CLAUSE AND SENTENCE-LEVEL WORD ORDER AND DISCOURSE STRATEGY IN CHICHICAPAN ZAPOTEC ORAL NARRATIVE DISCOURSE

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INTRODUCTION

Languages of the world vary considerably in terms of the devices used to signal prominence in narrative discourse. Indeed, as Schiffrin (1981:61) points out, focusing on only one means of signalling prominence in a given language would fail to adequately account for the subleties of prominence in that language, because different devices can signal prominence at different levels. In this paper, I focus on one prominence signalling device, namely left-shifts in word order at the clause level and sentence levels, in Chichicapan Zapotec (hereafter ChZ) oral narrative discourse.[1] In this paper, these leftward shifts (hereafter LS) are analyzed as making the shifted elements particularly thematic. Thematic material is considered to be any element(s) that precede the main verb of a clause or sentence.

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[1]Chichicapan Zapotec is spoken by approximately 5,000 speakers who live in the town of San Baltasar Chichicapan, district of Ocotlán, in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico.

The language has the following phonemic contrasts (orthographic symbolization placed in parentheses when different from phonemic representation): fortis stops p, t, ty (chy, ts),k (c, qu), kw (cw), lenis stops b, d, dy (r, dz), g (g, gu), gw; fortis affricate ch, lenis affricate j (dx); fortis fricatives s, :s (x), lenis fricatives z, :z (ll); fortis lateral L (ld), lenis lateral l; fortis nasals M (mm), N (nn), Ñ (nny); lenis nasals m, n, ñ; semivowels w, y; vowels + (i, wi, yi), i, e, a, o, u; and suprasegmental features, of which there are three types: tones (not orthographically written) low, high, low-rising, high-rising, low-falling, and high-falling; glottalization V', and syllable types high-intensity (Vh) and low-intensity (VV).

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This study is based on five narrative discourses drawn from two speakers and numbering approximately 800 clauses of all types. In section one I describe the basic word order of the ChZ clause, and then in section two I describe shifts from this basic order. In section three, I first discuss the rules for pronoun copy in connection with LS nominal elements, and then I then show that LS free pronouns fill a slot on the sentence level, while LS bound pronouns fill a slot on the clause level. In section four, I show the discourse significance of this word-order shift.

1. WORD ORDER AT THE CLAUSE LEVEL

ChZ, like other Zapotec dialects, is basically a VSO language. I say "basically," because this order can shift, depending on the discourse context.

The basic word order is not difficult to discover for ChZ because when the basic VSO order is changed, the pronouns which usually follow the verb take a special clitic form.[a] Non-pronominal noun phrases are not always marked in some special way, but can take a prefix which is either a'- or la'h, depending on the speaker. More will be said about this particular prefix in sections two and three. The following examples taken from texts reflect the basic word order for intransitive and transitive clauses.

The following symbols are used on the second line of text samples to encode the following grammatical categories:

Verb aspect: H= habitual, PC= present continuous, S= stative, C= completive, U= unreal, P= potential, and D= future definite.

Pronouns: 1s= first person singular, 1sf= first person singular free form, 2s= second person singular, 2sf= second person singular free form, 3h= third person human common, 3r=third person human respect, 3d= third person divine, 3an= third person animal, 3in= third person inanimate, 1pl= first person plural inclusive, 1px= first person plural exclusive, 2pl= second person plural.

General: PL= plural, PREP= preposition indicating something in its entirety, REFL= reflexive, EMP= emphatic, Q= question marker, CS= causative prefix, NEG= negation, REL= relative clause marker, DM= diminutive marker, PS= possessive prefix.

Examples are taken from the following texts: The Grass Mat Idiot [GMI], The Seven Rivers Legend [SRL], Market Trip [MT], The Sun and Moon Legend [SML], and The Two Friends [TTF].

[a]When a clause-level subject pronoun is shifted to the left before the verb, it takes an a'- focus prefix.

