

SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS
PUBLICATIONS IN LINGUISTICS

Publication Number 75

EDITORS

Desmond C. Derbyshire
*Summer Institute of
Linguistics - Dallas*

Virgil L. Poulter
*University of Texas
at Arlington*

ASSISTANT EDITORS

Alan C. Wares

Iris M. Wares

CONSULTING EDITORS

Doris A. Bartholomew
Pamela M. Bendor-Samuel
Robert Dooley
Austin Hale
Phyllis Healey

Robert E. Longacre
Eugene E. Loos
William R. Merrifield
Kenneth L. Pike
Viola G. Waterhouse

Jerold A. Edmondson

SENTENCE INITIAL DEVICES

Joseph E. Grimes
Editor

A Publication of
The Summer Institute of Linguistics
and
The University of Texas at Arlington

1986

© 1986 by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc.
Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 83-051455
ISBN 0-88312-096-8

Copies of this and other publications of the
Summer Institute of Linguistics may be
obtained from
Bookstore
Summer Institute of Linguistics
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.
Dallas, TX 75236

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Joseph E. Grimes	
New Information First	
Constituent Order, Cohesion, and Staging in Gavião	7
Horst Stute	
Focus and Topic in Xavante	27
Eunice Burgess	
Connectives	
Sentence-initial Elements in Brazilian Guarani	45
Robert A. Dooley	
Coreguaje Dependent Verb Suffixes	71
Dorothy Cook	
Higher-level Conjunctions in Karitiãna	95
Rachel M. Landin	
Topic	
Staging in Teribe Discourse	103
Carol Koontz Schatz	
Topicalization in Nambiquara	131
Ivan Lowe	
Topicalization and Constituency in Coreguaje Narrative	149
Frances Gralow	
Repetition in Jamamadí Discourse	171
Barbara Campbell	
Participants in Nambiquara Myths and Folktales	187
Margaret Lowe	
Collateral Information	
The Adversative Particle in Tucano Discourse	201
Birdie West	
Paumari Interrogatives	215
Shirley Chapman	

Focus and Topic in Xavante

Eunice Burgess

Information structure in Xavante differentiates new and given, and primary and secondary information. New primary information normally occurs preceding the predicate of a clause, and new secondary information and given information, within the predicate. The distribution of information in a multiple-clause sentence, and to some extent in a paragraph, parallels that of a single independent clause. Topic structure is established primarily by referential criteria. A topic is usually part of the given information in a clause, but it may be part of the new information in the opening clause of a discourse or paragraph. Marked topics are signalled grammatically; unmarked topics are not.

In this paper are described the information structure of Xavante¹ clauses, sentences, and paragraphs within the context of a discourse, the topical structure where it differs from information structure, and the surface structure as it affects, or is affected by, the information and topical structure.

The information structure differentiates new from given information, and primary from secondary information. The unmarked position for new information in a clause is the initial position. This affects the analysis of topical structure in that topic cannot be defined as the initial item of a clause if part of the definition of topic is that a topic is given information and anaphoric in reference to which new information is attached by a comment (Gundel 1974).

The topical structure involves the devices of fronting, tagging, pseudoclefting, topic interrogative, inflection, and the use of special pronouns.

The description of information and topical structure revolves principally around three relevant positions in the surface structure:

preceding, following, or embedded within the nuclear part of each level—that is, the predicate complex in the clause, the main clause in the sentence, and the body of the paragraph.

Many Xavante narratives are told in the form of an imaginary dialogue in which there are many repartee sequences which have some characteristics not found in monologue. Both styles are included in the description of the various kinds of structure.

1 Surface structure

1.1 Clause. Distribution of information and topicalization features are limited by certain constraints in the surface structure of clauses.

The grammatical subject is always the semantic agent in active clauses and the patient in stative clauses. This means that no other constituent can be subjectivized, there being no passivizing mechanism in the language.

The subject may be identified by a noun phrase. It is also identified by free person-aspect proclitics in all forms of transitive clauses, and in declarative active forms of intransitive clauses. In other forms of intransitive clauses, the subject is identified by person prefixes on the verb. The person-aspect proclitics and the person prefixes occur whether or not the subject is also identified by a noun phrase.

In transitive clauses the object may be identified by a noun phrase. If not, it is identified by a person prefix on the verb. Person and number suffixes on the verb agree with the subject of intransitive clauses, and with both subject and object of transitive clauses.

When both subject and object are identified by noun phrases, there is no overt distinction as to which is which either by affixation or by word order. If one noun phrase refers to an animate object and another to an inanimate, the animate one is usually the subject, and the inanimate one the object. If both are animate, or both inanimate, only context can disambiguate them. Their order relative to each other is determined by information or topical structure and not by surface structure.

