

## Chapter 14: Discourse

In this chapter, I will give a description of some features of MIG Zoque narrative styles and strategies. After a brief survey of the kinds of texts in the corpus, I will give summaries of the four texts that provided the data for this chapter. In section 14.2, I discuss the appearance of noun phrases that cross-reference core arguments, making generalizations about word order and the presentation of new and given information. In section 14.3, I describe the various sorts of discourse markers and their functions in structuring narratives. This set consists chiefly of a variety of terms for 'then' or 'thence', both MIG Zoque native words and Spanish loan words.

### 14.1. The text corpus

The texts in the corpus range from two or three minutes to ninety minutes in length. Most of them were recorded by Sr. Germán Sánchez Morales<sup>1</sup>, my principal consultant, but there are texts narrated by ten other people - five men and five women. Most of the texts are personal narratives, about the narrator's work or daily life, or about some notable event such as a wedding or the way in which their family's household saint was found. There are a few fables, including a few that were adapted from Spanish stories; descriptions of local customs or history; a couple of humorous stories; and two stories about a well-known

---

<sup>1</sup> Sr. Sánchez liked to record texts by himself in his hotel room at the MALDP project. Although he is a wonderful story-teller, he didn't like to have an audience.

raconteur of the previous generation, Saturnino. There are also two long interviews conducted by Sr. Sánchez: one with a *curandero*, a healer, about traditional medicine, and one with a *regidor*, a city council member, about the workings of local government.

All the texts were elicited, in the sense that Sr. Sánchez and I made appointments with people in advance and I paid them for their time. He always accompanied me so that he could make introductions and explain the process to each narrator in Zoque. We did this in an effort to keep people from constantly translating their words into Spanish for my benefit; being polite and hospitable people, their natural inclination was to accommodate to my linguistic handicap.

There is not a strong tradition of story-telling in San Miguel Chimalapa, and what there may once have been has been replaced by television and radio. People looked puzzled when I asked for "traditional" stories or stories their parents might have told them. The women were particularly uncomfortable with the task, and their texts are among the shortest in the corpus. Only two speakers were comfortable with telling long stories: Sr. Sánchez and his father, Sr. Agripino Sánchez Guitiérrez. Sr. Sánchez Guitiérrez loves to tell stories, and was apparently one of the few fathers who regaled his children with tales at night around the fire (in the days before electricity).

For the analysis presented in this chapter, I chose four medium-length texts by four different speakers. The first is a local-hero story called 'Saturnino and the Soldiers', narrated by Sr. Sánchez (tape ZOH1R11). Saturnino was a real person, a member of the generation previous to Sr. Sánchez Guitiérrez, from whom Sr. Sánchez learned this story. Saturnino was a well-known teller of tall

tales, all about himself and his adventures. This story took place (if it is true) during the time of the Mexican Revolution in the 1920's. Saturnino guides a group of Mexican soldiers into the jungle to capture some baby monkeys. The plan is to shoot some mother monkeys down from the trees, and then take away the babies that they are carrying on their backs. The Mexican soldiers try in vain to shoot the monkeys with their rifles. Finally, they ask Saturnino to help, and he immediately kills two of them with two shots from his *bola*<sup>2</sup>. They all head back to town and recount the story to the mayor, and then to Saturnino's wife.

The second story was told by Sr. Camilo Miguel Sánchez, who translated it on the fly from a Spanish children's story. It is called 'The Two-Legged One' (tape ZOH1R26). This story is about a little spotted jaguar, who goes forth into the jungle to seek his own prey. He is searching for the Two-Legged One, a creature that he has only heard about and desires to confront to prove his prowess as a hunter. He encounters several animals along the way, whom he questions, kills, and eats. Finally, he meets a man - the Two-Legged One. They agree to a duel, and count off the paces. The little jaguar turns and leaps at the man, who pulls out his gun and shoots him. The little jaguar manages to return to his mother, but then he dies.

The third text was narrated by Sra. Teófila Sánchez Morales (Sr. Sánchez's sister). It is called 'A Housewife's Day' (tape ZOH1R53), and is an account of her daily routine. She begins by describing her husband's work -

---

<sup>2</sup> This is a rope with a leather pocket at the end used for hurling rocks. Bolas are still used today to chase birds out of the cornfield.

clearing a planting a *chayote*<sup>3</sup> field. Then she details her work: grinding corn, preparing food, washing clothes, tending her children, etc.

The last text was narrated by Sr. Omobono Sánchez Miguel<sup>4</sup>, a local practioner of traditional medicine. The title of this text is 'The Appearance of Santa Juanita' (tape ZOH1R32). It tells the story of how he found his patron saint, Santa Juanita de los Arcos, from whom his gift as a healer derives. He was working on the crew that built the road up to San Miguel (sometime in the early 1960's), when he was assigned to work on a hillside not far from town. He pried loose a large boulder, and there behind it was a small hole, with the plaster figure of Santa Juanita tucked inside. This was indeed a great miracle, and he brought the saint home and began to celebrate her fiesta every year. She taught him the healing arts, and people would come from all around to be cured by her powers.

The first two texts are third person narratives, and consist chiefly of the main character moving from place to place and talking with other characters. The central action of the story - the killing of the monkeys or the finding of the two-legged one - is repeated in dialog several times. All stages of motion are mentioned, typically following the pattern of plan ("let's go"), movement (they went), and completion (they arrived). Dialog constitutes the bulk of a third person narrative.

The second two texts are first person narratives, and contain little or no dialog. Since these are accounts of daily events or things that happened (usually

---

<sup>3</sup> Known in English as a 'mirleton', this is a mildly-flavored squash-like vegetable.

<sup>4</sup> The astute reader will have noticed that everyone seems to have similar last names. This is because they are all cousins, of some degree or another. Since Sr. Sánchez arranged our taping consultations, we tended to work with his neighbors and relatives.

at home) in the past, there is less description of the movements of the main character (the narrator). There is more discussion of plans and results: "I wait for my children to come home from school so I can feed them".