(1) Gu-yuu' tuhbi bwiinn, ...guh-chi x-taada   ba...
    C-be   one person   C-die PS-father 3r
    There was a person,...his father died...
    [GMI]

(2) Lwehgu ba-chyu'xi ra' ni'chi buhrr-i'hn...
     then2 C-skin   PL that donkey-DM
     Then those (people) skinned the little donkey...
     [MT]

(3) Gu-na'zu ra' bi la'h daada guhl lliguehtalaadzi
     C-seize PL 3h PREP sir   old step-parent
     They seized their step-father...
     [SML]

     Other nominal elements of the clause follow the subject and object, or
the subject if the clause has no overt object:

(4) Ba-dzihn ba lahdxyi ba o sea   loh guihdxyi...
     C-arrive 3r country 3r or rather face town
     He arrived at his country, or rather in town...
     [MT]

(5) Ba-chi'bidu'h ra' bi la'h ba llaa'n tuhbi yahga...
     C-tie up   PL 3h PREP 3r bottom one   tree
     They tied him up to the bottom (trunk) of a tree...
     [SML]

     Unless the constituent is shifted to the front, "heavy" (i.e., extra
long) direct and indirect objects as well as prepositional phrases occur at
the end of the clause. "Heavy" clause constituents include direct quotes:

(6) ...chi'chi gu-ñi' la'ga'h bwi'dzida'ca:
        then   C-speak again   frog
     ...then the frog spoke again:

        R-ahw lasaa', r-ahw lasaa', r-ahw lasaa'.
        H-eat REFL   H-eat REFL   H-eat REFL
        "You're eating each other!, you're eating
        each other!, you're eating each other!"
        [SML]

In sum, the basic order or the clause in ChZ is VSO for transitive
clauses and VS for intransitive clauses. In the next section, I give
examples of clauses in which this basic order is different.

2. CLAUSE-LEVEL WORD ORDER SHIFTS

As stated above, shifts from the basic or unmarked order of clause-
level word order are generally characterized not only by the change in word
order itself, but also by prefixes or changes which are obligatory in the
case of pronouns and occasional in the case of noun phrases without
pronominal heads. The direction of the shift is from after the verb to
preceding the verb.

In addition, for noun phrases which are shifted to the left of the
verb, there can be pronoun copy to the right of the verb. This occurs much
more frequently for noun phrases which are subjects than for those which
are direct or indirect objects, or other nominal elements. If it is
posited that there is no intermediate grammatical level between the clause
and the sentence, then there is contrast between those cases of shifting
without copy and of those with copy. Below, I give examples of all types
of clause elements which shift to the left of the verb, beginning with
those which do not have pronoun copy after the verb. The prefixes a'-
and la'h- and their use will be discussed in greater detail in the
following section.

(Subject NP shift without pronoun copy)

(7)   O-zee chi'h ba nee ba-dzihn ba lugahri chi,
      PC-go just 3r and C-arrive 3r place   that
      He's just going and he arrived at that place,

      a'-ga tuhbi daada guhl lliu'hn n-uu lugahri chi...
      FOC-? one   sir   old   ?   S-be place   that
      there's a little old man (god) living in that place...
      [SRL]

(Object NP without pronoun copy)

(8)   ...puur gubah-yi'hn si   chi r-goo'ba ba...
         only vapor-DM   only that H-breathe 3hr
      ...just that aroma is what he breathes...
      [SRL]

(Prepositional phrase shift without copy)

(9) Loh   dahan 0-zee ba cun   x-cunna'h ba, ni'chi b-iaaba
     face field PC-go 3r with PS-woman 3r   thus   C-fall
     In the field he's going with his woman, thus fell

     tuhbi rrahyu yihca ra' ba gu-ñihchiloh   ra' chi'h ba.
     one   bolt head PL 3r C-perish   PL just 3r
     a (lightning) bolt on their heads, they just perished.
     [SRL]

(Subject NP shift with pronoun copy)