The verb is most frequently the final element in a clause, although certain items of both new and given primary information may occur after the verb. Such items are usually marked off intonationally as separate information units. It is rare to find the verb as the first constituent of the clause unless it is the only constituent.

A predicate complex is the core of the clause. It is that part of the clause that begins with person-aspect proclitics and ends with the verb. The verb includes person prefixes and may have postposed modifiers together with person-number and modal suffixes. In the following examples the clause core is boldfaced: *Dzêmi-hâtê **dza wê tsô** âwitsi*

(Jim-specifier **he will here them-for it-bring**) ‘Jim will bring it (the plane) here for them’; *Toptö wahi matê títsa* (Toptö snake **it her-bit**) ‘a snake bit Toptö’; *i î-to tse-di*, (her-eye **painful-is**) ‘her eye is painful’; *da-tsipêtsê-u tê dza atsamrô*, *hu'u-u* (people-dance-to **they will fly**, jaguar-to) they will fly to the dance, to the jaguar dance’.

1.2 Sentence. A sentence may consist of a single independent clause or a main clause plus one to three subordinate clauses. One or two subordinate clauses may precede the main clause, and one may either be embedded in or follow the main clause. The subordinating enclitic is usually last in the clause. The rhetorical relationships expressed by subordination are temporal succession, conditional, causal, and complement: *töibö ma tsiwi 'rê-pa ihö-rata-wamhã*, *ihö-teptsi tê oto tsiwi rom-dza'ra* (complete they collective plant-finish one-old-**when**, one-new they then collective thing-heap up) ‘when they finished planting the old one (field), they then clear the new one’; *ĩ-pê'êdze-tê-tsi tso ñ-mori-da wa ta-ma tiña* (I-sad-**if-only** her-for I-go-**that** I her-to say) I said to her that I would go for her only if I were sad’; *ĩ-to datê ta-ma 'wa'ri-dã*, *tê dza ti-wararê*, *hödze-ahã-wa* (her-eye someone her-for operate-in order to, she future she-fly, pain-much-**because**) ‘she will fly in order for someone to operate on her eye because it is very painful’.

2 Information structure

Information focus in a clause is that part that is new or informative. It is presented by the speaker to the hearer as not being recoverable from the verbal or situational context, or it is presented as new in relation to a particular predicate.

In Xavante there are two kinds of new information, primary and secondary. **Primary** information is that which the speaker identifies as essential to the development of the narrative. **Secondary** information is supplied by the speaker as explanation or background. It is information that helps the hearer understand the narrative, without being itself a crucial part of it.

Information that is not new is **given** information, which is recoverable from the verbal or situational context. Given information does not develop the narrative further but rather it provides a framework for handling new information.

2.1 Information structure in the clause. New primary information normally occurs before the predicate in a clause: *aro tê tsub-dza'ra* (**rice** they winnow-plural) ‘they are winnowing rice’; *tsetsta-na ma ama aimatsitsi-dzahure* (**Friday-on** they there stay-both) they both stayed

there on Friday'; *Batowi-ama tē nāmra* (**Batovi-at** he live) 'he lives at Batovi'. New secondary information normally occurs within the predicate: *dzahadu tē wēdēdzadadzōri tsada 'maña* (still they **coffin** him-for make) They are still making a coffin for him'. In the preceding example, the new secondary information was given to explain why a dead child was not yet buried.

In the same narrative, new secondary information tells as background what happened before the child died: *taha-dzō tē mararo ama 'wa' redze 'mapra* (him-for she **at dawn** there syringe take), 'she took a shot there at dawn for him'.

New secondary information may also occur in a relative clause embedded within another clause constituent: *ū-hitebre tē ū-ma ī-tsomri-na wa uptsō* (**my-brother he me-to that-give-with** I wash) 'I wash with (the soap) which my brother gave me'; *a-tsihudu tsipedze tētē ama ī-ōri dza wē ōri* (**your-grandson knife he there that-take** future here bring) 'bring here the knife which your grandson took there'.

Given information normally occurs within the predicate: *te dza oto ōmemhā apetse* (they future soon **there** dance) 'they will soon dance there'; *tē natsi da-'rata ti-ñotō-dza'ra* (they repeatedly **them-by** they-sleep-plural) 'they slept near them'.

When all, or most of, the information is new, as in the opening clause of a discourse or paragraph, there may be more than one item of new information before the predicate, in which case their order in relation to one another is determined by which is the topic of the higher level unit. This topic precedes other new information. In the next example *Roberto* and *Cuiaba-u* both precede the predicate because they are both informationally new and primary. *Roberto*, the topic of the paragraph of which this is the first clause, comes first: *Roberto Cuiaba-u ma tō mo* (**Robert Cuiaba-to** he punctiliar go) 'Robert has gone to Cuiabá'. Similarly in *Toptō wahi matē titsa* (**Toptō snake** it her-bite) 'a snake bit Toptō', *Toptō* is the topic of the discourse.

