

SIL-Mexico Branch Electronic Working Papers #006:
The Fronting of Noun and Adverb Phrases in Mixtec of Tezoatlán
Judith Williams

1. Introduction

Mixtec of Tezoatlán (MT) is spoken by about 6,000 people in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. The database for this paper has been limited for the sake of manageability to twenty narratives by a total of four Mixtec authors.¹

Mixtec has a fairly rigid VSO word order. In the database mentioned above, with a total of just over 1000 clauses, about 7.5% of the clauses have fronted subjects, or approximately 1 out of 13 clauses. Only 1.5% of the clauses have a fronted direct object; about 12.8% have a pre-verbal adverb phrase.

The purpose of this paper is to determine some of the roles that fronting plays in Mixtec discourse. The fact that interrogative words in WH-questions, which are obviously in focus, are fronted in MT, indicates that some instances of fronting mark *focus* (Lambrecht 1986:149). Others mark a change of *topic*. Finally, some sentence-initial adverbials of time indicate the *setting* of a clause or episode.

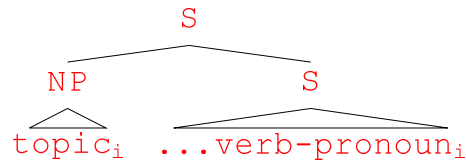
Section 2 discusses left detachment of subjects in non-equative clauses, which indicates the establishment or change of a topic, and fronting of subjects, which indicates focus. Section 3 discusses subjects fronted with the equative verb **kúú** 'be', and section 4 discusses subjects fronted in negative clauses. There is a brief discussion of the fronting of direct objects in section 5, and section 6 discusses fronted adverbials.

2. Fronted subjects in affirmative non-equative clauses

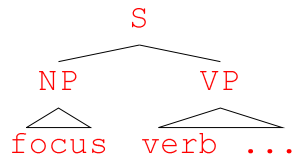
There are at least two fronting positions in a Mixtec clause. The *topic* position of a noun phrase indicates a new topic is being established, as at the beginning of some short stories, or a

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previous topic is being referred to again. In these cases, the subject noun phrase occurs to the left of a clause which also contains a co-referential subject pronoun after the verb, which I refer to as *left detachment*. See the following diagram.



When a subject noun phrase is fronted to the *focus* position, on the other hand, there is no pronoun subject after the verb.



2.1 Fronted topic

In this paper I follow the characterization of sentence topic developed by Lambrecht (1986:92): "...a referent can be interpreted as the *topic* of a proposition if it is possible, *in a given discourse*, to interpret the proposition as being *about* this referent, i.e. as expressing information which is *relevant to* and which *increases our knowledge of* this referent."

An unmarked sentence topic is normally an active identifiable referent which is a given or presupposed part of the sentence, normally the subject. It may be expressed simply as a pronoun clitic on the verb in MT.

This paper discusses primarily the manifestation of sentence topics rather than discourse topics in MT, though the two are, of course, closely related. The special construction marking sentence topic (i. e. left detachment) typically occurs at points where there is a change in discourse topic. Here the term *discourse topic* matches Lambrecht's informal use of the term: "to designate a referent that is pragmatically salient in a discourse and that remains topical beyond the limit of a single sentence." (1986:84) In MT, when a topic is marked by placing it in the topic position (to the left of the adjacent clause), the same referent typically (though not always) continues to be the topic in at least one more following clause.

To illustrate, I begin with an example of change of topic within a story which has two main characters, a greedy woman and a man who visits her. The man has arrived at the woman's house after a long trip and is extremely hungry. Four clauses have had the man as subject. Then the clause in (1) appears.

- (1) Kúú **ta'ána sá'ano ñoó** ndato ni nákaa ñoó
 and lady old that(ANAPH) happily ONLY CON = be she-that(ANAPH)
 káva'án pastel.
 CON = make-she cake
 'And the old lady was happily making a cake.'

Notice that the change of topic is marked by a fronted noun phrase co-referential with the pronoun subject that occurs after each of the two verbs in the clause. This is an example of the left detachment construction. The story continues with about six clauses in which the old lady is subject, referred to by the pronominal clitic only, except in one case. She eats the cake and decides to make another for the man, but eats that one too. Then the topic once more switches, as shown in (2).

- (2) Ta kúú **rtóho ñoó** nda'í kuíko rón.
 [and] man that(ANAPH) poor CON = be.hungry he.that
 'And the man was desperately hungry.'

The next clause continues with the man as the subject. This is once more an example of a change of topic with the left detachment construction. Lambrecht further describes the detachment construction (1986:131-132):

"From a certain degree of pragmatic accessibility on, it is possible in many languages to express a not-yet-active topic referent in the form of a lexical NP which is placed in a position *adjacent* to the clause which contains the propositional information about the referent. In such cases, the lexical topic constituent does not occupy an argument position in the clause. Instead it appears in a syntactically and semantically autonomous, "detached" position to the left or, more rarely, to the right of the clause. The syntactic and semantic role of such a detached referent is indicated inside the clause by means of an unstressed pronominal which is construed as co-referential with the extra-clausal lexical constituent. The intra-clausal pronominal morpheme is of the unmarked, preferred, topic type, while the extra-clausal lexical topic NP is *marked* type of topic expression."

There is one example in the data of a story beginning by presenting the two main characters by means of the detachment construction. This is given in (3).

- (3) **Iin kirí yíí, iin kirí di'ín,** luu ndáa rí.
 one animal male one animal female beautiful CON = are they
'There was a beautiful pair of animals.'

This is one of MT's ways of presentation of main characters. But MT often names the main characters at the beginning of a story by an intransitive verb of arrival or be/live/have. In this type of presentation, the subject follows the verb in most cases. As Lambrecht writes (1986:130):

"The most common and grammatically most clearly marked presentational sentence type is characterized across languages by the presence of a limited set of highly intransitive predicates such as 'BE', 'BE AT', 'HAVE', 'SEE', 'ARRIVE', 'DIE', etc. This semantic restriction to intransitive predicates is a natural consequence of the basic discourse function which all presentational sentences, whether deictic or existential, have in common: rather than predicating some property of the NP argument, presentational predicates state the presence of the referent of the NP in the (external or internal) text world.