(10) ...en cambiu   yi'h, nicala   prohbi lu'h per
        by contrast 2sf   no matter poor   2s   but
     ...in contrast you; no matter you're poor, but

     n-u'nbwa'   lu'h ziahan lugahri...
     S-be acquainted with 2s many   place
     you are acquainted with many places...
     [TTF]

(Direct object NP with pronoun copy)

(11) ...bwiinn ca   ba-luu'yi lu'h ba xa naa dzi'n
        person that C-show   2s   3r how S-be work
     ...that person you showed him how is the work

     nin r-uhnn lu'h...
     REL H-do   2s
     that you do...
     [SRL]

     As I stated above, the left shifts with copy and those without are in
apparent contrast if it is posited that there is no grammatical level in
ChZ that is intermediate between the clause and the sentence. In the
following section, I propose that these two types of shift are actually
realizations of one discourse-level feature, but that they occur on
different grammatical levels. Finally, in section four I propose that the
discourse feature that triggers word-order shifts is a means of
highlighting the major participants as well as the major props and time
frames of a narrative.

3. WORD-ORDER SHIFTS AND GRAMMATICAL LEVEL

In this section I first show that LS full noun phrases do not a
require pronoun copy on the clause level, while LS pronouns do. Then I
show that LS free pronouns actually function on the sentence level while LS
bound pronouns function on the clause level.

Note in the examples below that when a full noun phrase is shifted to
the left of the main verb, no pronoun copy is required if it is on the
clause level. However, when more than one clause is involved (as in
sentences involving conjoined clauses and no overt linkage between them),
pronoun copy is required in the following clauses:

(12) ...ya biñi'n ndxi'hw gu-le'he   rrabwehsa...
        now child man   C-take out left
     ...now the boy child took out the left one...
     [SML]

(13) ...ya biñi'n gunna'h chi ba-siooba bi gu-le'he   bi
        now child woman   that C-hurry   3h C-take out 3h
     ...now that girl child she hurried; she took out

     loh ma nin naa derehchu...
     eye 3an REL S-be right
     its right eye...
     [SML]

By contrast, left-shifted pronouns at the clause level require copy on
the main verb. As with LS full noun phrases, however, there is pronoun
copy if the LS pronoun is functioning on the sentence level:

(14)   Ya la'h ra' bi sola ru-llihdzi ra' bi...
        now PREP PL 3h only H-laugh   PL 3h
        Now them they only laugh...
        [SML]

(15) ...encambiu   yi'h nicala   prohbi lu'h peru
        by contrast 2sf no matter poor   2s   but
     ...by contrast you; no matter that you're poor but

     n-u'nbwa' lu'h ziahan lugahri."
     S-know   2s   many   place
     you know many places."
     [TTF]

In sum, the rules for pronoun copy in ChZ are sensitive both to the type of nominal that is shifted to the left (full NP versus pronoun) as well as the grammatical level at which the LS occurs (clause versus sentence). Furthermore, sentences can be composed of either juxtaposed clauses without any overt linking conjuctions (example 12) or with linking conjuctions (example 14).* I now show that the manifestation of LS pronouns is also sensitive to the grammatical level.

In the following example, note that there are two LS pronouns, both of which refer to the first person singular category. However, each has a different form; the first being the free form while the second is the bound form and is preceded by the obligatory prefix a'- (which can also be la'-, depending on the speaker):

(16)   "Dx-la'han si   tu, tin na'h a'-n   gu-zaa'ha
        P-remain only 2pl for 1sf FOC-1s P-go
        "You all just remain, because as for me I'm going to go

        s-tuhbi   nehza."
        other-one way
        another way."
        [GMI]

The sequence of a LS free pronoun followed by an LS bound one is common in the first person singular in direct speech. It can be a little confusing to decide why they are in a sequence. However, the fact that the LS free form is used in a topicalizing way (i.e., "As for you,...") in example (15) above, there is a model to use in explaining this sequence in example (16). The only difference is that the relevant portion of example (16) is apparently composed of a single clause while example (15) is composed of two clauses. Unfortunately, I do not have any examples of other pronominal categories from the texts used in this study which