When all the information in a clause is given information, such a clause is usually the final summary of a paragraph. For example, a paragraph beginning with *Eunice-nori-hā tē dza oto Batowi-u atsamrō* 'Eunice and another are flying to Batovi', which is developed by adding information as to companion, purpose, means of travel, and time of travel, ends with *tē dza atsamrō-dzahure* (they future fly-both) 'they will both fly', in which all information is given information.

Even though all the information in the final summary of a paragraph is given, if it is largely a repetition of the preceding clause, the word order of the first clause may be maintained in the repeated clause, in which case given information may occur before the predicate: *tī-mama-u tē dza ama mo* (**her-father-to** (new) she future there go) 'she will go to her father', followed by *tī-mama-u tē dza ama tī-morirê, tahā* (**her-**

father-to she future there she-go, she) 'she will go to her father, she (will)'.

When a clause of given information is not final in a paragraph, it is reintroducing a topic or situation already mentioned but from which the narrator has digressed, and now wishes to return. In the next example the narrator has been talking about Nharinha flying, digresses into talking about Dominga staying, and then returns to Nharinha flying; *ê Nharinha tê dza oto wara* 'Is Nharinha going to fly?'; *tê dza oto wara* 'she is going to fly'; *Domingare-hã bete* 'what about Dominga then?' . . . (here follows the digression about Dominga) *Nharinha-tsi te dza wara* 'just Nharinha will fly'. In the last clause of this example *Nharinha* is given information but is reintroduced preceding the predicate as though it were new information. A further example of given information preceding the predicate after a digression is: *ê momo tê ai-mo* 'where are you going?'; *ôwa, Bakairi-u wa mo* 'over there, to the Bakairi I am going'; *ê tihi-dzô* 'what for?'; *Bakairi ma 'matörö* 'a Bakairi has died'. Then follows a digression on whether it was an adult or child who died, and then: *ê ta-momo tê ai'aba'rei-wa'wa* (interrogative **that-where** you go-plural) 'is that where you went?'

Given information may also precede the predicate when it is linking secondary new information to preceding primary information: *ê ma tô apito tsabu* 'did the official visit him (the dead child)?'; *ma tô tsabu* 'she visited him'; *taha-dzô tê marare ama iwa'redze 'mapra* (**him-for** she dawn there syringe take) 'she took a shot there for him at dawn'.

Both new and given information may follow the predicate. New information in this position may be added to new information preceding the predicate, as in *upa-dzama dza têtê dzuri, aro-dzama* (**manioc-also** future they plant, **rice-also**) 'they will plant manioc too, and rice'. Or it may make the new information preceding the predicate more specific, as in *da-tsipese-u tê dza atsamrô, hu'u-u* (**people-dance-to** they future fly, **jaguar-to**) 'they will fly to the dance, the jaguar dance'. If the clause is in answer to a question, additional new information may follow the predicate, as in: *ê Nharinha tê dza oto wara* 'is Nharinha going to fly?', *tê dza oto wara Cuiaba-u, Nenehedzama* (she future soon fly, **Cuiabá-to, Nene-also**) 'she is going to fly, to Cuiabá, with Nene'; and in *ê mama-ô di* 'hasn't he a father?', *madzedi, i-mama tsa'rêse-ôdi, i-natsi* (no, his-father known-not, **his-mother-only**) 'no, his father is not known, only his mother'.

Given information may be highlighted by being placed after the predicate in a noun phrase that identifies an anaphoric reference earlier in the clause: *apö awaru-na wê tsitsa'rê* 'they came back by horse', *marare ma aihutu* 'they arrived at dawn'; *Negurê têtê tso tsimrô, awaru-hã* (Nego he them-for them-led, **horses-that-is**) 'Nego led them for them, the horses, that is'. Or it may repeat for emphasis the new

information preceding the predicate, as in *wa-wana ma tô ti-wawa-tсахöri-dza'ra*, *wa-wana* (**we-before** they complete they-cry-stop-plural, **we-before**) 'before we (got there) they stopped crying, before we (got there)'.

Given information may be deleted when it is in response to a content question. The information requested is supplied, and the rest of the clause is deleted: *ê 'wa ma awitsi* (interrogative who he bring) 'whom did he bring?', *Donaudo 'Donald'*. In a sequential information question, all given information except the question word may be deleted: *Uritiru-u tê dza 're tsamrâ* (Uritiru-at he future continuative live) 'he is going to live at Uritiru', *ê tiha-dzô* (interrogative **what-for**) 'what for?'

