Salience and shift in salience as means of creating discourse coherence: a case study of the Chipaya enclitics

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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 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 Cerron- 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 Cerron-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

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[1] See: http://dobes.mpi.nl/projects/chipaya/.

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) a *nuʐkiʂ ni wawa ana ʂinta wawa-q xe:k=mi epʰ*
thus ART.MASC child NEG single child=CONF INDEF.PRON=ADD father
pax=ki=tpa
recognise=REP=DECL
'Thus, the child did not recognise a single one [i.e. no one] as father.'

b *nuʐkiʂ qiti=ki=ʐ tʰon-tʃi*
thus fox=REP=**SAL** come-COMPL.3SG.MASC
'Thus, the fox came.'

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).

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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