might call unmarked referential anchors, at least for adult Zinacantecs like those who participated in these gossip sessions. These would be those well-known men or women who can be most simply identified: by (nick)name alone, or by nickname plus title, or perhaps by title alone.

> *mol Sarate* 'old man Zarate' (the leader of the Zinacantec *ejido* or land reform movement)
> *li komite* 'the land commissioner' (a single identifiable civil authority at any given moment, though always relative to a given community)
> *santa krus itz'inal*: 'junior mayordomo of the Holy Cross' (a unique current ritual officeholder for a given hamlet)

The lack of further qualification indicates precisely that in the current economy of potential referents, and given the current interlocutors, the simplest path to such a referent must be assumed.

10.9   Optimality and upgrades

Having laid out in considerable detail the sorts of linguistic resources Zinacantec gossips marshal for introducing persons into discourse, I now return to the initial claim of this essay: that person reference *always* involves multiple indexicality.

Sacks and Schegloff (1979, reprinted this volume) (hereafter S and S) propose a kind of proto-optimality model for referring to persons in conversation, in which two potentially conflicting constraints ('preferences') compete for a best solution. The model pits a preference for 'minimization' against another, stronger preference for 'recipient design' – specifically a preference for the use of 'recognitionals' or expressions that make it possible for recipients to work out the intended referent. Thus if a 'minimal' form offered in reference to a person does not achieve 'recognition' between interlocutors it must be 'expanded', so that conversationalists relax the preference for minimization until recognition is achieved.

Names have a privileged place in this story because they are taken to be well designed to accommodate both preferences at once: they are 'a basic sort for recognitionals' (S and S, this volume) and at the same time they evince the sort of minimization said to be involved: They are 'single forms' that can be used alone to refer, that is, not in combination with other referring expressions. Of course, names have no monopoly on satisfying either preference (see Brown, this volume): Other expressions can do a better job of achieving recognition (which on the S and S analysis is the higher goal), and multiple names can be used especially in a community where multiple names are common.

The ploys conversationalists bring into action in the face of non-recognition give S and S further evidence for the contours of an optimal solution when 'minimization' collides with 'recognition': There is a stepwise relaxation of the former in the service of the latter. Suppose A is unsure whether B, her interlocutor, will recognize a provisional 'recognitional' form. She may, in English, say it as an interrogatively marked 'try marker' – effectively inviting the interlocutor to display recognition. When an attempted recognitional fails, what follows is not an outpouring of non-minimal reference forms but, according to S and S, a grudging progression of further 'minimal' upgrades or attempts to secure recognition. Such a sequence of further moves gives explicit evidence not only about the proposed ranking of preferences, but also about what constitutes a recognitional or a minimal formulation in the first place.

If we try to apply the S and S optimality model to the Who's Who conversations, things at first look promising. We often have what looks like a 'minimal' or default name as a first reference formulation, followed when necessary by simple elaborations of the sort described in previous sections.

Example (11)   69.34

```
1 a:   ba      sa`-be      y-ajval li y-ajnil-e
       AUX(go) search-AP 3E-owner ART 3E-wife-CL
       He went to find a lover for his wife.

2      oy    la   s-kumpare
       exist QUOT 3E-compadre
       They say he had a compadre.

3      mol Antun   Uch.
       old Anthony Possum
       Old man Anthony Possum

4      s-bankil            mol Petul Uch
       3E-older_brother old Peter Possum
       Older brother of Peter Possum

5      lok'em martomjorey   ti  vo`ne    ch-k-a`i
       exit-PF Mayordomo_Rey CONJ long_ago ICP-1E-hear
       I think he had been a Mayordomo Rey [a prestigious first level
       religious office]long ago.
```

In Example (11) the speaker signals a new protagonist with an explicit existential and an indefinite NP in 2, literally, 'his compadre existed'. In 3 he gives title plus nickname – a first try to achieve recognition (or maybe a second try, since an interlocutor might in principle have been able to identity the new protagonist simply by the 'compadre' reference – apparently unexpected in this case because of the evidential hedging of the quotative clitic *la* and the explicit existential). Receiving no recognition token, he continues in 4 with a different kind of kin formula, and upgrades further in 5 to a ritual-office characterization.