The verb of a clause may be new or given information, but there is no grammatical difference in either case. When it is given, it is a repetition or a synonym of a verb that has already been used to describe the same situation: *ubure dza têtê a'â rom-dzuri* (everything future they there thing-plant) 'they will plant everything', *upa-dzama dza têtê dzuri, aro-dzama* (manioc-also future they plant, rice-also) 'they will plant manioc too, and rice'; *töibö ma tsiwi 're -pa ihâ'rata-wamhâ* (complete they collective plant-finish old-field-when) 'when they finished planting the old field . . . '.

2.2 Information structure in the sentence. When a reason, condition, statement of purpose, or temporal succession is new primary information, it is encoded in a subordinate clause that precedes the main clause whether the main clause contains new information or only given information. The subordinate clause may contain some given information as well as new, but the rhetorical relationship to the information in the main clause is new: *têtê 'ri-pari-ptsi, tê dza oto mo* (**he build-finish**, he future then go) 'when he has finished building, he will go', *datê po'o-da, tê ti-wararê ama* (**someone operate-purpose**, he he-fly there) 'he flew there for someone to operate (on him)', *hödze-tê, tê dza ti-wararê* (**painful-because**, she future she-fly) 'she will fly because she is ill'.

When a subordinate clause contains new secondary information, it occurs within the main clause: *ta-dza tê i-mama i-'rata-ma têtê tso rop'ruï-wa i-'rada tsô mo* (that-why she, **her-father her-grandmother-to he her-for order-because**, her-grandmother her-for go) 'that's why, because her father told her to, her grandmother went for her'.

When a multiple-clause sentence is the final summary of a paragraph and, therefore, is all given information, a subordinate clause may precede the main clause paralleling the information distribution of a single independent clause (see 2.1). A paragraph which says that

'Nharinha is going to Cuiabá to have an operation on her eye which is painful' ends with the summary sentence: *hödze-tê, té dza ti-warare, datê ta-ma 'wa'ri-da* (**painful-because, she future she-fly, someone her-for operate-purpose**) 'because it is painful, she will fly, for someone to operate on it'.

A subordinate clause containing only given information can also precede the main clause when it is acting as a link between paragraphs: *töibö ma tsiwi 're-pa, ihö-'rata-wamhã, ihö-tep-tsi tê oto tsiwi rom-dza'ra* (**complete they collective plant-finish one-old-when one-new they then collective heap up-plural**) 'when they finished planting the old (field), then they cleared the new one'.

A subordinate clause may follow the main clause when it is repeating, or making more specific, the information in a subordinate clause preceding the main clause, or one of the constituents of the main clause: *wa-pê'êdze-ñere, wa dza da-dzo mapari-dza'rani, atsa wa-ama da-pê'êdze-ô-ñere* (**we-sad-since, we future them-for watch-plural, reciprocal us-for they-sad-not-even=though**) 'since we are sad, we will watch for them, even though they are not sad for us in return'; *romhuri-dzo ma ta-watobro-ni apito-buru-u, wêdê têtê pahöri-mono-da* (**work-for they they-leave-plural postman's-field-to, trees they cut-purpose**) 'they left for work, to the postman's field, to cut down the trees'.

New information may be included in the answer to a yes/no question in a subordinate clause following the main clause: *ê ta-momo têtê ai'aba'rei-wa'wa* 'is that where you are going?'; *ihê, wa dza ama mo, têtê tsabu-da* (**yes, I future there go, I him-see-to**) 'yes, I am going there to see him'.

If the information in a subordinate clause is in answer to a question for information, the main clause in the answer may be deleted: *Uritiru têtê dza 're tsamrã* 'he is going to live at Uritiru'; *ê tiha-dzô* 'what for?'; *powawê têtê 'rê 'madö'ö-mono-da* (**cattle he continuative watch-to**) 'in order to look after the cattle'.

2.3 Information structure in the paragraph. The first sentence in a paragraph usually contains several items of new information. Further new information is added in the body of the paragraph, often one item per clause. The final sentence in a paragraph is often a summary one containing only given information. A clause containing parenthetical background information, i.e., new secondary information, may occur within the body of a paragraph. It is spoken with low level intonation which is in contrast to the intonation of the rest of the paragraph. The following example of a paragraph shows most of these features: *Eunitsi-nori-hã têtê dza oto Batowi-u atsamrö*. 'Eunice and another are going to fly to Batovi.' *ê 'wai-me* 'who with?' *Alitsi-hi-me* 'with Alice'

tê dza oto atsamrô-dzahure 'they will both fly' *Erena tê tsabu-dzahure-da, Erena-ha-u* 'to see Helen, to Helen's' *da-tsipetse-u tê dza atsamrô, hu'u-u* 'they will fly to the dance, the jaguar dance' (*tê dza oto ômemhâ apetse*) (parenthetical: 'they (the Xavante) will dance there') *hu têtê 'madô'ô-dzahure-da tê dza atsamrô-dzahure* 'to watch the jaguar dance they will both fly' . . . *tê dza-atsamrô-dzahure* 'they will both fly'.