Another common way of presenting characters in MT is, "I'm going to tell you a story, of uncle rabbit and uncle coyote". In both these ways of presenting characters, Lambrecht's *Principle of the Separation of Reference and Relation* is observed: "Do not introduce a referent and talk about it in the same clause" (1986:134)

Fronting to indicate change of topic is by no means obligatory. It is significant that about one third of the examples of fronting due to topic switching also show a parallel contrast. In these examples (4) through (7), only the subject of the second clause in each pair of clauses is fronted, unlike those examples of contrastive focus, where both subjects are fronted (see section 2.2.1). The subject in the second clause is marked with a resumptive pronoun and continues to be the topic for at least one more clause.

- (4) **Dá nī sa'an tuku roón** puestó,
 then CMP go again they-that deer.blind
dá yu'u nī sa'an tukui noó kándu'u rī.
 then I CMP go again-I where CON = lie he
'Then they went again to the deer blind, and I went again to where he (the deer) lay.'

- (5) --K_o níyiká ta'on yo'ó kaka_on ve'e kaa yó'o
 NEG CON = deserve NEG-ASN you POT = be-you house metal this
 --kaá r_a xí'ín yu'u.

CON = say he with I

"You don't deserve to be in jail," they said to me.

Ta ndu'u ñó'o ndu chí ió va kuachi ni kee ndu.
 and we CON = be.in we because CON = be ASN crime CMP do we

"But we are in here because there is a crime we committed."

- (6) Dá ni ya'a tiyóto siodáa ñóó karrterá ñóó.
 then CMP cross mouse city that(ANAPH) highway that
 Ta tiyóto yúkú ñóó k_o ní kúu ta'an
 and mouse country that(ANAPH) NEG CMP be.able NEG
 va ya'a rí karrterá ñóó.

ASN POT = cross he highway that(ANAPH)

'Then the city mouse crossed the highway. But the country mouse couldn't cross the highway.'

- (7) Tído nino nda'o ni sa'an r_a,
 but above very CMP go they
 ta yu'u ndaa nino xíxio ni sa'an yu'u.
 and I even below exceedingly CMP go I

'But they went very far upwards, and I went very very far downwards.'

Even the left dislocation constructions in the examples of change of topic in the greedy lady story shown in (1) and (2) could be highlighting a general contrast between the lady eating the cakes and the starving man. The story of the town mouse and country mouse is built around the contrast between the two of them and has more left dislocated subjects than most stories.

2.2 Fronted focus

I also follow Lambrecht (1986:159) in his definition of focus as "a device used to indicate the scope of the assertion in a sentence, i.e. as a formal mechanism whereby speakers contrast the asserted portion of a sentence with the pragmatic presupposition required by the sentence, in particular with the topic, which is part of that presupposition."

2.2.1 Parallel contrast

The fronting of subject noun phrases in MT sometimes shows the kind of focus Dik (1981) calls parallel contrast. Note that in the examples of parallel contrast given in (8) through (10), the subjects of both clauses are fronted to the focus position. There are no subject pronouns following the verbs.

- (8) Dá nī kaa ndigüe'í: --Yu'u kī'o oko tĩñoó.
 then CMP say coyote I POT=give twenty chickens
 --Ta **yu'u** kī'o iin chee --nī kaa ndika'a ñoó.
 and I POT=give one bull CMP say lion that(ANAPH)
 'Then the coyote said, "I will give twenty chickens." "I will give a bull," said the lion.'
- (9) Iin iin íchī nī kī'in rī kua'an rī.
 one one path CMP grab they PRG=go they
 Ndika'a ñoó kua'an kī'in chee,
 lion that(ANAPH) PRG=go POT=get bull
 ta **ndigüe'í ñoó** kua'an kī'in oko tĩñoó.
 and coyote that PRG=go POT=get twenty chickens
 'They each went their way. **The lion** went to get a bull and **the coyote** went to get twenty chickens.'
- (10) Dá nī kandoo dao ndu'u,
 then CMP remain some (of)us
 to'on onī ndu'u nī kandoo ko'on taó sākuaa ñoó,
 about three (of)us CMP remain POT=go POT=get.out deer that(ANAPH)
 ta **onī ka ra** nī sa'an nī sa ndodó puestó.
 and three more (of)them CMP go CMP DUR be.on deer.blind
 'Then some of us remained, **about three of us** remained to flush out the deer and **three more** to go be in the deer blind.'

2.2.2 Other focus

Other examples of fronting to the focus position in the MT data are of a more general type of focus in which the noun phrase almost always includes words indicating focus, such as **ndaá** 'even', **nda'o/ndava'o** 'very', **va** 'assertion' and/or **mií** 'self'. The examples in (11) illustrate the use of these words in both focus and non-focus uses.

- (11) a. kuá'á ndá'o sakuáa ñoó 'very many deer'
 many very deer those(ANAPH)
- b. ndáá miío ñoó 'even she herself'
 even self-ASN she-that(ANAPH)
- c. ndadá tó'ón tatá va ndu'u 'only our father'
 only only father ASN (of)us
- d. ñayuu káni ndavá'o 'very bad people'
 people bad very

Note that words such as these, though frequently occurring in fronted position, do not occur in the left detached position.

All of the instances of fronting subjects for focus do not have a subject pronoun following the verb. A further difference from topic fronting is that the referent almost never continues to be the subject or topic in the following clause.

3. Fronted subjects in equative clauses

Word order in equative clauses depends on the particular equative verb used (**kúú** 'be' and **nduu** 'become, change into') and can also indicate focus and sometimes topic.

3.1 Equative verb **kúú**

MT makes frequent use of the equative verb **kúú** 'be'. In clauses where **kúú** occurs, the normal word order is: Predicate nominal – Equative verb – Subject, as in (12).

- (12) Predicate Nominal Equative Verb Subject
 Do **kúú** tina vā'a ndavā'o nī sá kuu rí.
 [and] dog good very CMP DUR be he(animal)
 'And he was a very good dog.'