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*In other Otomanguean languages, a grammatical level that is intermediate between the clause and sentence level has been posited (Longacre 1966 for Trique, Lanier 1968 for Otomí, and Pride 1965 for Chatino). This level is valid in ChZ as well, and the following distinguishing features have been noted: 1) two or more clauses are juxtaposed without any overt conjuctions; 2) some restrictions exist in the sequence of aspect marking in the individual clauses; and 3) some restrictions exist in the reversibility of the clauses. There are very likely other distinguishing features of this level in ChZ as well, but a complete study of this level as well as the others up to the sentence has not yet been made.

illustrate the LS free form and the bound form in sequence. However, I have elicited this sequence in other pronominal categories and therefore know that they do exist.[4]

In the following section, I propose an analysis of the discourse-level function of LS as well as showing its interaction with other discourse features, namely aspect shift and the choice of juxtaposed-clause sentences over sentences with overt linkage between their constituent clauses.

4. WORD-ORDER SHIFTS IN RELATION TO DISCOURSE

In this section, I first show the range of clause and and sentence-level constituents that are affected by LS. Following this, I present narrative discourse fragments illustrating what the discourse role of LS is, namely to develop the theme. The latter is not to be confused with backbone information, as the backbone is generally conveyed by the information in the verb itself. Finally, I show how LS combines with other prominence-signalling devices such as verb aspect shift and the favoring of juxtapositioning of clauses without any overt linkage to heighten vividness of action.

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[4]The free and bound forms of each of the pronominal categories of ChZ are represented below in the form which they take in the left-shifted form:

FREE FORM

1 singular	na'h	1 plural	la'h-nu (exclusive of hearer)
2 singular	yi'h		la'h-nu'h (inclusive of hearer)
3 singular	la'h-ba (respect)	2 plural	la'h-tu
	la'h-bi (common)	3 plural	la'h-ra'-ba (respect)
	la'h-ma (animal)		la'h-ra'-bi (common)
la'h-an (inanimate)		la'h-ra'-ma (animal)	
	la'h-ñi'h (deity)		la'h-ra'-an (inanimate)
			la'h-ra'-ñi'h (deity)

BOUND FORM

1 singular	(l)a'-n	1 plural	(l)a'-nu (exclusive)
2 singular	(l)a'-lu'h		(l)a'-nu'h (inclusive)
3 singular	(l)a'-ba	2 plural	(l)a'-tu
	(l)a'-bi	3 plural	(l)a'-ra'-ba
	(l)a'-ma		(l)a'-ra'-bi
	(l)a'-an		(l)a'-ra'-ma
	(l)a'-ñi'h		(l)a'-ra'-an
			(l)a'-ra'-ñi'h

In the following four examples, LS affects a time phrase, a locational phrase, a dependent time clause, and an adverbial element. The first two LS constituents are on the clause level, while the latter two are on the sentence level. In each case, the LS constituents are in capital letters. All four examples are from *The grass mat idiot*, and the numbering reflects the position each example has in the story.

(LS time phrase and subject NP, clause-level)

(17)   GALOH X-CUNNA'H BA guh-chi...
         first PS-woman   3r C-die
         FIRST HIS WOMAN died...[GMT 2]

(LS locational constituent, clause-level)

(18)   "GURIIN   NEHZA hasta guzaa'h-ahn"
         different way   where P-go-1s
         "IT'S A DIFFERENT WAY where I will go."[GMT 5]

(LS dependent time clause, sentence-level)

(19)   YA CHIN GW-AHSTII RA' LLII'N BA,
         now when C-get up PL child 3r
         NOW WHEN HIS CHILDREN GOT UP,

    A'-BA 0-zuu   yihca tuhbi yuu',
    FOC-3r PC-stand top   one   house
    HE's standing on top of a house,

(LS adverbial constituent, sentence-level)

    RI'CHI CHI'H SI gu-ya'loh vihda xteenn ba.
    there just only C-finish life possess 3r
    JUST ONLY THERE his life ended.[GMT 10]

Having given a few other types of clause and sentence-level constituents that are affected by LS, I now illustrate the discourse use of LS. I do this by giving three discourse fragments and show how LS in each develops the flow the theme.