2.4 General observations. A comparison of the information structure of the clause with that of the sentence reveals strong parallel features. As the information units in the clause are to the predicate, so those in subordinate clauses are to the main clause. To a lesser degree the paragraph also has some parallel features, the most notable being the parenthetical secondary information within the body of the paragraph and the greater volume of new information occurring at or near the beginning of the paragraph.

A comparison of the information structure of Xavante with that of English, as presented by Bayless and Johnson, shows some similarities and some differences. Their principle 1, "syntactic new information in one clause becomes syntactic old information for subsequent clauses," is only partially valid for Xavante. In summary final clauses of paragraphs, where all information is now old, the syntactic order of the preceding clause may be retained. The primary function of such a clause, however, seems to be not informative, but rather a signal that the speaker is concluding one topic and about to introduce another in the next clause. Where new information has followed the predicate in one clause, it may be put into the "proper" syntactic position for new information in the succeeding clause: *ê 'wa dza wê tsô awitsi* 'who will bring it (the plane) here for them?'; *Dzemi-hâ 'Jim'*; *Dzemi-hâ tê dza wê tsô awitsi, romhuriduridzep-amo-na* 'Jim will bring it here for them, next Monday'; *romhuriduridzep-amo-na tê dza wê tsô awitsi* 'next Monday he will bring it here for them'.

Their principle 2, "syntactic old information generally precedes syntactic new in the same clause," is not valid for Xavante. The reverse order is the case if the new information is primary. Both Halliday (1967) and Daneš (1974) propose a similar principle.

Their principle 3, "old information is generally found in subject position," is only partially valid for Xavante, because Xavante surface structure restricts the subject to being the agent of active clauses and the patient of stative clauses. If a series of active clauses has the same agent or a series of stative clauses the same patient, then the subject of the noninitial clauses is old information and is identified only by the obligatory person-aspect proclitics in the clause. If old information is other than the agent or the patient, then the subject may be new information and be identified by a noun phrase preceding the predicate

complex. The surface constraints on what may be subject invalidate for Xavante their principle that “one function of surface-rearrangement rules (in English discourse) is to place old information, or a dummy NP instead of old information, in subject position.”

Their principle 4, “the notions of old and new information operate at different structural levels,” is valid for Xavante. In the next example *romhuri-u* and *romhuri-dzô* are postpositional phrases where the object in the second instance is old information, and only the postposition is new. *buru-u* and *apito-buru-u* have the same postposition *-u* but the object of the postposition is modified in the second instance by the possessor *apito*, which is new information: *Buru-u ma tô ta-dzömoridza'ra-ni*, *romhuri-u*. *Romhuri-dzô ma ta-watobro-ni*, *apito-buru-u*. (eld-to they punctiliar they-travel-plural, **work to**. **work-for** they they-leave-plural, **postman's**-eld to) ‘They went to the field, to the work. They left for the work, to the postman’s field.’ The above examples show that part of a phrase may be new information and the rest of it old. In other words, new information does not have to be an entire constituent at clause level.

3 Topical structure

The question I wish to answer in this section is whether or not Xavante has a topic-comment structure for clauses that is different from the information structure already described.

The Prague school in their work on functional sentence perspective (Daneš 1974) mention three concepts that have to do with the topical structure of clauses, viz., given and new information, theme and rheme, and communicative dynamism. They affirm that known information is distinguished from theme because there exist instances where theme does not convey known information, although they acknowledge that such cases are the minority and are considered as marked themes. They then proceed to ignore the difference between known information and theme. They describe theme as the element of the sentence (usually the opening one) that links the utterance with the context and the situation; they also say that the theme carries the lowest degree of communicative dynamism in a clause.

Halliday (1967) divides the information structure of a clause into information, i.e., given and new; thematization, i.e., the sequence of elements; and identification, i.e., the patterns of clause structure. He defines theme as the first element in a clause or the point of departure for the clause as a message, and distinguishes marked themes from unmarked. Theme is distinguished from old information in that the former is what is being talked about now, while the latter is what was being talked about before. Gundel (1974), using the terms “topic” and

“comment,” says the topic is the element that names what the speech act is about. It is not necessarily the leftmost element or leftmost noun phrase in a clause, although this is probably its most common position. She further says that topic is always associated with given information and is necessarily a nonfocal element. She equates topical structure with information structure.