But can S and S's analysis of English person reference then be exported wholesale to the Tzotzil case? Consider the following sequence.

Example (12)   Searching for a name

```
1 a:   te     la   x- y- il  s- ba -ik ta   y- ut    chob    -tik
       there QUOT ASP-3E-see 3E-self-PL PREP 3E- inside cornfield-PL
       s- chi`uk taj
       3E-with  that
       They used to meet in the cornfield, with that ...

2      a- kumpare xun k'at'ix a`a
       2E-compadre John hawthorn indeed
       ... with that compadre of yours, John Hawthorn.

3      taj ali xun ch'en-tik ch- y- ut  -ik
       that ART John cave -PL  ICP-3E-tell-PL
       With that guy they call 'John Cliffs'.

4 b:   xun ch'en-tik ch- y- al -be-ik noxtok
       John cave -PL ICP-3E-say-AP-PL also
       Do they also call him 'John Cliffs'?

5 a:   ïi  jun o
       no  one REL
       No, that's another guy.
```

```
6      ja`s-cha`- krem ti  mu    chep-il    k'u x- y- al -be-ik
       ! 3E-two- boy ART tasty Joe -ATTRIB what ASP-3E-say-AP-PL
       That' the stepson of disgusting Joey, or whatever they call him.

7      ti mol j- tata` -tik   lok'-em paxyon
       ART old 1E-father-PLINC exit-PF pasionero
       That old gentleman, the former Pasionero .a medium prestige
       ritual office]

8 c:   mol chep buluch-e
       old Joe eleven-CL
       You mean Old Man Joe Eleven?

9 a:   muk' bu    j- na`  lek
       NEG  where 1E-know good
       I don't really know.

10     buluch nan      li batz'i s-jol  s- b:    a`a
       eleven perhaps ART real   3E-head 3E-name indeed
       Maybe his real last name is 'Eleven'.

11     pero s- cha`- krem
       but  3E-two - boy
       But it's his stepson.
```

Here interlocutors display various confusions and uncertainties, but it is far from clear that these are about *lack of recognition*. Although recognition is of course important, appropriate labelling is also critical: how best both to characterize and *properly* name the people involved, taking into account the triangular relationship between the various interlocutors and the referent.

10.10   'Referring dupliciter'

In presenting an inventory of referring resources for Zinacantec Tzotzil, I have continually emphasized the ways that the choice of a particular expression involves multiple projections from participants to their interrelationships – no surprise if a central business of talk is maintaining and recasting such relationships. My point is that by referring, interlocutors always 'do' more than refer, so that 'referring simpliciter' is a mirage in the face of the additional (sometimes duplicitous) indexical work simultaneously performed. Even the most unmarked of referring expressions, given the multiplicity of possible alternatives, will in its circumstances operate at some level in contrast to those alternatives. Referential function may be foregrounded, but indexical flavour is never fully bleached. I have also suggested that in Zinacantán it would be hard to discern a *single* 'default' referential strategy, and that even a unilinear hierarchy of referring strategies (cf. Hanks, this volume) is complicated by circumstances that may, in fact, downgrade the importance of referential precision or recognition in favour of other cultural or interactive priorities. In fact, having a single default referring strategy in a specific social situation seems to suggest that the situation itself is, by default, taken as constraining or normalizing the sorts of social relations that are relevant between H, S and R.

(Recall the example of the Reed Anthropology usage: Calling someone by the default 'Mr. X' or 'Miss Y' reflects not just standard usage but also a specific sort of projected standard set of relationships.)