## **14.2. Word order and the presentation of information**

Core arguments are marked on the verb in MIG Zoque (section 6.1), so noun phrases that cross-reference these arguments are syntactically optional. (Henceforth I will refer to such noun phrases as 'overt NPs'.) Thus, many clauses in a Zoque text have no overt NPs whatsoever, and many more have fewer than the valency of the verb allows (only the object of a transitive verb, for example). When overt NPs do appear, their order with respect to one another and to the verb is free, except that when there is a possibility of confusion the subject must precede the object (section 6.4).

In this section, I will give some statistics based on the four texts described above, identifying the types of clauses and numbers of arguments that appear in various possible orders. I will also examine the presentation of new and given information in each of the four texts more closely, discussing the patterns of usage that appear.

### **14.2.1. Clauses by type**

For the purposes of this chapter I identified four types of clauses: transitive, intransitive, existential, and speaking. I lump verbs that allow two or more arguments together into the transitive class, since there are very rarely more

than two overt NPs in any clause. Intransitive verbs allow one argument. Existential clauses in MIG Zoque have no verb on which to mark arguments, so the subject and predicate NPs appear overtly by necessity. They do not therefore figure in to calculations of word order or number of overt arguments.

The speaking verbs *nəm-*, 'to say', and *nəm.hay-* (say.APPL), 'to say to someone', are singled out because their behavior is somewhat different from that of other verbs, including other verbs of speaking (such as *cam.hay-* (tell.APPL), 'to tell someone', commonly used to introduce a story). The *nəm-* verbs are used to introduce dialog, which, as mentioned above, often carries the bulk of a third person narrative. They may appear twice, bracketing a single quoted clause.

(14.1)

ʔəy nəmhayyə ke bwen soldadu miš ciwə

ʔəy+ nəm.hay-wə ke bwen soldadu miš+ ciʔ-wə

3E+ say.APPL-COM that good soldier 2>1+ give-COM

ʔəy nəmhayyə

ʔəy+ nəm.hay-wə

3E+ say.APPL-COM

'He said to him, "What a good soldier you gave us", he said to him.

(ZOH1R11 080)

*nəm-* verbs don't obey the same rules for aspect as other verbs. Normally, the aspect of a verb is directly related to the factual temporal character of the event described: complete if the event is over and done with, incomplete if it is on-going. There are other factors, such as the use of the incomplete in a narrative set in the past to create a more vivid enactment of events, but generally, choice of aspect obeys orderly discourse rules. The use of *nəm-*, however, seems

to lie outside this orderly domain, alternating between incomplete and complete with no discernible pattern. The two clauses shown in (14.2) are consecutive in the text. The first 'he' refers to the lieutenant, who has not yet been specifically introduced, but whose presence can be inferred from the fact that a group of soldiers (who have been mentioned) must have a leader. The mysterious aspect alternation shown in these two examples continues throughout the narrative.

(14.2)

- (i) *nəmpa ke cawi ?əy təʃukpa ?une cawi pwes*  
**0** *nəm-pa ke cawi? ?əy+ tə?-ʃuk-pa ?une? cawi? pwes*  
 3A say-INC that monkey 3E+ want-3PL-INC baby monkey well  
 'He says that they want monkeys, well, baby monkeys.' (ZOH1R11 005)

- (ii) *?entonses nəmmə huʃtiʃa*  
*?entonses 0 nəm-wə huʃtiʃa*  
 then 3A say-COM mayor

*?i ?iwə nəkpay yakwinwituʃukkə camkuyho?*  
*?i ?iwə nək-pa ?əy+ yak.win.witu?-ʃuk-wə camkuy?+ho?*  
 and who go-INC 3E+ CAUS.FACE.return-3PL-COM jungle+LOC2  
 'Then the mayor said, "And who will go guide them into the jungle?"'  
 (ZOH1R11 006)

Finally, the syntax of *nəm-* clauses is nearly invariant. When the speaker is explicitly mentioned, the order is VSO. The object, which is the quoted expression, always appears, and it always appears after the verb<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>5</sup> Terrence Kaufman notes that in Epi-Olmec the order of such expressions was S V quote.

Table 14.1 gives the number of each of the four types of clauses and the percentage of the total for each type. These numbers include all four texts.

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Transitive</b>	440	61.5
<b>Intransitive</b>	173	24.2
<b>Existential</b>	54	7.6
<b>Speaking</b>	48	6.7
<b>Total</b>	715	100

**Table 14.1: Number of clauses**

The vast majority of clauses, not surprisingly, are transitive or intransitive (86.7%). The remainder of this section will be concerned only with these clauses.



### 14.2.2. Intransitive clauses

We'll look first at intransitive clauses, the simpler case. Table 14.2 divides the set of intransitive clauses into those with no argument, those with a subject (almost always an actor - there are very few passive verbs in these texts), imperatives, and verbs that are intransitive because the object was incorporated.

	Number	Percentage
<b>0 arguments</b>	105	60.7
<b>Subject</b>	56	32.4
<b>Imperative</b>	6	3.5
<b>Incorporated object</b>	6	3.5
<b>Total</b>	173	100

**Table 14.2: Intransitive clauses**

Imperatives, of course, imply a second-person subject, which is rarely overtly mentioned. Clauses with incorporated objects never appear with overt NP subjects in these four texts. Incorporating the object serves to generalize the activity denoted by the verb+object construction, de-emphasizing the patient argument.

(14.3)

(i) naštahtampám

(də+) naš=tah-tam-pa+ʔam

(1A+) earth=dig-1/2PL-INC+NOW

'Now we're digging the dirt.'

