

George Aaron Broadwell

Elling Eide Professor of Anthropology Chair,
Department of Linguistics

Areas of Interest/Research

Linguistic anthropologist with primary research interest in syntactic theory, language documentation, and historical linguistics. Area specialization is Native American languages, with a particular research focus on Choctaw, Timucua, Copala Triqui, and Zapotec.

I was the 2023 recipient of the **Victor Golla Prize** from the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas.



Background

Education:

- Ph.D. UCLA (1990) Linguistics
- M.A., UCLA (1986) Linguistics
- B.A. Harvard (1983) Linguistics and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

Contact Information

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Research Interests

Linguistic anthropology, syntactic theory, language documentation, historical linguistics, American Indian languages, Choctaw, Timucua, Copala Triqui, and Zapotec

Personal statement

My primary research agenda focuses on endangered languages, primarily Native American languages of the United States and Mesoamerica. I am interested in the issues of integrating language description and documentation with contemporary work in linguistic theory. I am also committed to working with Native American communities to provide dictionaries, texts, and other materials that are useful in language revitalization and maintenance.

My long-term descriptive commitments have been to grammatical and lexical descriptions of Choctaw, contemporary Zapotec (San Dionisio Ocotepéc, Macuilianguis, and Sierra Juárez varieties), Colonial Valley Zapotec, Copala Triqui, and Timucua. I have also worked on grammatical issues in a number of other languages around the world (Mon, Kaqchikel, Kiche, Yucatec, Turkish, Crow, Muskogee).

I am interested in theoretical problems that include word order, causative structures, lexical semantics, negation, diachronic morphosyntax, and syntactic typology.

I teach, advise, and am a member of the graduate faculty in both the Department of Anthropology and the Department of Linguistics at University of Florida. I am particularly interested in working with graduate students who are interested in a combination of linguistic and anthropological training. I believe that Anthropology and Linguistics both have an important contribution to make in doing good research on the languages of the world.

I was the Director of [CoLang 2018](#), the Institute for Collaborative Language Research, which took place at University of Florida in summer 2018. This is a five-week training program in language documentation and community consultation.

Contributions to science

Documentation of contemporary languages of the Southeastern United States and Mesoamerica

I am currently engaged in fieldwork on Choctaw, Seminole Creek, and Copala Triqui, and I have also done work on several varieties of Zapotec and on several Mayan languages (Kaqchikel, K'ichee, and Yucatec.) I have been particularly interested in compiling dictionaries of these languages, collecting texts, and writing grammatical descriptions.

Investigation of historic texts in Native American languages

In some parts of the Americas there are several centuries of writing in native languages. Working with material in languages such as Timucua, Choctaw, and Colonial Valley Zapotec requires a special set of theoretical and philological skills. I have been engaged in building resources (lexicons and text collections) for the study of these languages, and I have published on the grammar of Timucua and Zapotec and historical changes in their grammar. [Brook Lillehaugen](#) and I have collaborated for many years on building [Ticha](#), an online collection of texts in Colonial Valley Zapotec. [Alejandra Dubcovsky](#) and I have collaborated on many publications and co-curate [Hebuano](#), a set of resources on the Timucua language.

Syntactic theory

I am interested in a wide range of syntactic issues, including word order, control, binding theory, the morphology/syntax interface. I have worked in a variety of syntactic frameworks, including Principles and Parameters, [Lexical-Functional Grammar](#), and [Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar](#). I believe syntactic theory benefits from multiple theoretical perspectives and some degree of skepticism about our theoretical assumptions.

Computational modeling of language

I worked for many years with the research group at University at Albany headed by [Tomek Strzalkowski](#) on computational modeling of sociolinguistic interaction and the identification and classification of metaphor.