Gundel associates such syntactic devices as left dislocation, right dislocation, clefting, and pseudoclefting with the topic-comment structure of a clause. Bayless and Johnson associate the same devices with the information structure. Halliday associates them with identification, which is one part of total theme structure separate from considerations of new and given information and of theme and rheme.

In Xavante, the options in relation to order of constituents in a clause seem to be largely determined by information structure as has already been described. That structure involves not only new versus given information, however, but also primary versus secondary information. When given information occurs before a predicate complex, this could be called a case of fronting. Such fronting on the clause level usually functions where secondary new information has displaced given information, which then becomes the link between the secondary information and the preceding context. On sentence level, a subordinate clause that is given information may be fronted before the main clause both when the subordinate clause is the link between paragraphs and when the main clause introduces new information as the topic of a new paragraph. With interrogative clauses, there are some instances of fronting that seem to be genuine instances of marked topicalization, which occur as initial sentences of a discourse or paragraph: *pi'ô-nori-hã, ê momo tê ai'aba're* (**woman-plural** interrogative where they go) ‘the women, where are they going?’ *Donaudu, ê mame tê ñamra* (**Donald**, interrogative where he live) ‘Donald, where does he live?’ *buru-ama hõiwahõ tsetsta-na î-tsipe, ê tiha ma tê bete ãwitsi* (eld-at afternoon Friday-on who-arrive, interrogative what they then bring) ‘the ones who arrived at the field on Friday afternoon, what did they bring?’ The topic, which may be either new or given information, is fronted before the interrogative marker *ê*, which is normally the first element of an interrogative clause. By fronting, the topic is established, and then the question asked about it. The same sort of device is also used for rhetorical questions whose function is to intensify the quality of a descriptive. First, the topic is established and then it is described: *udzô-hã barana-hã, ê î-ro'ô-baihõirê* (**light night**, interrogative which-burn-many) ‘lights at night, wow! are there ever a lot!’; *tiha u'êtê-rarê, ê î-tse-õrê* (**thing cake-small**, interrogative that-delicious-not) ‘the small cake thing, boy!, is that ever good!’

There are also some instances of tagging or right dislocation which seem to be instances of marked topicalization: *Negurê têtê tso tsimrô, awaru-hã* (Nego he them-for them-led, **horses-that=is**) ‘Nego took them for them, the horses that is’; *ôhõta tê wê rop madõ, î-têdê-’wa-hã* (over there, he here look, **its-owner-that-is**) ‘from over there he is looking this way, the owner that is’; *têtê ’ri-pari-ptsi, tê dza ama mo, Tsiriwaruwê-hã* (he build-finish-when, he future there go, **Tsiriwaruwê-that=is**) ‘When he has finished building, he will go, Tsiriwaruwê, that is’. When tagging has a topicalizing function, it seems to be clarifying what is the topic, rather than singling out the topic to highlight it. In some instances two constituents are dislocated to the right: *dzahadu têtê tsada ’ri-pari-dza’ra-õdi, Bakairi-hã, î-tsa’wari-dzeb-da-hã* (incomplete they it-for it-build-finish-plural-negative, **Bakairi that is, its-empty-place-for-that=is**) ‘they still haven’t finished building it for it, the Bakairis that is, its storage place that is’. In the preceding example in the main part of the clause, there are three anaphoric references—to the agent (the Bakairis), to the beneficiary (the rice crop), and to the goal (the storage place). Only two of these are singled out following the predicate. The first of them, the Bakairis, seem to be topicalized. They have been the topic of a previous but not immediately preceding clause, and are now being reinstated as topic. The second element, the storage place, is new information but not topic. In other words, not all right dislocation has to do with topic structure. Given information is topicalized, and new information is not. In the next example, ‘Nharinha’ is old information, and ‘by truck’ is new. *Î-mrõre-hã bete?* ‘What about his wife?’ *Cuiaba-u tê wara, Nariñarê-hã, wedewara-nã* (Cuiabá-to she rode, **Nharinha-that=is, truck-by**) ‘She went to Cuiabá, Nharinha that is, by truck’.

Another device for marked topicalization in Xavante is the use of the topic interrogative *bete* ‘what about’. It is used when the speaker in dialogue wants to know something about a new topic that has come to his mind because of its situational association with the previous topic: *Domingare-hã bete* ‘What about Dominga?’ *Î-mrõ-hã bete* ‘What about her husband?’

Pseudoclefting also occurs occasionally as a marked topic device. By this device a clause is made into an equative construction in which the comment occurs first followed by the the topic in the form of a relative clause, as in: *barana î-dzõmori-dze-hã* (night that-travel-time-that=is) ‘the time that they traveled was at night’; *taha-tsi î-’matsi-hã* (that=one-only which-full-that=is) ‘that one only is the one which is full’; *buru-ama Tsabinohõ-’rata î-tsap-tsi, î-tsa’wari-wawê hã* (field-at Sabino-near which-stand-only that-supply-big-that=is) ‘the one which is at the field near Sabino’s is the one with the big supply’. This use is similar to Halliday’s identification structure. It is used with background

or orientation information, rather than as part of the development of a narrative.

