The Chipaya language is an endangered isolate of the Bolivian highlands, spoken by approximately 1,000 speakers in the community of Santa Ana de Chipaya (ADELAAR 2007: 19). The data to be discussed in the following are taken from the author’s & colleagues’ fieldwork.1

Chipaya has a set of three enclitics =l, =m and =ʐ which are coreferential with the subject of a clause but which do not necessarily attach to the subject of the clause itself. Subject pronouns of a first- and second person never take the enclitics, while the respective enclitic frequently attaches to a lexically expressed third person subject. Other hosts include direct and indirect objects, adverbs and adjectives as well as the negation particle ana ‘no, not’. Moreover, the Chipaya enclitics are not obligatory and long stretches of discourse or even entire texts can occur without use of a single enclitic. In the so far only grammar of Chipaya CERRÓN-PALOMINO (2006: 172–173; translation mine) characterises the enclitics as “focalising” and “floating from one phrasal constituent to the other, depending on the focalising intention of the speaker”. While I agree in principle with CERRÓN-PALOMINO (ibid.), I suggest that the Chipaya enclitics can be described in more explicit terms as salience-marking enclitics. I propose that the enclitics are discourse operators (see REDEKER 2006:340) that mark their respective host as being salient. The notion of salience is used here in the sense of “speaker salience (importance/newsworthiness)” where “[s]peaker salient information is speaker-private and relevant, e.g. new for the hearer, not predictable or something the speaker wants to put special emphasis on” (CHIARCOS 2011: 107; emphasis in the original). In accordance with Chiarcos’ (2011: 109) observation that “[…] salience is a necessary condition for shifts of attention [… “, the Chipaya enclitics indicate shifts in salience within a discourse. They occur at discourse transitions where they mark particular referents or elements as salient, thereby making the addressee aware of a shift in salience. Thus, the enclitics contribute to creating discourse coherence. However, not every transition in a discourse is necessarily accompanied by the Chipaya enclitics; instead, they are used only when a transition involves a shift in salience. That is, the first and foremost function of the Chipaya salience-marking enclitics is not to indicate a discourse transition but to highlight referents or elements that a speaker wishes to make salient. As such, however, the Chipaya enclitics frequently occur at discourse transitions as these often, although not always, involve a shift in salience. This is demonstrated below in an excerpt from a Chipaya folk tale about a fox and an armadillo where one of the major characters – the fox – enters the scene. This involves a shift of salience away from the referents of the preceding segment, child, father and king, to the new and important referent of the fox. Example (1a) is the last clause from the previous segment, while in Example (1b) the new segment begins. There is thus a transition from Example (1a) to (1b).

1 http://dobes.mpi.nl/projects/chipaya/
The use of the Chipaya salience-marking enclitics is partly speaker- and genre-specific. Their peculiar features and use make the Chipaya salience-marking enclitics a phenomenon the like of which is rarely described in the literature (but see Olawsky 2006).

References


Glosses

ADD = additive; ART.MASC = article masculine; COMPL.3SG.MASC = completive past tense third person singular masculine; CONF = confidential; DECL = declarative; INDEF.PRON = indefinite pronoun; NEG = negation; REP = reportative; SAL = salience-marking enclitic

(1) a. nuzkiš ni wawa ana ŝinta wawa-q xe:k=mi eph

thus ART.MASC child NEG single child=CONF INDEF.PRON=add father

pax=ki=tša

recognise=REP=DECL

‘Thus, the child did not recognise a single one [i.e. no one] as father.’

b. nuzkiš qiti=ki=ζ thon-tʃi

thus fox=REP=SAL come-COMPL.3SG.MASC

‘Thus, the fox came.’