(ZOH1R32 017)

- (ii)    tihhən cawimeʔctame  
           tih-wə            ʔən+ cawiʔ=meʔc-tam-E  
           go&return-COM 1E+    monkey=look\_for-1/2PL-dCOM  
           'We went monkey-hunting.' (ZOH1R11 102)

The vast majority of intransitive clauses have no overt NP argument. Most intransitive verbs in texts are verbs of motion, indicating the movements of the principal characters in the story. In 'The Two-Legged One', for example, the movement of the little spotted jaguar around the forest in search of his nemesis is the principal theme of the story, and his motion forward is mentioned repeatedly. The extract shown in (14.4) is a part of the basic frame of this story, repeated after every encounter with a new animal.

- (14.4)  
           nəkkeʔttə  
           0 nək.keʔt-wə  
           3A go.REPET-COM  
           'He went again.' (ZOH1R26 058)
- tuŋŋawə ʔəy nəki  
           tuŋ.ʔa-wə ʔəy+ nək.E  
           road.VERS1-COM 3E+ go.dCOM  
           'He went walking along.' (ZOH1R26 059)

The listener certainly knows that it isn't the bird that was just killed and eaten who is walking along, so it isn't necessary to mention the little jaguar explicitly in these clauses. In first person narratives, the subject is unambiguously marked on the verb, so when the first person pronoun is used, I count it as an

overt NP<sup>6</sup>. It normally appears before the verb, as do pronouns in second and third person.

(14.5)

para ke dəš də yošpa  
 para ke dəš də+ yoš-pa  
 for that 1Prn 1A+ work-INC  
 'So that I could work'

(ZOH1R32 085)

When an overt NP subject does appear, it appears slightly more frequently after the verb than before it, as shown in table 14.3.

	Number	Percentage
<b>SV</b>	25	44.6
<b>VS</b>	31	55.4
<b>Total (of intransitives)</b>	56	100

**Table 14.3: Word order in intransitive clauses**

---

<sup>6</sup> My sense is that the use of the first person pronoun is somewhat emphatic, since it is, strictly speaking, redundant, but that it is not as markedly emphatic as the use of the first person pronoun in a similar Spanish sentence. This judgement is based on the observation that first person pronouns appear more frequently in Zoque texts than in Spanish conversations.

When a discourse entity is first mentioned in an intransitive clause, it is most likely to appear after the verb. This is true regardless of whether or not the entity is human, inanimate, or an abstraction, such as a unit of time.

(14.6)

(i) minnə bi ʔapupən  
 0 min-wə bi ʔapuʔ=pən  
 3A come-COM DEF old=man  
 'The old man came.'  
 (ZOH1R32 007)

(ii) haykeʔttə ʔotro šepe  
 0 hay.keʔt-wə ʔotro šepe  
 3A delay.REPET-COM another month  
 'Another month went by.'  
 (ZOH1R32 011)

(iii) toyhaypay kopak  
 0 toy.hay-pa ʔəy+ kopak  
 3A hurt.APPL-COM 3E+ head  
 'His head hurts.'  
 (ZOH1R32 108)

(iv) kwando ya gay minpam bi weltu  
 kwando ya gay 0 min-pa+ʔam bi weltu  
 when now then 3A come-INC+NOW DEF money  
 'When now the money is coming'  
 (ZOH1R32 047)

A common pattern used when introducing a new discourse entity is to present a pair of clauses: in the first, the new information follows the verb; in the second, the clause is essentially repeated, but with the now known information preceding the verb (14.7 i-ii). This pattern is also used when the first clause is transitive, and the new entity is the object of the transitive verb. Examples iii-iv are Sra. Sánchez's answer to the question "How many children do you have?"

(14.7)

(i) ʔentonse yeʔccə soldaodəkka  
ʔentonse 0 yeʔc-wə soldao+dəkka  
then 3A arrive-COM soldier+NPL  
'Then the soldiers arrived.' (ZOH1R11 002)

(ii) ʔentonse yəʔ soldaodəkka yeʔčukkə  
ʔentonse yəʔ soldao+dəkka 0 yeʔc-šuk-wə  
then this soldier+NPL 3A arrive-3PL-COM  
'Then these soldiers arrived.' (ZOH1R11 004)

(iii) ʔən pəwə ʔeste tuhtán  
ʔən+ pəʔ-wə ʔeste tuhtaən  
1E+ bear-COM um six  
'I bore, um, six.' (ZOH1R53 038)

(iv) hə tuhtán hehpa  
həʔ tuhtaən 0 heh-pa  
yes six 3A live-INC  
'Yes, six living.' (ZOH1R53 039)

### 14.2.3. Transitive clauses

Transitive clauses allow two arguments: an agent and a patient. There are also some verb roots, like ciʔ-, 'to give', that allow a third argument (a recipient), and several valency-increasing affixes that add a recipient, benefactor, or causer. Since the overt mention of any third argument is extremely rare (0.7% of transitive clauses), I counted trivalent clauses in with the simple transitives.

Table 14.4 shows the distribution of overt NPs in transitive clauses. The percentage given refers to the total number of transitive clauses. The term Dative subsumes all the roles of the third argument - recipient, benefactor, etc. In

imperative clauses the subject is known to be the second person, so these are counted separately.

	Number	Percentage
<b>0 arguments</b>	94	21.4
<b>Subject only</b>	21	4.8
<b>Object only</b>	130	29.5
<b>Subject &amp; Object</b>	18	4.1
<b>Dative (third argument)</b>	3	0.7
<b>Imperative w/Object</b>	4	0.9
<b>Total</b>	440	100

**Table 14.4: Transitive clauses**

The most frequent type of clause includes an overt object NP (29.5%); subjects are infrequently mentioned (4.8%). This makes sense, given that there tend to be few characters in these stories, and the principal characters are usually introduced with an intransitive (motion) verb. Objects provide the details of a story: props, weapons, opponents, etc.