Below, I give the first two sentences from the *Seven rivers* story to illustrate how LS is used to develop the theme in a narrative discourse in ChZ. Note that when nothing is preceding the main verb in a sentence or the verb in a clause, the verb itself should probably be considered thematic. In other dialects of Zapotec (Mitla and Albarradas are

examples), the same clause-level focus morpheme, (1)a'-, can be prefixed to verbs as well as NPs. However, ChZ does not do this.

(20)   Gu-yuu'-tee ba loh ñihsa, ca-yahza ba chin lu'h
         C-enter-EMP 3r face water PC-bathe 3r when 2s
         He entered the water, he is bathing when

    guh-cabwa' ba LA'H BWEEN   CHI gu-dahbi la'h ba.
    C-realize 3r PREP alligator that C-swallow PREP 3r
    he realized THAT ALLIGATOR swallowed him.

    Guh-ca-n   ziga chi'h laa'yi dxyih, NEE HASTA BA-RAH
    C-happen-3in as ?   mid   day   and when C-end
    It happenned about mid-day, and WHEN

    S-TUHBI   GUE'LA, ba-re'caa ma rwaa' ñihsa chi,
    other-one night   C-leave   3an edge water that
    ANOTHER NIGHT ENDED, it came out on the other side of
          that water,

    ya S-TUHBI   LAHDU LA RWAA' ÑIHSA CHI n-a' ma
    now other-one side now edge water that S-lie 3an
    now ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT WATER it's lying

    loh yuhlli.
    face sand
    on the sand.
    [SRL]

     The following points should be noted. First, although the LS elements are generally new information, there is one notable exception, namely the introduction of the alligator in the first sentence. The fact that the deictic chi 'that' is used indicates that this is either inferrable or expected information. Second, as I claim above, the LS constituents should be best considered thematic, because they are the constituents that develop the theme or the main thrust of the story; i.e., it's an alligator that swallows the man, and that after travelling all night the alligator arrives at the other side of the water (in this case, probably the ocean). An interesting side-point is that for Zapotecs, the land of the gods is not above, but far away on the same horizontal level.

     In the *Sun and moon story*, a dragon comes to eat two children who have murdered their step-grandfather. In the following embedded discourse, the step-grandmother is telling the two children what their punishment will be. Note how she uses LS to emphasize that their punishment won't just be to be put into an oven, but that another consequence will occur as well:

(21)   "Nee ayi 0-nesto' dxi'h tu TANSOLA LA'N CHI
         and NEG PC-think NEG2 2pl just   in   that
         "And don't you all just think that ONLY IN THAT

     0-chee tu, sinoque nee TUHBI MAAN   NIN LAA BWE'LDA
     P-go   2pl rather and one   animal REL name snake
     you will go, but rather also AN ANIMAL THAT IS CALLED

     ROOSI dx-ie'ta   g-ahw la'h tu," r-ahbi ba.
     white P-descend P-eat PREP 2pl   H-say 3r
     THE WHITE SNAKE will come down to eat you," she says.
     [SML]

     Finally, note the use of LS in the following fragment from _Market
trip_. This fragment was taken from the peak of the story:

(22)   ZIGA MODA GUDXYIH-I'HN ba-re'h ba dxiaa' lahtsi.
         like way afternoon-DM C-leave 3r market Ocotlán
         LIKE ABOUT LATE AFTERNOON he left Ocotlán market.