This section discusses examples where the subject (i.e. what is being talked about, which is usually part of the presupposed part of the clause) is fronted before the verb: Subject - Equative verb - Predicate Nominal. This fronting serves to establish or change topic or to mark focus. Before looking at those examples, however, I mention another word order for equatives, shown in (13).

(13) Equative verb - Subject pronoun - Predicate nominal

- a. tá nī sa kuu -i tadi'í ló'ǫ
 when CMP DUR be I girl little
'...when I was a little girl.'
- b. Kúú ná nāyuu dinī ndeī'í.
 CON=be they people head black
'They are people with black hair.'
- c. Dá kakuu na Ndíos yu'ǫ.
 then POT=be he God I
'Then He would be my God.'

Examples of subjects fronted before the verb because they are changing or establishing a topic are not always as easily identifiable as in the previous section, because there is no repeated pronoun after the verb. But the example in (14) is fairly clear. It occurs near the beginning of a story, after the four main characters have been mentioned: a man, corn, beans, and the man's wife. The man's wife is mentioned last, and that line of the introduction is included in the example.

- (14) Ta sa io ñadi'í rā.
 and DUR have wife he
'And he had a wife.'

Ñá'a ñoó sa kuu naná nonī ñoó xí'ín ndúchī ñoó.
 woman that(ANAPH) DUR be mother corn those(ANAPH) with beans those(ANAPH)
'That woman was the mother of the corn and beans.'

In the second sentence of (14), the subject has been fronted. Since it has just been stated that the man had a wife, ñá'a ñoó 'that woman' is presupposed and is what is talked about, so it is the subject and topic. The focus (i.e. the assertion, the new information), on the other hand, is the predicate nominal. The same woman is the subject of the next seven clauses and it seems clear this is an example of establishing a topic. This topic was readily accessible from the introduction of the character immediately before.

Most stories end with a formulaic ending, with the first word being **dión** 'thus (anaphoric)', such as in (15) and (16).

- (15) Dión kua'an cuentó noni xí'in ndúchì.
 thus(ANAPH) PRG = go story corn with beans
'Thus goes the story of the corn and beans.'

- (16) Dión ni ndo'o ndu'u ni sa'an ndu Kíní.
 thus(ANAPH) CMP suffer we(ex) CMP go we(ex) Yucuquimi
'Thus it happened when we went to Yucuquimi.'

But (17) and (18) are two examples of equative clauses ending stories. In each example, the subject is fronted, and performs the same function as **dión** 'thus (anaphoric)'. The subject **ña yó'o** 'this (anaphoric) thing' refers back to the whole story and is the topic of the last sentence of the story, rather than a focus construction.

- (17) Ña yó'o ni sa kuu cuentó na.
 thing this(ANAPH) CMP DUR be story they
'This was their story.'

- (18) Ña yó'o kían ni ndo'o yu'u
 thing this(ANAPH) CON = be-RC CMP happen I
 tá ni sa kuui tadi'í ló'o.
 when CMP DUR be-I girl little
'This is what happened when I was a little girl.'

On the other hand, a subject which is clearly *Restricting Focus* (Dik 1981), is fronted in the following equative clause. The context of (19) is that both the lion and the coyote were going to be the godfather of the child, but the coyote didn't show up.

- (19) Tó'ón vá ndika'a ñoó ni sa kuu tarndúta taleé ñoó.
 only ASN lion that(ANAPH) CMP DUR be godfather child that(ANAPH)
'Only the lion was the godfather of the child.'

(20) is an example of what Dik calls *Replacing Focus*. The coyote says there is going to be a party for a child but a godfather hasn't been found. Then the lion speaks.

- (20) --Tor kónon, yo'ó xí'in yu'u ná ko'o
 if CON = want-you you with I OPT POT = go-we
 kakuuó tarndúta taleé ñoó.
 POT = be-we godfather child that(ANAPH)
'If you want, let's you and I be the godfather of the child.'

Replacing Focus is also highlighted in the third line of (21). The subject, **yúchì va** 'knife ASN' is the focus of the clause.

(21) ħÁ taa nda'o kúú ndi yo'ó xinóon?

YNq man very CON=be what you believe-you

Dá nì kaa yító ñoó: Ta'ón taa kúú yu'u.

then CMP say stick that(ANAPH) NEG-ASN man CON=be I

Yúchì va kúú taa cháá ká, dá chí kándéé váán

knife ASN CON=be man [more] [because] CON=can ASN-it

sa'andáan ndu'u --nì kaa yító ñoó.

CON=cut-it we CMP say stick that(ANAPH)

"Do you believe you are very macho?" Then the stick said, "I am not macho.

The knife is more macho, because it can cut us," said the stick.'

Even though the knife in the previous example is new to us outside the story, it is presented as given by the stick in talking to the man. That is, the stick uses a construction that is appropriate if the referent can be identified by the addressee.

(22) is an example of contrastive parallel focus. Note that only one focus noun phrase may occur in the position immediately before the verb in each clause.

(22) Ñoó ndéi uu takuáí sa'a iin yító.

there CON=are two children foot one tree

Ta iin xi kúú tayíí ló'o.

and one (of)them CON=be boy little

Ta iin ká xi kúú tadi'í ló'o.

and [other] (of)them CON=be girl little

Nda'í ndáa xi ndéi xi sa'a iin yító ñoó.

poor CON=are they CON=be they foot one tree that(ANAPH)

*"There (in that place) were two children at the foot of a tree. And **one of them** was a little boy. And **the other** was a little girl. They were sad, sitting there at the foot of the tree.'*

Note further example (23). Because of the yes-no question in the first clause with the fronted subject (I am macho), the presupposed information is that someone is very macho. The subject is the focused part of this clause and the clause following it.

- (23) ǐÁ t̥aa nda'o kúú ndi mií ní, xiní ní?
 YNq man very CON=be what self you CON=believe you
 Dá n̥i kaa Ndios xí'ín rí: Jaan, **yu'u** kúú t̥aa
 then CMP say God with he yes I CON=be man
 ta **yu'u** kúú Ndios.
 and I CON=be God

“Do you believe you are very macho”? Then God said to him, “Yes, I am man (or macho) and I am God.”