(14.8)

- (i) ?entonse yə? soldaddəkka ye?čukkə  
 ?entonse yə? soldado+dəkka 0 ye?c-šuk-wə  
 then this soldier+NPL 3A arrive-3PL-COM  
 'Then these soldiers arrived.' (ZOH1R11 004)

- (ii)    nəmpa ke cawi ?əy təʃukpa ?unecawi pwes  
          0 nəm-pa ke cawi? ?əy+ təʃ-ʃuk-pa ?une?=cawi? pwes  
          3A say-INC that monkey 3E+ want-3PL-INC child=monkey well  
          'He says that monkeys, well, they want some baby monkeys.'  
          (ZOH1R11 005)
- (iii)    nəkwə bi ?u:nkahaŋ  
          0 nək-wə bi ?une?=kahaŋ  
          3A go-COM DEF child=jaguar  
          'The little jaguar went.'  
          (ZOH1R26 041)
- (iv)    winhóŋ ?əy paʔttə bi məa?  
          winhoon ?əy+ paʔt-wə bi məa?  
          in\_front 3E+ find-COM DEF deer  
          'Up ahead he met a deer.'  
          (ZOH1R26 043)

The next most frequent type of transitive clause has no overt NPs (21.4%). Once a discourse entity is known, it doesn't need to be repeated explicitly unless some other object intervenes. Also, in dialog, first and second person entities are unambiguously referenced by the pronominal agreement markers on the verb, so independent pronouns are not necessary. The examples in (14.9) are taken from 'The Two-Legged One'. The little jaguar meets a bird (a two-legged creature) on line 063, and converses with it. The bird NP appears again in line 067, in one of the few explicit mentions of a dative argument found in these texts. They continue to talk, and no other entities appear on the scene, so that the transitive clauses without overt object NPs in lines 075 and 076 are unambiguous. This section of the tale is closed with a final mention of the bird NP in line 078. The fact that this explicit mention is unnecessary for interpretation suggests that it has

an aesthetic purpose, that of marking the conclusion of an episode within the story.

(14.9)

- (i) winhónŋ ʔəy paʔttə bi cənhon  
winhoonŋ ʔəy+ paʔt-wə bi cən=hon  
in\_front 3E+ find-COM DEF sit=bird  
'Up ahead he met a bird.' (ZOH1R26 063)

- (ii) "miš ʔəm nəhi kacitʔok" ʔəy nəmhaba  
miš ʔəm+ nəhi? kacitʔok ʔəy+ nəm.hay-pa  
2Prn 2E+ name hunter 3E+ say.APPL-INC  
bi cikin kahaŋ bi cənhon  
bi cikin kahaŋ bi cənhon  
DEF spotted jaguar DEF bird  
""Your name is 'hunter', said the spotted jaguar to the bird." (ZOH1R26 067)

- (iii) dey ke miš paʔttám miš kəšpa  
dey ke miš+ paʔt-wə+ʔam miš+ kəš-pa  
now that 1>2+ find-COM+NOW 1>2+ eat-INC  
""Now that I've met you, I'll eat you."" (ZOH1R26 075)

- (iv) ʔəy caŋkageʔttə  
ʔəy+ caŋ=kaʔ.keʔt-wə  
3E+ hit\_w\_fist=kill.REPET-COM  
'He killed it with a blow.' (ZOH1R26 077)

- (v) ʔəy kəššə bi hon  
ʔəy+ kəš-wə bi hon  
3E+ eat-COM DEF bird  
'He ate the bird.' (ZOH1R26 078)



The vast majority of overt object NPs appear after the verb (83.8%), as shown in table 14.5. This supports the idea that the post-verbal slot is the preferred position for introducing new information (or re-newed information, as I believe is the case in examples 14.9 (ii) and (v), above).

	Number	Percentage
<b>OV</b>	21	16.2
<b>VO</b>	109	83.8
<b>Total</b>	130	100

**Table 14.5: Transitive clauses with only an overt object NP**

The only case of an overt object preceding the verb in 'The Two-Legged One' occurs on line 134; notably, this object is a relative clause - a heavy NP. Similarly, in 'The Appearance of Santa Juanita', only clausal object NPs precede the verb (14.10 ii).

(14.10)

- (i) miš nəmhayyó? came yan yəktə?əy  
 miš nəm.hay-wə+V?k cam.E ya ?ən+ yək.tə?.?əy-A  
 2>1+ say.APPL-COM+REL tell.NOM3 NEG 1E+ INSTR2.want.SUF-nINC  
 'The words you told me, I didn't believe.' (ZOH1R26 134)
- (ii) hemhi dedə grande milagro ?əy ?əɲnitpá? də cipa  
 hemhi dedə grande milagro ?əy+ ?əɲnit-pa+V?k də+ ci?-pa  
 all that great miracle 3E+ have-INC+REL 1A+ give-INC  
 'All that great miracle that she has, she gives to me.' (ZOH1R32 092-3)

Sr. Sánchez places the object NP before the verb for rhetorical effect, in two sets of parallel clauses. The first (14.11 i) is the narrator's account of the dramatic peak of the story, when Saturnino shoots two monkeys down from the trees with his little bola. The second set (ii) appears in the lieutenant's recounting of this event in the mayor's office. Placing the object before the verb highlights it; using three such clauses in a parallel series highlights the whole scene.

(14.11)

- (i)    ʔotro ʔəy ciwə de gahi  
       ʔotro ʔəy+ ciʔ-wə de gahi  
       another 3E+ give-COM from there  
       'He hit another one (down) from there.' (ZOH1R11 070)

mecaŋ ʔo:kcawi ʔəy yakkawə  
 mecaŋ ʔoko=cawiʔ ʔəy+ yak.kaʔ-wə  
 two old\_woman=monkey 3E+ CAUS.die-COM

ʔi mecaŋ ʔune ʔəy pəkminšukkə  
 ʔi mecaŋ ʔuneʔ ʔəy+ pək=min-šuk-wə  
 and two child 3E+ get=come-3PL-COM  
 'Two mother monkeys he killed, and two babies they brought.'  
 (ZOH1R11 071)

- (iii) ?in kambyo de? mecaŋ poŋ ?əy ciwə  
 ?in kambyo de? mecaŋ poŋ ?əy+ ci?-wə  
 in change that two time 3E+ hit-COM

?i mecaŋ cawi ?əy yakkawə  
 ?i mecaŋ cawi? ?əy+ yak.ka?-wə  
 and two monkey 3E+ CAUS.die-COM

?i dey mecaŋ ?une ?ən pəkmintammə  
 ?i dey mecaŋ ?une? ?ən+ pək=min-tam-wə  
 and now two child 1E+ get=come-1/2PL-COM

'In contrast that one, two times he shot, and two monkeys he killed,  
 and two babies we brought back.' (ZOH1R11 087-8)

Transitive clauses with only an overt subject NP are infrequent (only 4.8% of all transitive clauses). When overt subjects do appear, they most frequently appear before the verb, as shown in table 14.6.

