

THE FRONTING OF NOUN AND ADVERB PHRASES IN MIXTEC OF TEZOATLAN

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0. Introduction

Mixtec of Tezoatlán (MT) is spoken by several thousand people in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. The database for this paper has been limited for the sake of manageability to five narratives by each of four Mixtec authors, or a total of twenty narratives.

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 at once that some instances of fronting mark *focus* (Lambrecht 1986:149). Others mark a change of *topic*. Finally, some sentence-initial adverbials of time indicate *setting* of a clause or episode.

Section 1 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 2 discusses subjects fronted with the equative verb *cúú* 'be', and Section 3 discusses subjects fronted in negative clauses. There is a brief discussion of the fronting of direct objects in Section 4, and Section 5 discusses fronted adverbials.

1. Fronted subjects in affirmative non-equative clauses

There are two fronting positions in a Mixtec clause, as shown in Figure 1. The *topic* position of a noun phrase indicates that either a new topic is being established, as at the beginning of some short stories, or a 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*. When a subject noun phrase is fronted to the *focus* position, on the other hand, there is no pronoun subject after the verb.

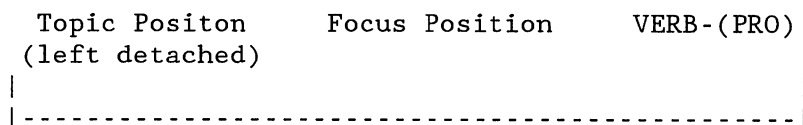


Figure 1

1.1. 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

- (1) Cúú tahná sáhno ñóó ndato ni nácaa ñóó
and old.lady that happily CON=be she-there

cávahán pastel.
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 cakes 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 cúú rrtóhq ñóó ndahí cuíco-roón.
and man that poor CON=be.hungry-he.that
'And the man was desperately hungry.'

¹Abbreviations used in morpheme glosses are listed at the end of the paper.

The next clause continues with the man as 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 of the *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 quirí yíí, iin quirí dihín, 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 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 1.2.1). The subject in the second clause is marked with a resumptive pronoun and continues to be the topic for at least one more clause. Following are several examples of fronting, or more precisely left-detachment, for change of topic, with a parallel contrast.

- (4) Dá n_i sahan tucu roón puestó,
 then CMP go again they-that deer.blind
- dá yuhu n_i sahan tucu-i noó cánduhu-ri.
 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) «Co níyicá tahon yohó cacaon vehe caa yóho»
 NEG CON=deserve NEG you POT=be-you house metal this
- caá-ra xihín yuhu.
 CON=say-he with I
- «Ta nduhu ñóho-ndu chí ió va
 and we CON=be.in-we because CON=be ASN
- cuachi n_i quee-ndu.»
 crime CMP do-we
- '«You don't deserve to be in jail,» they said to me.
 «But we are in here because there is a crime we committed.»'
- (6) Dá n_i yaha tiyóto siodáa ñóo carrterá ñóo.
 then CMP cross mouse city that highway that
- Ta tiyóto yúcu ñóo co ní cúu tahan
 and mouse mountain that NEG CMP be.able NEG
- va yaha-rí carrterá ñóo.
 ASN POT=cross-he highway that
- 'Then the city mouse crossed the highway.
 But the country mouse couldn't cross the highway.'
- (7) Tído n_ino ndaho n_i sahan-ra,
 but above very CMP go-they
- ta yuhu ndaa nino xixio n_i sahan yuhu.
 and I even below exceedingly CMP go I
- 'But they went very far upwards,
 and I went very very far downwards.'

Even the left detachment 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 detached subjects than most stories.

1.2. 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."

1.2.1. Parallel contrast

The fronting of subject noun phrases in MT sometimes shows the kind of focus Dik (1981) calls parallel contrast. Note that 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 n_i caa ndig_uehí:*
then CMP say coyote

«*Y_uh_u qu_iho oco tiñóó.*»
I POT=give twenty chickens

«*Ta y_uh_u qu_iho iin chee*» *n_i caa ndicaha ñóó.*
and I POT=give one bull CMP say lion that

'Then the coyote said, «I will give twenty chickens.»
«I will give a bull,» said the lion.'

- (9) *Iin iin ích_i n_i quihin-rí cuah_an-r_i.*
one one path CMP grab-they PRG=go-they

Ndicaha ñóó cuah_an quihin chee,
lion that PRG=go POT=get bull

ta ndig_uehí ñóó cuahán quihin oco tiñóó.
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 n_i c_andoo dao ndu_hu,*
then CMP remain some (of)us

t_ohon on_i ndu_hu n_i c_andoo cohon
about three (of)us CMP remain POT=go

taó sac_uaa ñóó,
POT=get.out deer those

ta on_i ca-ra n_i sahan n_i sandodó puestó.
and three more-(of)them CMP go CMP be 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.'