In conclusion, fronting of the subject before the equative verb **kúú** 'be', may indicate the changing or establishing of a topic or may mark focus. These are the same two roles the fronting of subjects plays with other verbs (section 2), except that with other verbs, the former role is marked by the special left detachment construction, with a pronoun subject after the verb.

3.2 Equative verb nduu

Unlike the verb **kúú**, a different equative verb **nduu** 'become, change into' may occur with a resumptive pronoun, as in the second clause of example (24). The normal word order for an equative clause with the verb **nduu**, according to Shields (1989) who writes about a similar dialect of Mixtec, is V-S-Nominal Complement, as in the first clause of (24). This contrasts with the normal order for a clause with the equative verb **kúú**, viz. Nominal Complement-V-S.

- (24) Dá ví n̥i nduu non̥i ñoó iin tayíí ló'o,
 then EMPH CMP become corn that(ANAPH) one boy little
 Ta **ndúch̥i** n̥i nduuan iin tadi'í ló'o.
 and **beans** CMP become-it one girl little

*“Then the corn changed into a little boy, and **the beans** changed into a little girl.”*

This example follows the pattern of left dislocation to signal a topic change, seen in section 2.1. There is a strong element of parallel contrast. As seen in the four examples of topic changing with parallel contrast in section 2.1, the subject in the second clause is fronted but not in the first clause. The examples of parallel contrast focus (section 2.2.1), on the other hand, have the subjects in both clauses fronted. Usually when left dislocation signals a topic change, at least the immediately following clause continues with the same topic as subject. In (24), however, the subject of the following clause is a pronoun which seems to refer to both the corn and beans.

4. Fronted subjects in negative clauses

MT has two negative markers which normally co-occur, one before and the other after the verb, as in French (Givón 1983), with the subject and object following in normal word order. An example is (25).

- (25) **Ko** kétátá **ta'on** yu'ṽ nḁ.
 NEG CON = do-medicine NEG-ASN I they
'I do not cure them.'

Givón suggests that preverbal negative markers tend to be derived from main verbs, such as 'lack' or 'miss', whereas postverbal negative markers tend to be derived from former objects, such as 'thing'. He claims that in informal French the older and more neutral negative marker **ne** tends to drop out. That is the preverbal marker. However, in MT the postverbal marker often drops out, as in the examples in (26).

- (26) a. Kúú **ko** ní no'o tuku ra noó rḁ ndigüé'í
 and NEG CMP go.base again he face Mr. coyote
'And he didn't return again to Mr. Coyote.'
- b. Tído **ko** kándéé ndú kandido ndu rḁ no'o ndü,...
 but NEG CON = be.able we POT = carry we him POT = go.base we
'But we couldn't carry him home,...'
- c. Tído **ko** ní'í ná ndá yoo kakuu tarndúṽ xí.
 but NEG CON = find they [who] POT = be godfather he
'But they haven't found a godfather for him.'
- d. ĩÁ **ko** nónó ve'ón ná koo tóoi?
 YNq NEG CON = be.open house-(of)you OPT POT = be while-I
'Is your house free that I could stay there for a while?'

There is only one story in the data which has an example of **ko** 'NEG' dropping out and only **ta'on** 'NEG-ASN' appearing. This is given in (27).

- (27) **Ta'ón** tḁa kúú yu'ṽ.
 NEG-ASN man CON = be I
'I am not macho.'

In this case, **ta'ón** precedes the predicate, because the standard way of negating equative clauses with the verb **kúú** is that the two negative markers **kō ta'ón** appear together clause initial. The Mixtec sentence in (27) is repeated by many characters in the story in reply to the question given in (28).

- (28) ɛ́Á t̥a nda'o kúú ndi yo'ó xinóon?
 YNq man very CON=be what you CON=believe-you
'Do you believe that you are very macho?'

When **kā** 'more' or **ni** 'negative' (Spanish loan) occur, **kō** 'negative' but not **ta'on** 'negative-ASN' co-occurs with it, as in (29).²

- (29) a. **Ni kō** xíían ndu'án.
 NEG NEG CON = want-they POT = enter-they
'They didn't want to enter.'
- b. **Kō** kándéé **kā** va ndu'ū kaka ndu.
 NEG CON = be.able more ASN we POT = walk we
'We are not able to walk (because we've eaten so much).'

Possibly the Mixtec negative marker **kō** was derived from a verb, since it sometimes appears in a clause without any other verb, as in (30). This form is slightly lengthened. In the shorter form **kō** a floating high tone perturbs certain words that come immediately after it³.

- (30) a. **Sā kōó** k̥a vaan.
 IM NEG more ASN-they
'They weren't there (anymore).'
- b. ...nōó ndéi ñayuu **kōó** idí diní.
 where CON = live people NEG hair head
'...where people with no hair live.'

The fact that speakers use a different form for **kō** 'NEG' in the potential aspect, viz. **o/a** 'NEG', would also support the idea that it used to be a verb. Notice the use of **a** 'NEG' with the potential in (31).

² **Ni** does not occur in pairs in Mixtec, as in Spanish **ni...ni** 'neither...nor'

³ Examples of tone perturbation following **kō** include: **vā'a** 'bien' to **kō vá'a** 'no bien', **ndaā** 'verdadero' to **kō ndáā** 'no verdadero', **kaon** 'rápido' to **kō k̥aón** 'no rápido', and **ta'on** 'NEG' and **kō t̥a'ón** 'no NEG', as well as changes in verbs, e.g. **ní xí'i na** 'bebió' and **kō ní xí'i na** 'no bebió'.

- (31) Dá ná a ndió ña.
 then OPT NEG POT = fall it
'Then it will not fall.'

Given that the normal non-equative word order of a negative clause is Neg-V-Neg-S-0, when fronting of subject or object occurs there are two different positions of fronting. The first is when the subject is fronted before the negative markers and verb. The four examples in the data are all of parallel contrast. Two are given in (32) and (33). (32) is also a change of topic.