	Number	Percentage
<b>SV</b>	17	81
<b>VS</b>	4	19
<b>Total</b>	21	100

**Table 14.6: Transitive clauses with only an overt subject NP**

As noted earlier, independent subject pronouns typically precede the verb. This conforms nicely with the principal that new information follows the verb and old information precedes it, since an independent subject pronoun just repeats the information encoded on the verb by the agreement marker.

(14.12)

- (i) pwes dey dəʃʃən ʔiʃpa hunəŋ də ha:mpəʔtpa  
pwes dey dəʃ ʔən+ ʔiʃ-pa hunəŋ də+ hama=pəʔt-pa  
well now 1Prn 1E+ see-INC how 1A+ day=pass-INC  
'Well, now I'll see how I'm going to get through the day.' (ZOH1R53 047)
- (ii) kay ga nəkpay maʔəyyə ʔitiho?  
kay gaʔ nək-pa ʔəy+ maʔ.əy-wə ʔitiʔ+ho?  
then that go-INC 3E+ sale.VERS2-COM town+LOC2  
'Then she (a daughter) will go selling (fruit) in the town.' (ZOH1R53 035)

Pronouns account for the vast majority of overt subject NPs in transitive clauses, particularly when the object is not also mentioned (see below). Other kinds of NPs tend to appear in speaking clauses that use verbs other than *nəm-* (which I counted separately). An example of this usage is shown in (14.13 i). In verbs of speaking and perception, the preferred position for the subject is after the verb, regardless of its newness as information. In the next example (ii-iii), the discourse entity "the people" is introduced in a VSO clause on line 044<sup>7</sup>. The subsequent stretch of texts details the complaints that people may bring to the saint for curing, with no further explicit mention of "the people". The discourse entity is then refreshed on line 059, with the NP positioned before the transitive verb. The next section is topically different: now Sr. Omobono Sánchez Miguel describes the planning for the saint's fiesta and all the fine things the people do to celebrate her miracles.

---

<sup>7</sup> I count an NP that appears between the auxiliary and the main verb as an instance of VS order, to distinguish it from cases in which the NP precedes the whole auxiliary phrase.

(14.13)

- (i) nəʔtti ʔəy ʔaŋcoŋəyyə bi cənhon  
 nəʔtti ʔəy+ ʔaŋ.coŋ.ʔəy-wə bi cənhon  
 no 3E+ MOUTH.join.SUF-COM DEF bird  
 "'No", the bird answered him.' (ZOH1R26 068)

- (ii) kay minpam bi hentedəkkay ʔiʃʃukkə bi santu  
 kay min-pa+ʔam bi hente+dəkkə ʔəy+ ʔiʃ-ʃuk-wə bi santu  
 then come-INC+NOW DEF people+NPL 3E+ see-3PL-dINC DEF saint  
 'Now the people are coming to see the saint.' (ZOH1R32 044)

- (iii) ʔi gahíŋ gay bi hentedəkkay ʔəy meʔčukpám  
 ʔi gahiŋ gay bi hente+dəkkay ʔəy+ meʔc-ʃuk-pa+ʔam  
 and thence then DEF people+NPL 3E+ look\_for-3PL-INC+NOW  
 'And from there now the people seek her out.' (ZOH1R32 059)

Transitive clauses with both subject and object NPs are quite rare - only 4.1% of all transitive clauses. Table 14.7 shows the relative frequency of the possible orderings of these NPs with respect to the verb<sup>8</sup>.

	Number	Percentage
<b>SOV</b>	3	16.7
<b>SVO</b>	11	61.1
<b>VSO</b>	4	22.2
<b>Total</b>	18	100

<sup>8</sup> Technically, it is grammatical for object NPs to precede subjects when there is no possibility of confusing the roles, such as when the object is inanimate and the verb requires an animate agent. I elicited positive grammaticality judgements for examples of this kind (see Appendix F), but they don't seem to appear in the texts. (I haven't made an exhaustive search for them.)

**Table 14.7: Transitive clauses with both subject and object NPs**

SVO order is the most frequent in this category, with 61.1% of transitive clauses with both subject and object NPs appearing in this order. It is reasonable to suppose that the preference for SV order when only subject NPs appear and VO order when there is only an object NP is a reflection of this same preferred pattern. Again, in many of these the subject NP is a pronoun, as shown in (14.14 i). Example (ii) is the climax of 'The Two-Legged One', when the little jaguar finally has his showdown with the hunter, who shoots him fatally.

(14.14)

- (i)    ʔi dəʃʃən cipa bi ʔaydəkkay  
       ʔi dəʃ ʔən+ ciʔ-pa bi ʔayʔ+dəkkay  
       and 1Prn 1E+ give-INC DEF leaf+NPL  
       'And I will give him the herbs.' (ZOH1R32 153)
- (ii)   bi mecaŋ maŋkuypəʔk ʔəy hupwanakkə ʔəy tuhkuŋ  
       bi mecaŋ maŋkuŋʔ+pəʔk ʔəy+ hup=wanak-wə ʔəy+ tuhkuŋ  
       DEF two foot+REL 3E+ pull=go\_down-COM 3E+ gun  
       'The two-legged one drew his gun.' (ZOH1R26 122)

There are only three examples of SOV clauses in this sub-corpus. Two of them appear in 'Saturnino and the Soldiers', where I believe Sr. Sánchez is again fronting the object NPs for rhetorical effect. It appears to be part of his performance of the pompous style of speech adopted by the two authority figures in the story, the mayor and the lieutenant. The example in (14.15) occurs during the lieutenant's retelling of the main events of the story. Note that the object NP is repeated after the verb as well.