1.2.2. Other focus

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

- (11) a. *cuahá ndaho sacuaa ñóó*
 many very deer those
 'very many deer'
- b. *ndaá mió ñóó*
mii-va
 even self-ASN she-that
 'even she herself'
- c. *ndadó tóhón tatá va nduhu*
 ? only father ASN (of)us
 'only our father'
- d. *ñayuu quíni ndavaho*
 people bad very
 'very bad people'

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.

2. Fronted subject in equative clauses

2.1. Equative verb *cúú*

M.T. makes frequent use of the equative verb *cúú* 'be'. In clauses where *cúú* occurs, the normal word order is: Predicate nominal - Equative verb - Subject, as in (12).

- | | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| (12) | Predicate nominal | Equative verb | Subject |
| | Do cúú tina vaha ndavaho ní sa cuu | -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 two other word orders for equatives, shown in (13) and (14).

- | | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| (13) | Equative verb | Subject pronoun | Predicate nominal |
| a. | tá ní sa cuu -i | tadihí lóho | |
| | when CMP DUR be I | girl little | |
| | '...when I was a little girl.' | | |
| b. | Cúú ná | nayuu diní ndeíhí. | |
| | CON=be they | people head black | |
| | 'They are people with black hair.' | | |
| c. | Dá cacuu na | Ndíos yuhu. | |
| | then POT=be he | God I | |
| | 'Then He would be my God.' | | |

- | | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| (14) | Equative verb | Predicate adjective phrase | Subject |
| a. | ...chíi cúú cáhno ndavaho | -rí. | |
| | because CON=be big very | he(animal) | |
| | '...because he was very big.' | | |
| b. | Cúú vaha ndaho sáhan | pastel yóho. | |
| | CON=be good very tasty | cake this | |
| | 'This cake was very delicious.' | | |

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 (15) 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.

- | | |
|------|----------------------|
| (15) | Ta sa io ñadihí-ra. |
| | and DUR have wife-he |
| | 'And he had a wife.' |

Ñáha ñóó sa cuu naná noni ñóó xihín ndúchi ñóó.
 woman that DUR be mother corn those with beans those
 'That woman was the mother of the corn and beans.'

In the second sentence of (15), the subject has been fronted. Since it has just been stated that the man had a wife, ñáha ñóó '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 (16) and (17).

(16) Dión cuahan cuentó noni xihín ndúchi.
 thus(anap) PRG=go story corn with beans
 'Thus goes the story of the corn and beans.'

(17) Dión ni ndoho nduhu ni sahan-ndu Quini.
 thus(anap) CMP suffer we(ex) CMP go-we(ex) Yucuquimi
 'Thus it happened when we went to Yucuquimi.'

But (18) and (19) 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 yóho '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.

(18) Ña yóho ni sa cuu cuentó-na.
 thing this(anap) CMP DUR be story-they
 'This was their story.'

(19) Ña yóho quían ni ndoho yuhu,
 cúu-ña
 thing this(anap) CON=be-RC CMP happen I

tá ni sa cuui tadihí lóho.
 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. For example, the context of (20) is that both the lion and the coyote were going to be the godfather of the child, but the coyote didn't show up.

- (20) Tóhón vá ndicaha ñóó nĭ sã cuu tarndúta taleé ñóó.
 only ASN lion that CMP DUR be godfather child that
 'Only the lion was the godfather of the child.'

(21) 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.

- (21) Torr cóng, yohó xihín yuhu ná cohó
 if CON=want-you you with I OPT POT=go-we

 cacuó tarrndúta taleé ñóó.
 POT=be-we godfather child that

 'If you want, let's you and I be the godfather of the
 child.'

Replacing focus is also highlighted in the third line of (22). The subject, *yúchi va* 'knife ASN' is the focus of the clause.

- (22) «ÍÁ taa ndaho cúú ndi yohó xinóon?»
 YNq man very CON=be INTERR you believe-you

 Dá nĭ caa yító ñóó: «Tahón taa cúú yuhu.
 then CMP say stick that NEG man CON=be I

 Yúchi va cúú taa cháaca, dachiĭ cándéé ván
 knife ASN CON=be man more because CON=can ASN-it

 sahandáan nduhu» nĭ caa yító ñóó.
 CON=cut-it we CMP say stick that

 '«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.