- (32) Yachi ndava'a va ni xinq ini ndúchi ña no'an.
 soon very ASN CMP complete inside bean that POT = go-it
 Ta noni ko xén ta'an vaan no'an xí'in ra tó'o ñoó.
 and corn NEG CON = want NEG ASN-it POT = go-it with [man] that(ANAPH)
'Very soon the beans were pleased to go home.
*But **the corn** didn't want to go home with that man.'*

- (33) Ndaái va'a cháá ká'an yú'on xa'an.
 truly-EMPH good little CON = speak mouth-(of)you there
 Tído noo xa'an ko vá'a kúu.
 but eyes there NEG good CON = move
'It's true that your mouth speaks well,
*but **your eyes** do not move (in gesture) well.'*

The other common order of fronting is where both of the negative markers occur together, followed by the fronted subject or object, and then the verb. (34) is an example. In a story, the gnat asks "sickness" to heal his foot and (34) is his reply.

- (34) Ko ta'ón yu'u kátátá.
 NEG NEG-ASN I CON = do-medicine
'I do not cure.'

This example shows narrow focus, i.e. the scope of the negation is only the subject '*not I, but someone else*'. The speaker of (34) continues with the same subject (himself) fronted in the following clause, given in (35).

- (35) Yu'u dáku'u oon va ñayuu.
 I CON = cause-be.sick only ASN people
'I only make people sick.'

Later he says, "Go talk to God to heal your foot."

There are fourteen examples where the subject is fronted after the negative markers, or simply after **kō** 'NEG' if that is the only negative marker. It is worth noting that in six of these examples, the fronted subject is also the object in the previous clause; it is the subject of the previous clause in four other examples. This object or subject which is identical or at least co-referent with the fronted subject occurs in the last position possible in the previous clause in all but one or two cases, one of which is the Montero example in (38).

- (36) Tá nī tūu noq,
when CMP [dawns]
nī kee ra kua'an rā ko'óní rá **lechí**.
CMP leave he PRG = go he POT = milk he milk
Ni kōó **lechí** ní kána.
NEG NEG milk CMP came.out
'When a new day came, he went to milk (the sheep). No **milk** came out.'

- (37) Dá yu'u nī sa'an tukui noq kándu'u rī,
then I CMP go again-I where CON = lie he
kúú sa kōó ka rī kándu'u, xiní.
and IM NEG more he CON = lie, CON = see-I
Tído oon ni nī ndakoo rí...
but CNTR CMP get.up he
'Then I went again where he (deer) lay, and saw that now **he** was not there.
But he had gotten up...'

- (38) Kúú nī ki'in rí **Monteró ló'i**, néhe rí kua'an rī.
and CMP got he Montero little-I CON = carry he PRG = go he
Kúú nī tūu noq, kúú kō tā'ón **Monteró ló'i** ndísaa.
and CMP [dawns] and NEG NEG-ASN Montero little-I CON = return
'And he (coyote) grabbed my little Montero (dog) and left carrying him. When a new day dawned, **my little Montero** had not returned. (Then I began to go looking for him. Let's see where he is lying. He has died, I thought.)'

This last construction differs from both the left detached fronting for establishing a topic and from fronting for narrow focus. Possibly the lexical repetition close together contributes to cohesion between the two sentences, closely relating the expectation with the counter-assertion.

5. Fronted direct object

Fronted direct objects are rare in MT. The examples found in this data base of twenty narratives are all of direct objects fronted to highlight the focal participant of the clause.

Notice that in (39), for example, answering the question, "What do you eat in your house?", the direct object is fronted in the second sentence.

- (39) --Seí yu'ᵘ páan, seí yu'ᵘ quesó, seí yu'ᵘ koño.
 CON=eat I bread CON=eat I cheese CON=eat I meat
 ñoó seí yu'ᵘ ve'i.
 it-that(ANAPH) CON=eat I house-I
*'I eat bread, cheese, meat. **That** is what I eat in my house.'*

In the following three examples of fronted direct objects, notice the words that are commonly found in focused noun phrases (**ndaá** 'until, even', **tó'ón** 'only', **va** 'ASN').

- (40) Kúú **ndaá** **doᵘ** **yító** nᵢ sᵘ seí ñoó.
 and even bark tree CMP DUR eat she.that(ANAPH)
*'And she ate **the bark of the tree**.'* (This refers to a greedy woman who was stuck on the side of a tree and was turning into a woodpecker.)
- (41) Kᵒ kᵘ tᵘ né'e choon ndéi.
 NEG more man CON=carry work CON=be
 Ndaá **tó'ón** **séndiko** nᵢ ni'ᵢ ndú.
 even only séndico CMP find we
*'There were not any authorities there. We found **only the "sindico"**.'*
- (42) Ñᵘ né'e yu'ᵘ veᵢ kúú tᵒ'on Ndíos.
 thing CON=bring I PRG=come-I CON=is word God
 Tá **tó'ón** **Ndíos** **yó'o** **va** dána'a ndu'ᵘ.
 and word God here ASN CON=teach we
*'What I am carrying is the Word of God, and we are only teaching **this Word of God**.'*

The next example, (43), shows double fronting. Not only is the direct object noun phrase fronted, but within that phrase the adjective phrase of quality, which normally follows a noun, is fronted before the direct object noun.

- (43) Kúú s̥a n̥i n̥i'í vá rá iin s̥akuaa chiká'ano.
 and IM CMP find ASN he one deer huge
 Kúú ká'ano nd̥a'o s̥akuaa n̥i sa'ání rá, s̥a'án...
 and big very deer CMP kill he because-that(COM)
 'And he found a huge deer. **A very big deer** he killed, because...'

Example (44) shows a direct object fronted within a sentential complement. The sentential complement is the direct object of the verb "see".

- (44) Dá n̥i xini ñadi'í t̥a kuí'íná ñóó
 then CMP see wife man thief that
 ña kuá'a d̥i'ón né'e t̥a sá'ano ñóó.
 that(CMTL) much money CON=carry man old that(ANAPH)
 'Then the thief's wife saw that the old man was carrying **a lot of money**.'

6. Fronting of adverb phrases

Adverb phrases of time which give the setting for a clause, for an episode, or even for a whole story, are most often found clause initial. Other adverbs or adverb phrases are normally found post verbally, but can be fronted for focus. The normal order for most adverbials is: V – SUB – (OBJ) – Adverbial, as in (46).