(14.15)

porke yə ʔən pəktihtammə

porke yəʔ ʔən+ pək=tih-tam-wə+Vʔk

because this 1E+ get=go&return-COM+REL

de meci ʔəy yakkawə bi ʔokcawi

deʔ meciʔ ʔəy+ yak.kaʔ-wə bi ʔokcawiʔ

that both 3E+ CAUS.die-COM DEF mother\_monkey

'Because that one that we brought, he killed them both,

the mother monkeys.'

(ZOH1R11 081)

There are only four VSO clauses in this set of texts. Three of them are verbs of speaking or seeing, illustrated in (14.16 i). The other is part of the most dramatic section of 'Saturnino and the Soldiers', and I assume this unusual order was used to heighten the excitement of the scene. (This is the scene in which the soldiers repeatedly miss their targets, with mounting frustration on the part of the lieutenant.)

(14.16)

(i) yakkə ʔiʃšukkám gadəkka ti bi cəkšukpa

yakkə ʔəy+ ʔiʃ-šuk-wə+ʔam ga+dəkka ti bi cək-šuk-pa

VOL 3E+ see-3PL-COM+NOW that+NPL what DEF do-3PL-INC

'Now let them see what it is that they will do.'

(ZOH1R11 111)

(ii) ʔəy pəkkə tenyenteɣ tuhkuyʔ

ʔəy+ pək-wə tenyente ʔəy+ tuh.kuyʔ

3E+ get-COM lieutenant 3E+ shoot.INSTR1

'The lieutenant grabbed his rifle.'

(ZOH1R11 047)



Interrogative pronouns, whether subjects (14.14 i) or objects (ii), always appear at the beginning of their clauses.

(14.17)

- (i)    ʔentonses nəmmə huʃtiʃa  
          ʔentonses 0 nəm-wə huʃtiʃa  
          then           3A say-COM mayor
- ʔi ʔiwə nəkpay yakwinwituʃukkə  
 ʔi ʔiwə nək-pa ʔəy+ yak.win.wituʔ-ʃuk-wə  
 and who go-INC 3E+ CAUS.FACE.return-3PL-dINC  
 'Then the mayor said, "And who will go guide them?"' (ZOH1R11 006)

- (ii)   tin cəkhaban nəpin?  
        ti ʔən+ cək.hay-pa ʔən+ nəpin?  
        what 1E+ do.APPL-INC 1E+ blood  
        'What will I do for my blood?' (ZOH1R32

152)

Dative arguments are rarely mentioned in overt NPs: there are only three such clauses in these texts. This argument is usually the one being spoken to, and is thus easily inferred from the context. When an overt third argument does appear, it generally appears directly after the verb.

(14.18)

- (i)    ʔəy ceʔkcoŋŋə ʔəy santu milagru  
          ʔəy+ ceʔk=coŋ-wə ʔəy+ santu milagru  
          3E+ ask=join-COM 3E+ saint miracle  
          'They asked their saint for a miracle.' (ZOH1R32 075)

### 14.3. Discourse markers

Schiffrin (1987) defines discourse markers as "sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of talk", which can be understood as including whole narrative texts, as well as bits of dialog inside such texts. MIG Zoque discourse markers can be divided into three sub-classes: sequencing terms, which are mostly variants of 'then' or 'thence'; markers that appear only in dialog; and narrative beginners and enders. These sets are shown in table 14.8.

This section will look at each of the sub-classes in turn, attempting to distinguish among their members and to provide a general characterization of their use in narrative. There is some overlap among the classes; for example, *bweno* is both a narration beginner and a turn-taking marker in dialog. There is also some individual variation in the choice of markers, particularly from the many members of the sequencing set; for example, Sr. Omobono Sánchez Miguel is the only speaker who uses *gahín*, 'thence', regularly. I will draw on texts from the whole corpus for the description in this section.

<b>Zoque</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Spanish</b>
dey	now; then (DCT2.TMP)	ya; entonces (DCT2.TMP)
gay (kay)	now; then (DCT3.TMP)	ya; entonces (DCT3.TMP)
gahín	thence (DCT3.DIR2)	de ahí (DCT3.DIR2)
de gahi	thence (of DCT3.DIR1)	de ahí (de DCT3.DIR1)
ʔentonses	then	entonces
ʔadyo	then; later	entonces; luego
mas cuhiam	later	luego
bweno	OK	bueno
deʔše deʔ	that's that	así es
gaʔše gaʔ	that's that	that's that
pwes	well	pues
həʔ	yes	sí
nəʔtti	no	no

**Table 14.8: Discourse markers**

### 14.3.1. Sequencing markers

There are many ways to say 'then', 'thence', and 'later' in MIG Zoque, with some subtle differences in the use of the various options in structuring a narrative. The first two in the list are the temporal adverbs formed from the deictic bases:

---

<sup>9</sup> This word has many variant forms: ʔentonse, ʔenton, ʔanto, etc. The most common is probably ʔentonse.

dey and gay (kay utterance-initially), the neutral and distal forms, respectively<sup>10</sup>. Both of these are used for sequencing events within the narrative - not for structuring sections of the narrative itself. The distal gay places an event in a narrative time that is more distant from the present time of narration, while the neutral dey refers to a time somewhat closer to the present. Since stories often begin at the beginning of an important event, such as the finding of Santa Juanita, and continue up to the recent past, there is often a preponderance of gay's at the beginning of a narrative that are gradually displaced by dey's as the story approaches the present. Sr. Sánchez makes particularly skillful use of the contrast in 'Satornino and the Soldiers'. The examples in (14.19) come from the end of the narrative, and provide a clear illustration. Satornino has just told his wife about the events of the day. He told her that he took some soldiers monkey-hunting, that they were unable to shoot any but that he shot two down with his bola. She asks if they paid him, and he assures her that they did. In example (i), she is asking him what happened next in the story - what did the soldiers do after they paid Satornino. His reply (ii) refers to that past time: they stayed at the mayor's. In (iii), he brings his story-within-a-story up to the present, saying that now he is back, and now they can see what they will do with themselves (he doesn't know or care). Example (iv) also shows the use of proximal yey to refer to the near future, contrasting with the present time reference of dey.