Another marked topic device is the use of free pronouns (as distinct from person-aspect proclitics in predicates). When this device occurs, the free pronoun is usually fronted or tagged: *wa-nori-hã*, *wa dza ama lwape-ni* (**we-group**, we future there it-carry) 'our group, we will carry it there'; *ti-mama-u tê dza ama ti-morirê ta-hã* (her-father-to she future there she-go, that-one) 'she will go to her father's, she will'; *tso tsai'uri, a-hã* (it-for climb, you) 'climb for it, you'.

The enclitic *-hã* is often used after a noun phrase when a constituent is topicalized in one of the marked ways already mentioned. This does not seem to be its only function, however; McLeod (1974b:71-73) describes its function in participant highlighting, marking change of agent, and as a device for building up suspense in a narrative.

The enclitic *-tsi* occurs with noun phrases that contrast with preceding topics. After a paragraph about Dominga, one text continues: *Nariña -tsi tê dza wara* (Nharinha-**only** she future fly) 'only Nharinha will fly'.

Use of *-hã* or *-tsi* does not necessarily make a noun phrase topic of a clause; rather they serve to introduce elements that are part of the referential field of a succeeding clause. In the example in the preceding paragraph, the topic is still Dominga. It makes sense to assert that only Nharinha will fly in the context of talking about Dominga who stayed. In the next sentence, however, Nharinha is the topic. It makes sense to ask 'Why (will she fly)?' about Nharinha. The predicate complex has been deleted, but if it had been present, Nharinha would have been referred to by the person-aspect subject *tê* 'she': *ê tiha-dzo* (interrogative what-for) 'what for (will she fly)?'

In a clause in which all information is new, the first element is topic. In such clauses, the concept of identifying something and then saying something about it seems more relevant for establishing the topic than a question like 'About what does it make sense to make this assertion?' If the clause is intransitive, the subject is most likely to be the topic. If the clause is transitive, either subject or object may be topic, and their order relative to each other is determined by which is topic, the topic being the first element: *Litsi ma tê-dzada* (**Lici** she leg-burn) 'Lici burned her leg'; *Roberto Cuiaba-u matô mo* (**Robert** Cuiaba-to he go) 'Robert went to Cuiabá'; *Toptô wahi matê ti-tsa* (**Toptô** snake her-bite) 'a snake bit Toptô'. I disagree with Gundel when she says that no topic may be new information, and that in a sentence where all information is new, the topic is the temporal or local situation. This seems to me to fail in cases where the situation is not yet defined. I prefer to say that different criteria are needed for establishing the topic

in sentences where all information is new than in other sentences.

In a clause that has an unmarked topic and where there is some given information, the topic is part of such information. Where there is more than one item of given information, there is no syntactic or morphological signal that singles out a single item as topic. If one considers such a clause in isolation and asks the question “About what does it make sense to make this assertion or ask this question?” it seems that any or all of the anaphoric referent could be topic. In context, however, reference is always to the referent most recently designated in the text as topic. To recognize that referent as the topic, therefore, does not break continuity with a previously established topic, even in the absence of a more explicit topic signal in the clause in question. How this operates can be seen by tracing the topic structure and referential field through the following short complete text.

In the following text each item of new information has a superscript number, and each succeeding anaphoric reference to that item has the same number. Where a reference has been elided, so that it is recognized by the absence of any overt signal, the number is placed in the position where the overt signal would occur.

1. *Toptö¹ wahi² matê² ti¹-tsa.* (Toptö snake it her-bite) ‘A snake bit Toptö.’
2. *Matê² têtê² ¹paihi³-dupto.* (it her-arm-swell) ‘It arm-swelled her.’
3. *Nharinha⁴ tê⁴ ¹tso mo, têtê⁴ ¹wa'ri-da ti²-wi.* (Nharinha she her-for go, she inject-for it-against) ‘Nharinha went to her, to give her a shot against it.’
4. *Matê⁴ ¹paihi³-watsitsi.* (she her-arm-tied) ‘She tied her arm.’
5. *I²-tse matê⁴ ti²-wi ¹ama tsô'ra.* (its-poison she it-from her-at stop) ‘She stopped its poison from spreading at her.’
6. *Mădarê⁵ têtê¹ i⁵-tsa'rare-dzo ¹mori-dza, matê² ti¹-tsa.* (mango she which-pile up-for go-as, it her bite) ‘As she was going for the mangoes she had piled up, it bit her.’
7. *I¹-mama⁶ tê⁶ ¹ama ti⁶-wawa.* (her-father he her-at he-cry) ‘Her father is crying over her.’
8. *Tê⁶ ¹ama ¹re tsadari.* (he her-at continuative wail) ‘He is wailing over her.’