- (46) V SUB ADV PHR
 Tído iin kuu n̥i xiti iin t̥a tó'o iin yúku xíká.
 but one day CMP sow one [man] one mountain far
 'But one day a man sowed on a far away mountain.'

There is also a closed set of adverbs whose normal position in a clause is between the verb and subject. Note the adverb **tuku** 'again' in (47).

- (47) Dá n̥i kee tuku ra kua'an r̥a nandukú ñáá rá.
 then CMP leave again he PRG=go he POT=look he he
 'Then he left again, going to look for him.'

- (52)
- | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|------------|
| | Topic | Focus | |
| | <i>SUB</i> | <i>ADV PHR</i> | |
| Tído ndivé'e | Ndíqs tatá | yu'u ndidaá | kuu vá |
| but thank God | father I | every day | ASN |
| | <i>V</i> | <i>SUB</i> | |
| ká'an | noó | xí'ín, ña | ná dá'a ni |
| CON = say he.that(ANAPH) with-I that(COM) [NEG.IMP] ONLY | | | |
| | kantá'in | xí'ín takuáchí | kini. |
| POT = get.together with young.people bad | | | |
| <i>'But thank God, my father always told me not to be good friends with bad young people.'</i> | | | |

In two cases where there are two adverb phrases fronted together, the first modifies the second fronted adverbial, as to its truth value. These are given in (53) and (54).

- (53) Modifier Focus
- | | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <i>ADV PHR</i> | <i>ADV PHR</i> | <i>V</i> | <i>SUB</i> |
| Ndaái | va'a cháá | ká'an | yú'on xa'an. |
| truly-EMPH | good little | CON = speak | mouth-you there |
| <i>'It's true that your mouth speaks well.'</i> | | | |

- (54) Modifier Focus
- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|----------|-------------|
| <i>ADV PHR</i> | <i>ADV PHR</i> | <i>V</i> | <i>SUB</i> |
| Ndá ndi kuu | kaon nda'o | ni | sa'an yu'u. |
| [perhaps] | quickly very | CMP go | I |
| <i>'Perhaps I went very quickly.'</i> | | | |

Another way of fronting adverbials is with a construction of the adverbial followed by **kían**, which is a contraction of **kúú-ña** 'be COM (complementizer)' in examples (55) and (56) or 'be RC (relative clause marker)' in examples (18) & (57). Most of the examples in the data are of **viti kían** 'now it is that...' They are all found in dialogue and indicate that now it is time for something to happen, as in (55), or now someone has realized something, as in (56).

- (55) --Viti kían ko'o vaá--
- now CON = be-that(COM) POT = go ASN-we
- 'Now let's go.' OR: 'Now it's time for us to go.'*

- (56) --Viti kían nī kandaā inon ndi ndó'o ñayuu
 now CON = be-that(COM) CMP understand inside-you what CON = suffer people
 kéchóon na dá sásá'an na.
 CON = work they then CON = eat they
'Now you understand what people who work to eat suffer.'

There are six other examples of **viti kían** in the data. There is an example of another fronted adverbial with **kían** in (57).

- (57) --Miían ndaā kuití kían ká'an yó'ó--
 self-that(COM) truly definitely CON = be-it CON = speak you
'It's very true what you say.'

A slightly different construction in (58) involves a time clause and ends with **kían**, which is a contraction of **kúú ñá** 'is it'. It is not part of a dialogue, but is part of a personal experience story, so the narrator is in effect speaking.

- (58) Dá too va kían dá nī saā taa né'e choon.
 then a.while ASN CON = be-it then CMP arrive men CON = carry work
'Then it was a little while and the authorities arrived.'

Section 6.1 discusses adverbials in the setting position in more detail, and section 6.2 will discuss adverbials in the focus position.

6.1 Setting position for adverbials

Many adverb phrases of time are pre-verbal in a discourse, and are the setting for the clause as a whole, for an episode or for the entire story.⁴

It is very common to begin a major episode in a story with the adverb phrase of setting **iin kuū** 'one day' and a later episode with **iin ga kuū** 'another day'. For example, one of the hunting stories begins as in (59).

⁴ The position of adverbial clauses of time setting is also sentence initial, e. g. **Tá nī tūu noo**,... 'When a new day dawned... ' or **Dá nī kāsndaá tō'on ká o'on sa'ini**,... 'Then arrived approximately five o'clock,...

- (59) **iin kuu** ni sa'an ndu ni sadiki ndu sakuaa.
 one day CMP go we CMP hunt we deer
 'One day we went deer-hunting.'

Other time adverbials in this slot include **tá sa na'a** 'long ago', **sa io tiempó** 'long ago', **iin ga na'a** 'another morning', **viti** 'now', etc.

Perhaps it would be better not to call these adverbials fronted, because the most common word order by far is to have them sentence initial, with only an optional connector coming before them. It is possible to place these adverbs of setting after the verb (and subject and object), but this is quite unusual in a discourse. One example of this alternate order is shown in (60).

- (60) Di'a ni ndo'o yu'u **iin kuu** noó sa ioi yúku,
 thus CMP experience I one day where DUR be-I mountain
 ni sa xitii.
 CMP DUR plow-I
 'Thus it happened to me one day where I was on the mountain plowing.'

Here **iin kuu** 'one day' seems to have been moved from its initial position because of the adverb **di'a**.

Geis (1986:128), though writing about English, describes precisely the role of these adverbials of setting: "the function of initial (non-WH) adverbials is to *situate* the events or states described by *sentences as a whole* in some real world or other possible context."

Geis calls sentences that include the adverb of setting *Adverb Preposing sentences*. He says (1986:129):

"...sentence-initial adverbials of the sort that interest us are seen to function somewhat like such discourse-bound connectives as 'meanwhile', 'subsequently'....while we can use post-verbal temporal adverbials to date events, we normally resort to sentence-initial adverbials when doing so in discourses that involve a sequence of events."

Locative setting in MT, on the other hand, except for deictic words such as 'there' and 'here', occurs clause final. An example is (61).