---

<sup>10</sup> yey, the proximal temporal adverb, means 'right away' or 'soon', and is only used in dialog:

?entonse yey də witupa nəmmə satornino  
 ?entonse yey də+ witu?-pa 0 nəm-wə satornino  
 then now 1A+ return-INC 3A say-COM satornino  
 'Then, "I'll be right back", said Satornino.'

(ZOH1R11 018)

(14.19)

- (i) pwes ?i kay  
pwes ?i kay  
well and then  
"Well, and then?" (ZOH1R11 109)
- (ii) pwes kay huštiša?añhi cakkəmšukkə  
pwes kay huštiša+?añhi? 0 cak. ?əm-šuk-wə  
well then mayor+LOC3 3A leave.PASS-3PL-COM  
"Well, then they stayed at the mayor's." (ZOH1R11 110)
- (iii) ?i dey də minnám  
?i dey də+ min-wə+?am  
and now 1A+ come-COM+NOW  
"And now I've come back." (ZOH1R11 113)
- (iv) tey yakkə ?iššukkám hu? si nəkpa yey ?o hohi  
tey yakkə ?əy+ ?iš-šuk-wə+?am hu? si 0 nək-pa yey ?o hohi  
now VOL 3E+ see-3PL-COM+NOW where if 3E go-INC now or tomorrow  
"Now let them see where, if they go right away or tomorrow." (ZOH1R11 114)

The neutral dey is also used to refer to the recent past in dialog, where it necessarily refers to the time of the story, rather than the time of narration. In the following pair of examples, gay places the event in the remote past - the time when the little jaguar finally meets the two-legged one. In the subsequent bits of dialog, dey refers to the immediate past (ii) and the immediate future (iii), nicely illustrating the flexibility of the neutral deictic. I'm not sure why he doesn't use yey, the proximal form, in (iii): perhaps because the jaguar doesn't, in fact, eat the man?

(14.20)

- (i) mas winhón gay paʔttám bi mecaŋ maŋkuypəʔk  
mas winhoon gay ʔəy+ paʔt-wə+ʔam bi mecaŋ maŋkuy+pəʔk  
more in\_front then 3E+ find-COM+NOW DEF two foot+REL  
'Farther ahead then he has found the two-legged one.' (ZOH1R26 094)
- (ii) ʔa pwes dey ke miš paʔttám  
ʔa pwes dey ke miš+ paʔt-wə+ʔam  
ah well now that 1>2+ find-COM+NOW  
'"Ah, well, now that I've found you," (ZOH1R26 100)
- (iii) dey tehi ke miš kəššə  
dey tehi ke miš+ kəš-wə  
now there\_is<sup>11</sup> that 1>2+ eat-dINC  
'now I'll have to eat you.'" (ZOH1R26 101)

The next five words in table 14.8 are used to sequence sections of narrative. They are more or less interchangeable, and the choice seems to be a matter of personal taste. All speakers use ʔentonses, 'then', which is the most frequent choice from this set. Sr. Omobono Sánchez Miguel is the only speaker who regularly uses gahín, 'thence' (literally 'from there', DCT3.DIR2). All the speakers use de gahi, 'thence' (also literally 'from there', and a calque on the Spanish *de ahí*). Most speakers use ʔadyo, 'later', but mas cuhiam ('more night.LOC1.NOM1.NOW') appears only once, in Sr. Sánchez Miguel's 'The Appearance of Santa Juanita', and I believe it was prompted by his desire to speak the purest Zoque for the tape recorder and the alert ears of Sr. Sánchez Morales.

---

<sup>11</sup> Sr. Camilo Miguel Sánchez is the only speaker that uses this construction: tehi ke V, 'have to V'. I believe it is a consequence of the fact that he is translating from a Spanish story as he speaks.

These markers appear only at the beginnings of clauses, whereas *dey* and *gay* always appear closer to the verbs they modify; that is, inside locatives or other discourse markers. They can even appear in the same clause, demonstrating clearly that they perform different functions. In the example in (14.21), *gay* is locating the event of seeking in the remote past of the narrative (this sentence comes from the beginning of the text). Note that the clause is in the incomplete: the time is years ago (probably in the mid-1960's), but the event is one that is ongoing with respect to the surrounding story. The *gahín* is used to mark a transition in the narrative. Sr. Sánchez Miguel has just been describing the curing miracles that Santa Juanita performs, and is now starting a section describing her fiesta.

(14.21)

ʔi gahín gay bi hentedəkkay ʔəy meʔčukpám  
 ʔi gahiin gay bi hente+dəkkay ʔəy+ meʔc-šuk-pa+ʔam  
 and thence then DEF people+NPL 3E+ look\_for-3PL-INC+NOW  
 'And from there now the people seek her out.' (ZOH1R32 059)

Sr. Sánchez Morales uses *ʔentonses* as a scene-divider in 'Satornino and the Soldiers'. Its general function is to bring characters onto the scene, and to signal a change in speaker.