To conclude, let me return to 'Lazy Domingo', now bitterly estranged from his aged father-in-law who forty years before had explained the nickname. The old man now, if he refers at all to Lazy Domingo, uses no names. The younger man, with whom he has fought bitterly over lands and money, is simply unnameable, referred to only indirectly and in the vaguest possible terms – *li jun mol ta jap-osil* 'the one old man from up on the ridge', for example – leaving it to the interlocutor to calculate which unmentionable 'old man' is intended (see Levinson, this volume). Such a taboo extends not only to Lazy Domingo's names and nicknames, but to his titles too. He is widely called *pasaro* [> Spanish *pasado*] for his most distinguished civil position, or *mol Romin* 'old man Domingo' because of his political authority and age; but his father-in-law adamantly refuses to use such formulas. Such facts reflect again the omnipresent indexicality of person reference. Hostile relations between Speaker and Referent invert the 'preferences' for recognition and minimization, and trade on (and simultaneously signal) the precise identities and relationships between speech act participants and referents. Moreover, it is not only the outraged father-in-law who will not name Lazy Domingo. In direct conversation with the old man, his interlocutors, recognizing the mutual enmity, will also often avoid direct recognitionals. In Example (13), talking to the old man about fights between the estranged son-in-law and another man, the local magistrate adopts the same sort of circumlocution – *li jun mole* 'the one old man'.

Example (13)   Indirection and recipient design

```
A:   komo    x-chi'uk i   jun mol uk  une
     because 3E-with ART one old also CL
     Like with the one gentleman [i.e., the son-in-law] also

     komo    muk' bu   xa     lek x-a-k'opon  a-ba-ik-e
     because NEG  where already good ASP-2E-speak 2E-self-PL-CL
     Since you don't get along with him any more

     yech'o le:k xa      s-ta     s-ba    x-chiuk une
     thus   good already 3E-find 3E-self 3E-with CL
     Therefore [the other man] gets into good fights with him, too.
```

Even more telling, in the old man's retold *representations* of the son-in-law's hypothetical speech, this kind of deliberate referential opacity is inserted into his enemy's virtual mouth.

Example (14)   Reported angry speech

```
'kavron, tek      y-a'i   s-ba    ti  puta mol a'a  kavron
bastard there=IRR 3E-hear 3E-self ART whore old EVID bastard
'Damn, he can just watch out for himself that whorish old man [i.e., the
```

```
father-in-law, here the narrator], the bastard.

muk' bu    batz'i j-tek'-be tana ok'ob  s-ti'   s-na'
NEG  where real   1E-step-AP later tomorrow 3E-mouth 3E-house
I won't be stepping over his doorstep, today or tomorrow',

xi la   un
say QUOT CL
he is reported to say.
```

The hated son-in-law is voiced as referring to his father-in-law with an offensive epithet, perfect meta-index of the broken relationship (Haviland 2005). When the name cannot be pronounced, the identity of the referent – object of S and S's optimal constraint – seems no more important than the indexical message projected by his non-identification.

Reference to persons is ubiquitous in interaction. If, as I have argued for Zinacantán, all such reference is simultaneously and necessarily a projection of social relationships, reference to persons becomes a powerful ethnographic and social structural probe. If, in addition. such projection can have multiple orientations, it seems most reasonable to consider that linguistic and interactive resources for achieving reference – from names to kinship formulas, and from affective to evidential inflections – are not simply designed as 'recognitionals' but as intricate and highly structured instruments of interactive social action.

Abbreviations

!	Emphatic predicate
1E	1st person ergative
1PLX	1st person plural exclusive suffix
2E	2nd person ergative
3E	3rd person ergative
AGN	agentive prefix
AP	applicative suffix
ART	article
ASP	unmarked aspect prefix
ATTRIB	attributive suffix
AUX	auxiliary verb
CL	clitic
CONJ	conjunction
CP	completive aspect

DEF	definite article
DEIC	deictic determiner
DER	derivational suffix
DIR	directional particle
EVID	evidential
EXIST	existential predicate
ICP	incompletive aspect
IRREAL	irealis suffix
NC	numeral classifier
NEG	negative particle
PASS	passive suffix
PF	perfective suffix
PL	plural suffix
PLINC	1st person plural inclusive suffix
PP	perfect passive
PREP	preposition
PT	particle
QUOT	quotative clitic

Part III

The person reference as a system in trouble

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