- (61) Tā kuɪ'íná ñóó sà nákaa va rón ndáti ra
 man thief that(ANAPH) IM CON = be ASN he-that(ANAPH) CON = wait he
 íchì nḡó yá'a tã sá'ano ñóó.
 path where CON = pass man old that(ANAPH)
'The thief was already waiting at the path where the old man would pass by.'

However, there is a deictic locative adverb in particular that occurs frequently in narratives and that is often fronted. It might qualify as an adverb of setting. Often a specific place is mentioned at the end of one sentence and then is picked up in the next sentence by the fronted ñóó 'over there (anaphoric)'; *that place referred to*'. This is exemplified in (62).

- (62) Dá ví nì saā rā nḡó ndí'i íchì ñóó.
 then EMPH CMP arrive he where CON = end path that(ANAPH)
 Ñóó ndéi uṽ takuálí sa'a iin yító.
 there(ANAPH) CON = be two children foot one tree
'Then he arrived at the end of the path. There (in that place) were two children under a tree.'

Sometimes several clauses in a row begin with ñóó, referring back to the same place already mentioned, as in (63). In this example, there is another use of ñóó 'that (anaphoric)' in noun phrases referring to participants. It is not to be confused with the adverbial use of ñóó 'over there (anaphoric)'.

- (63) Dá nì saā tã sá'ano ñóó nḡó ñó'o takuúí.
 then CMP arrive man old that(ANAPH) where CON = be water
 Ñóó sà káo ndei ra ko'o ra takuúí,
 there(ANAPH) IM [POT = lean.over] he POT = drink he water,
 nì ka'án rá.
 CMP think he
 Ñóó nì keta tã kuɪ'íná, nì ka'án rá
 there(ANAPH) CMP leave man thief CMP think he
 kuio ndaa rā dī'ón tã sá'ano ñóó
 [POT = take] he money man old that(ANAPH)

Ñoó nakuíin ndichi ta sá'ano ñoó;
 there(ANAPH) [CMP=stand.up] man old that(ANAPH)
 nī sei ndaa ra di'indī ta kuí'íná ñoó.
 CMP [kick] he seat man thief that(ANAPH)

Ñoó nī nduu ra vúrro.
 there(ANAPH) CMP change he burro

'Then arrived the old man where there was water. There he leaned over intending to drink water. There came out the thief, intending to take away the money of the old man. There the old man stood up; he kicked the thief in the seat. There the thief turned into a burro.'

Perhaps the role of **ñoó** in such examples is less that of setting than that of cohesion in the discourse. It is interesting that a speaker of the language volunteered the idea that a connector (e.g. **ta kúú** 'and (emotional impact)' or **dá** 'then') could be substituted for the latter two fronted **ñoó**'s in (63).

The adverb **ñoó** serves as setting as well as cohesion, in that it situates what happened in a clause in the same place as in the previous clause. It sometimes occurs after the verb and subject and object, as does normal locative setting.

6.2 Adverbials in the focus position

Most locative adverbials that are fronted, other than **ñoó** 'over there' mentioned in 5.1, are locative arguments of verbs of movement (e.g. 'go', 'come', 'arrive', 'enter', 'put'). Rather than setting, they are focus. See examples (64) and (65). Examples of locative noun phrases of goal include (66) and (67).

(64) Tído **nīno** **nda'o** nī sa'an ra,
 but upwards very CMP go they
 ta yu'u **nda** **nino** **xíxio** nī sa'an yu'u,
 and I until downwards exceedingly CMP go I
*'But they went **way up**, and I went **way down**.'*

(65) **Xíkā** **nda'o** nī kii ra.
 far very CMP come he
*'From **very far** he came.'*

- (66) Dinñó'ó Ñaxi'a ná ko'o ndatq'ón yó -kaá nq.
 first Tezoatlán OPT POT=go-we POT=ask we CON=say they
*"First let's go to **Tezoatlán** to ask", they said.'*
- (67) Viti sa ná'á vá yu'u
 now IM CON=know ASN I
 ña ñó'o ko'in ta yaa va nduui.
 that(COM) fire POT=go-I and ashes ASN POT=change.into-I
*'Now I know that I will go into **the fire** and turn into **ashes**.'*

Note than (65) is an example of a locative adverbial of source in focus.

Other locative adverbials identify the location of an object or person, usually in conversation. In the next example, the speakers say where they will remain until a certain thing happens. Thus the locative is not setting for the clause, but rather focus, as in (68).

- (68) Yó'o va kandeí ndu'u ndaa kasaa ví naná ndu'u.
 here ASN POT=stay we until POT=arrive EMPH mother we
*'**Here** we'll stay until our mother arrives.'*

Example (69), as does example (64), shows parallel contrastive focus of adverbials.

- (69) Dá nī taán ñaá rá ini ve'e kaa,
 then CMP put us they in house metal
 dá chikáa ra yu'u xí'in onī tā xīni ve'e kaa nino
 then CMP=put they I with three men CON=are.drunk house metal below
 ta ve'e kaa nino nī sa kaa ditoī xī'in Abrám.
 and house metal above CMP DUR be uncle-I with Abram
*"Then they put us in jail. They put me with three drunks in the jail below and **in the jail above** went my uncle and Abram.'*

Some adverbials of manner are fronted for focus. For example, **kueé kueé** 'slowly' in (70) could also be placed between the verb and subject.

- (70) Tá nī saā rā,
 when CMP arrive he
 kueé kueé nī ku'u ra kua'an rā tein te'e ñoó.
 slowly slowly CMP enter he PRG=go he among squash.plants those(ANAPH)
*'When he arrived, he **slowly** went in amongst the squash plants.'*

One of the adverbs of manner **tuku** 'once again' normally comes between the verb and the subject. In a larger data base of MT stories I counted around 75 examples of **tuku** in that position. It seldom (only 5 times) occurred with the particle of assertion **va**, when in that position. On the other hand, when **tuku** 'once again' was fronted, it was accompanied by the particle **va** in nine out of the twelve examples. This is a rather good indication that this adverb is fronted for focus. An example of **tuku** fronted is given in (71).