(14.22)

(i) ʔanto yeʔccə witupa pwes bi satornino  
 ʔentonses 0 yeʔc-wə 0 wituʔ-pa pwes bi satornino  
 then 3A arrive-COM 3A return-INC well DEF satornino  
 'Then he arrived. Well, that Satornino came back.' (ZOH1R11 020-1)

- (ii) ?entonse nəmpa tenyente ke bwen soldadu pinək miš  
 ?entonses 0 nəm-pa tenyente ke bwen soldadu pinək miš  
 then 3A say-INC lieutenant what good soldier CONFAC 2Prn  
 'Then the lieutenant says, "What a good soldier you would be!"'  
 (ZOH1R11 072)

?entonses is also frequently used to begin a story. Although it is always translated *ya* 'now' in Spanish, a more apt translation in English would be 'once upon a time'.

(14.23)

- (i) ?entonse ye?ccə soldaodəkka  
 ?entonse 0 ye?c-wə soldado+dəkka  
 then 3A arrive-COM soldier+NPL  
 'Once upon a time, some soldiers arrived.' (ZOH1R11 002)
- (ii) ?entonses ga tum ha:y?une ?əy ?əɲnitpa tum nu?  
 ?entonses ga? tum haya=?une? ?əy+ ?əɲnit-pa tum nu?  
 then that one male=child 3E+ have-INC one dog  
 'Once upon a time, there was a boy that had a dog.' (ZOH1R46 003)

#### 14.13.2. Discourse markers in dialog

The next set of markers appears only in dialogs. *hə?*, 'yes', and *nə?tti*, 'no', signal agreement and disagreement, respectively. Since they always appear at the beginning of an utterance, they also serve to signal a change of speaker. In (14.26 i), the lieutenant has just tried to give Saturnino a rifle to shoot the monkeys with. Example (ii) uses *bwen* to mark a change of speaker and simultaneously signal agreement or approval of the situation in general. Here, the lieutenant has just finished his lengthy speech to the mayor, in which he rather pompously sings Saturnino's praises.



(14.24)

- (i)    nəʔtti tenyente dəš tehin tuhkuy?  
         nəʔtti tenyente dəš tehi.ʔa-pa            ʔən+ tuhkuy?  
         no        lieutenant 1Prn there\_is.VERS1-INC 1E+ weapon  
  
         ʔən nəmhayyə  
         ʔən+ nəm.hay-wə  
         1E+ say.APPL-COM  
         "No, lieutenant, I have my weapon", he said to him.'        (ZOH1R11  
057)

- (ii)    bweno mi tenyente dəš nəkpám  
         bweno mi tenyente deš nək-pa+ʔam  
         ok        my lieutenant 1Prn go-INC+NOW  
         "Ok, my lieutenant, I'm going now.'"                                (ZOH1R11 092)

The marker pwes, 'well', ubiquitous in Mexican speech, most commonly appears in MIG Zoque texts in dialog. An example of this is shown in (14.27 i), from a portion of the story in which the leader is rallying the men to go and fight the rebels. This is a normal, garden-variety use of the marker. pwes also appears in non-dialog portions of texts to signal a description of the internal state of a character. Example (ii) is from 'Saturnino and the Soldiers'. Here, the soldiers have just tried to shoot the monkeys four times and failed each time. This passage is spoken very rapidly, all in one breath, expressing the intense frustration of the lieutenant.

(14.25)

- (i) pwes pickó? də mintammə gahi  
pwes pickó? də+ min-tam-wə gahi  
well that's\_why 1A+ come-1/2PL-COM there  
"Well, that's why we came there." (ZOH1R24 068)

- (ii) ?i pwes bi tenyente pwes ?aflisyón pwes  
?i pwes bi tenyente pwes ?aflisyón pwes  
and well DEF lieutenant well affliction well

porke cawi pwes ?əy pa?čukkám  
porke cawi? pwes ?əy+ pa?t-šuk-wə+?am  
because monkey well 3E+ find-3PL-COM+NOW

?i nyay tuhšukkə  
?i ni ya ?əy+ tuh-šuk-wə  
and nor NEG 3E+ shoot-3PL-COM

'And the lieutenant, well, he's frustrated, well, because the monkeys,  
well, they found them but they didn't shoot them.' (ZOH1R11 050)

### 14.13.3. Beginners and enders

We've just seen the use of ?entonses as a story beginner, meaning something like 'once upon a time.' Speakers often literally begin to speak by saying either "I'm going to tell you a story about X", or by simply saying bweno, 'ok'. Some speakers also use bweno to restart the narrative after a digression. In (14.26 ii), Sr. Sánchez is returning to the events in the narrative, after a section of dialog in which the lieutenant tries to persuade Saturnino to join his band of soldiers. (All the speakers occasionally slip into first person, even when telling a third-person narrative. This example refers to the group of Saturnino and the soldiers.)

(14.26)

- (i) bweno maton̄tamə  
bweno maton̄-tam-A?  
ok listen-1/2PL-IMPV  
"OK, listen."  
(ZOH1R32 001)

- (ii) bweno də nəktammə  
bweno də+ nək-tam-wə  
ok 1A+ go-1/2PL-COM  
'Ok, we went.'  
(ZOH1R11 076)

Many stories end with question about what the main characters will do next (Sr. Sánchez is particularly fond of this technique). But personal narratives don't admit this sort of wrap-up, and they are often terminated by saying "Well, that's that". This expression, shown in (14.27), is formed on the neutral deictic. The example is the end of 'A Housewife's Day'. Paired with its distal counterpart, it is a normal way to signal the end of a section of conversation as well. (Example (ii) is from my memory of such conversations.)

(14.27)

- (i) pwes deʔše deʔ tey ya də minha ti bi nəmkeʔtpa  
pwes deʔše deʔ tey ya də+ min.hay-A ti bi nəm.keʔt-pa  
well thus that now NEG 1A+ come.APPL-nINC what DEF say.REPET-INC  
"Well, that's that. Now it doesn't come to me what to say next."  
(ZOH1R53 054-5)

- (ii) deʔše de ʔi gaʔše gaʔ  
deʔše deʔ ʔi gaʔše gaʔ  
thus that and thus that  
'That's that and that's that.'