     Pwihsi PARA LA'H BA BA'RU NASAA   0-ziaa ba tuhsi   ba
     Well   FOR PREP 3r ?   pleasant PC-go 3r one-only 3r
     Well FOR HIM VERY PLEASANTLY he's going home by himself,

     nen CAALLA g-aann ba cuun loqui nin n-a'hla la'h ba.
     and however P-know 3r what that REL S-follow PREP 3r
     and HOWEVER will he know what is following him.

     GAROOLDA CHI'H NEZYUH 0-ziaa ba chin ba-re'h-caa
     halfway ?   WAY   PC-go 3r when C-come out
     ONLY HALFWAY HOME he's going when

     tuhbi dxu'hn guba'n.
     one   bunch robber
     a bunch of robbers jumped out.
     [MT]

     As with the other two examples, the use of LS in the above discourse
fragment serves to make the development of the theme a little more
dramatic.

     I now focus on the combination of LS with other highlighting devices.
In the following two examples, note how LS elements occur in concert with
verb aspect shift (completive to habitual), which makes backbone events
more vivid by retelling them as if they were occurring before the
listener's eyes. Attention is thus drawn not only to the participants but
also to the action. In the first example, taken from the *Sun and moon*

legend the two children have just been confronted with the murder of their
step grandfather, while in the second, taken from the same story, they use
a broken shovel to kill a white dragon that has been called to eat them:

(23) Ya LA'H RA' BI sohla ru-llihdzi ra' bi,
     now PREP PL 3h only H-laugh   PL 3h
     Now THEM they just laugh,

     chi'chi gu-ñi' la'ga'h bwi'dzi da'ca...
     then   C-speak again   frog
     then the frog spoke again...
     [SML]

(24) ...chi'chi gu-ca'ha ra' bi pahla dxuuca,
        then   C-take   PL 3h shovel broken
     ...then they took the broken shovel,

CUN LA'H-AN ru-la'ha ra' bi dxiah lda'h
with PREP-3in H-throw PL 3h rock hot
WITH IT they throw hot rocks

rwaa' ma hasta que no   b-wi'hnn ra' bi gahn
mouth 3an until that finally C-do   PL 3h succeed
into its mouth until they finally succeeded

guh-chi ma,...
C-die   3an
that it died...
[SML]

     Next, From a discourse point of view, the use of juxtaposed clauses
tends to make for a staccato-like succession of events and thus makes the
action more intense. Note in the examples below the use of a sentence
composed of juxtaposed clauses and the use of LS as well. In the first
example, the white snake makes its appearance to eat the two children who
have killed their step-grandfather, while in the second example the girl
gets the white snake's right eye (the most valuable) ahead of the boy:

(25) Ya HOHRA GAHCAA ZA   gu-yuu' bwih roo' b-iehta maan chi
     now hour same   also C-enter wind big C-lower anim. that
     Now AT THAT SAME TIME there was a big wind that animal

     hasta O-rii ra' bi...
     where PC-be PL 3h
     came down to where they were together...
     [SML]

(26)   Per ya BIÑI'N GUNNA'H CHI   ba-siooba bi gu-le'he   bi
        but now child woman   that C-hurry   3h C-take out 3h
        But now THAT GIRL she hurried she took out

        loh ma nin naa derehchu, ya BIÑI'N NDXI'HW
        eye 3an REL be right   now child man
        its eye that is the right, now THE BOY

        gu-le'he   rrabwehsa.
        C-take out left
        took out the left.
        [SML]

In sum, LS is a realization at the clause and sentence level of a discourse-level strategy to develop the theme of a narrative by highlighting certain nominal, temporal, locational and adverbial elements. This strategy is often combined with others, such as verb aspect shift to make events more vivid and colons to change the timing of events.

None of the changes caused by these strategies can be adequately accounted for by referring only to the syntax of the sentence level and below. Changes in word order as well as in aspect and the use of juxtaposed clause sentence types over loose-knit types can be syntactically described as options, but little can be said about the reasons that the options exist in the first place.

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