In sentence 1, all the information is new. Both subject and object are nominal constituents and precede the predicate. In terms of information content, one would say that the text is about Toptö rather than the snake, and for that reason *Toptö* precedes *wahi* in the first clause and is established as topic. In sentence 2, there are two anaphoric references, the subject and the object, referring back to the snake and Toptö respectively. If it were asked, “About what does it make sense to make the assertion ‘it arm-swelled her’?” the answer could equally well be either Toptö or the snake, unless one concluded that Toptö is topic by reason of having been topic of sentence 1. In sentence 3, a

new participant, Nharinha, is introduced as subject of both the main and the subordinate clauses and there are anaphoric references to Toptö as referent in the main clause and as object in the subordinate clause, and to the snake as referent in the subordinate clause. In sentence 4, the anaphoric references are to Nharinha as subject and to Toptö as object. In sentence 5, there are references to Nharinha as subject, and to the snake and Toptö as referents. In sentence 6, there is reference to Toptö as subject of the relative clause and the subordinate clause, and as object of the main clause, and to the snake as subject of the main clause. In sentence 7, a new participant, 'her father', is introduced as subject by a kinship term which relates him to Toptö, and another reference to Toptö as referent. In sentence 8, there is reference to 'father' as subject and to Toptö as referent. Continuity of Toptö as referential topic is assumed throughout each sentence of the text since no other marked topic occurs.

To sum up this section, Xavante information structure and topical structure are largely but not completely overlapping. Topic is defined referentially rather than grammatically, although there are grammatical signals in the case of a marked topic. Two criteria are needed to establish an unmarked topic. In a clause containing only new information, the topic is the element that identifies an existing object about which the rest of the clause says something. In a clause containing given information, the topic is that element about which it makes sense to make an assertion or ask a question. Where there is ambiguity as to what the topic is, continuity of a previously established topic is assumed.

Notes

- 1 Xavante is a Gê language spoken by approximately two thousand people in northeastern Mato Grosso, Brazil. The data on which this paper is based were collected during various field trips between December 1958 and May 1962, made possible at that time under a contract between the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Museu Nacional of Rio de Janeiro, with permission to live on the Posto Indígena Simoés Lopes being granted by the then Serviço de Proteção aos Índios. I wish to thank my colleagues Ruih McLeod and Joan Hall for access to their data, and Joseph Grimes and Ivan Lowe, both of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, for their help, advice, and criticism.

Xavante has 10 consonants, 8 oral vowels, and 4 nasalized vowels. These phonemes are represented in the orthography used in this paper as follows: Consonants /p/ p; /t/ t; /ʔ/ ʔ; /b/ b, m; /d/ d, n; /dz/ dz; ñ; /ts/ ts; /w/ w; /r/ r; /h/ h. Vowels /i/ i; /e/ ê; /ɛ/ e; /ɨ/ y; /a/ a; /o/ ô; /ɔ/ o; /ɤ/ õ; /ɨ/ ɨ; /ẽ/ ẽ; /ã/ ã; /õ/ õ. For a fuller description of the phonological system see McLeod (1974a). Morphemes within a phrase are joined by hyphens in the examples.

References

- Bayless, Richard L. and Linda K. Johnson. Ms. "A Function of Surface Rearrangement Rules in English Discourse: Old and New Information." University of Michigan.
- Daneš, František. 1974. "FSP and the Organization of the Text." In *Papers on Functional Sentence Perspective*, ed. by F. Daneš. *Janua Linguarum*, Ser. Minor 147. The Hague: Mouton.
- Gundel, Jeanette. 1974. "The Role of Topic and Comment in Linguistic Theory." Ph.D. dissertation: University of Texas.
- Grimes, Joseph R. 1975. *The Thread of Discourse*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Hale, Austin and David Watters, eds. 1973. *Clause, Sentence, and Discourse Patterns in Selected Languages of Nepal: Part 2, Clause*. Summer Institute of Linguistics Publication 40. Norman, Oklahoma: SILUO.
- Halliday, M.A.K. 1967. "Notes on Transitivity and Theme in English, Part 2." *Journal of Linguistics* 3:199-244.
- Levinsohn, Stephen H. 1975. "Functional Sentence Perspective in Inga." *Journal of Linguistics* 11:13-37.
- McLeod, Ruth. 1974a. "Fonemas Xavânte." *Série Lingüística, Publicações do Summer Institute of Linguistics* 3:131-52.
- . 1974b. "Paragraph, Aspect and Participant in Xavânte." *Linguistics* 132:51-74.