- (71) **Tuku va** nī k̄an̄ kono t̄a dito ilo kua'an̄ r̄a.
 again ASN CMP [run] Mr. uncle rabbit PRG= go he
 'Once again uncle rabbit ran away.'

However, in one case, **tuku** 'once again' is fronted along with a focused direct object, and the meaning of the adverb changes. This is given in (72).

- (72) **Tuku va** de'e ra nī taxí rá.
 again ASN son he CMP run.off he
 'Once again he ran off a son (another one).'

In this example, the adverb in a sense modifies the following noun phrase, rather than the verb. If the position of **tuku va** 'once.again ASN' is between the verb and subject, as in (73), native speaker reaction is that the meaning is then ambiguous:

- (73) Nī taxi tuku va ra de'e ra.
 CMP run.off again ASN he son he
 'Once again he ran off his son (same son).' OR: 'He ran off another son of his.'

A few of the adverbs of manner may have a different meaning depending on whether they are fronted or occur after the verb. Note the meaning of the word **va'a** 'well' as it occurs in the following example:

- (74) Nde'é rá, **va'a** nī chindeí yó'ó.
 IMP=look ? well CMP help you
 'Look, I helped you very well.'

By rearranging the adverb in (74), the meaning of **va'a** is 'much' or 'enough', as in (75).

- (75) Nī chindeé va'i yó'ó.
 CMP help good-I you
 'I've helped you a lot (and don't want to help you more).'

The adverb **dión** 'thus (anaphoric)' is normally found clause initial, especially in its function as part of a formulaic ending to a whole story or part of a story. Examples (15)-(16) illustrate this use. It can also occur after the verb and subject, as in (76) and (77).

(76) A vá'a ta'on keeá dión.

NEG good NEG do-we thus

It's not good for us to do that.

(77) ...ñóó ndani ni kaa ra dión xí'in ñani ra.

[for.that.reason] CMP speak he thus with brother of.him

For that reason he spoke like that with his brother.

There are a few adverbials of time in the data that fall in the fronting position, rather than the setting position. They modify the verb rather than give a setting for the whole sentence, episode or story. This is illustrated in (78) and (79). In (78) **ndidaá kuú va** 'every day ASN', or more freely translated 'all the time', appears *after* fronted topic and before the verb; thus it is in the focus position.

(78) Tído ndivé'e Ndíos, tatá yu'u ndidaá kuú vá

but thank God father I every day ASN

ká'an nóó xí'ín, ña...

CON=say he-that(ANAPH) with-I that(COM)

'But thank God, my father all the time told me that...'

(79) --Ita'an, dá ná ko'q--

tomorrow then OPT POT=go-we(incl)

'Tomorrow let's go.'

Note that the more normal order of (79) (i.e. without the marked focus) would be as in (80).

(80) --Ná ko'q ita'an.--

OPT POT=go-we(incl) tomorrow

'Let's go tomorrow.'

Expressions of clock time (e.g., 'at 10:00'), are found in two personal experience texts in the data base. Unlike other expressions of time which are setting, they appear most often clause final. It seems they are more closely related to the verb phrase, rather than being setting on a sentence or discourse level. Clock time expressions are in almost every case found with

momentary verbs of arrival or leaving. There is one example where the hour is fronted for focus, which is given in (81).

- (81) **To'on ka ux̥i n̥i** kasáa n̥a ve'e yu'u.
 about bell ten CMP arrive they house
'About 10:00 they arrived at my house.'

Time adverbials indicating time duration that are fronted in the data for focus include those in (82).

- (82) a. kuá'á nd̥a'o kuiḁ *'for many years'*
 many very years
 b. tóó vá *'for a while'*
 a.while ASN

Notice the use of words commonly found in focus expressions, viz. **nd̥a'o** 'very' and **va** 'ASN'.

Although **iin ga kuu** 'another day' is a common adverbial of setting, in the example in (83) words typical of focus are added (**ndḁa** 'even' and **ví** 'intensifier'). Thus this is an example of focus rather than setting.

- (83) **Dá ndḁa iin ga ví** kuu, dá n̥i se̥i r̥ián.
 then until one more EMPH day then CMP eat he-them
'It wasn't until the next day that he ate them.'

In summary, locative adverbials, adverbials of manner, and even adverbials of time can be fronted for focus.

7. Conclusion

Fronting signals a change of topic or focus in Mixtec of Tezoatlán and in a few cases, cohesion in a passage. Fronting of the subject in the left dislocation position, with the subject referent repeated after the verb, indicates a change of topic. (An exception is the equative verb "to be" where simple fronting indicates a change of topic.) This fronting for change of topic is not obligatory. About one third of the examples of fronting due to topic switching also show a parallel contrast with the previous subject.

Fronting within the clause indicates one of various kinds of focus. These include parallel contrast, restricting focus and replacing focus (Dik 1981). There is also a general type of focus using focus words, such as **va** (the particle of assertion) and **ndaá** 'even'.

In negative sentences, parallel contrastive focus is found, where only the second subject in the contrast is fronted. It is fronted before the negative markers and the verb. On the other hand, when the subject is fronted before the verb but after the negative markers, sometimes it is negating the subject (not him, but someone else). Often it is a repetition of something in the previous sentence, bringing cohesion and sometimes a counter expectation.

As for adverbials, the setting of a story normally comes clause initial. Other fronting indicates focus and in one example (63), cohesion in the climax.

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Abbreviations

ANAPH	anaphoric
ASN	particle of assertion
CMP	completive aspect (usually marked on verb prefix)
CNTR	contrary to expectation
COM	complementizer
CON	continuative aspect
DUR	durative verbal prefix
EMPH	intensifier, particle of emphasis
IM	verbal prefix with meanings: ‘immediately’ (with continuative aspect) ‘about to’ (with potential aspect) ‘already’ (with completive aspect)
NEG	negative
ONLY	a particle meaning approximately “only”
OPT	optative
POT	potential aspect
PRG	progressive aspect
RC	relative clause marker
we(ex)	1st person plural exclusive
we(in)	1st person plural inclusive
YNq	yes-no question marker
=	phonologically fused clitic