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

- (23) Ñóó ndéi uy tacuálí saha iin yító.
 there CON=are two children foot one tree

Ta iin xi cúú tayií lóh_o.
and one (of)them CON=be boy little

Ta iinca xi cúú tadihí lóh_o.
and other (of)them CON=be girl little

Ndahí ndáa-xi ndéi-xi saha iin yít_o ñóó.
poor CON=are-they CON=be-they foot one tree that

'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 (24). Because of the yes-no question in the first clause with fronted subject (I am macho), the presupposed information is that someone is very macho. The assertion of the clause is that the subject is that someone. The subject is the focussed part of this clause and the clause following it.

(24) «íÁ taa ndaho cúú ndi miní, xiní-ní?»
YNq man very CON=be INTERR you CON=believe-you

Dá ní caa Ndios xihín rí: «Jaan, yuhu cúú taa
then CMP say God with he yes I CON=be man

ta yuhu cúú 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 cúú '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 1), except that with other verbs, the former role is marked by the special left detachment construction, with a pronoun subject after the verb.

2.2. Equative verb nduu

Unlike the verb cúú, a different equative verb nduu 'become, change into' may occur with a resumptive pronoun, as in the second clause of the following example. 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 (25). This contrasts with the normal order for a clause with the equative verb cúú, viz. Nominal Complement-V-S.

(25) Daví ní nduu noni ñoó iin tayíí lóho,
 then CMP become corn that one boy little

Ta ndúchi ní nduuan iin tadihí lóho.
 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 detachment to signal a topic change, seen in Section 1.1. There is also a strong element of parallel contrast. As seen in the four examples of topic changing with parallel contrast in Section 1.1, the subject in the second clause is fronted but not in the first clause. The examples of parallel contrast focus (Section 1.2.1), on the other hand, have the subjects in both clauses fronted.

Usually when left detachment signals a topic change, at least the immediately following clause continues with the same topic as subject. In (25), however, the subject of the following clause is a pronoun which seems to refer to both the corn and beans.

3. Fronted subject 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 (26).

(26) Co quétátá tahon yuhu na.
 NEG CON=do-medicine NEG 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 (27).

(27) a. Cúú co ní noho tucu-ra noó ra ndiguehí.
 and NEG CMP go.base again face Mr. coyote
 ‘And he didn’t return again to Mr. Coyote.’

b. Tído co cándéé-ndú candido-ndu ri noho-ndu
 but NEG CON=be.able-we POT=carry-we him POT=go.base we
 ‘But we couldn’t carry him home, ...’

c. Tído co níhi-ná ndáyoo cacuu tarrndúta-xí.
 but NEG CON=find-they who POT=be godfather-he
 ‘But they haven’t found a godfather for him.’

- b. ...nqó ndéi ñayuu cqó idí diní.
 where CON=live people neg hair head
 '...where people with no hair live.'

The fact that older speakers use a different form for c_o 'NEG' in the potential aspect, viz. a 'NEG', would also support the idea that it used to be a verb. Notice the use of a 'NEG' with the potential in the example in (32).

- (32) Dá ná a ndió-ñá.
 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 contrastive focus. Two are given in (33) and (34).

- (33) Yachi ndavaha va ni xino ini ndúchi ña nohan.
 soon very-ASN CMP complete inside bean that POT=go-it

Ta noni co xeén tahan van nohan xihín ratóho ñoó.
 and corn NEG CON=want NEG ASN-it POT=go-it with man that

'Very soon the beans were pleased to go home.
 But the corn didn't want to go home with that man.'

- (34) Ndaí vaha cháá cáhan yúhon xaán.
 Ndaa ví
 true EMPH good little CON=speak mouth-you there

Tído noq xaán co váha cúu.
 but eyes there NEG good CON=move

'It's true that you speak well with your mouth,
 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. It is not yet clear what significance this type of fronting may have. (35) is an example.

- (35) Co tahnón yuhu quétátá.
 neg neg I CON=do-medicine
 NEG NEG SUB VERB
 'I do not cure.'

Out of context, this example may seem to show narrow focus, i.e. the scope of the negation is only the subject: 'not I, but someone else'. However, the mosquito has said that he has come to get his foot healed by the speaker of the clause above, but the speaker denies that he heals. The speaker continues with the same subject (himself) fronted in the following clause, given in (36).

- (36) *Yuhu dácuhu oon va ñayuu.*
 I CON=cause.be.sick only ASN people
 'I only make people sick.'

So the contrast is between the predicates rather than between the subjects. 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 *co* '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 (39).

- (37) *Tá ní tyunog,*
 when CMP open-eyes

ní quee-ra cuahan-ra cohní-rá lechí.
 CMP leave-he PRG=go-he POT=milk-he milk

Ni cóó lechí ní cána.
 NEG NEG milk CMP came.out

'When a new day came, he went to milk (the sheep).
 No milk came out.'

- (38) *Dá yuhu ní sahan tucuí noó cánduhu-ri,*
 then I CMP go again-I where CON=lie-he

cúú sa cóó ca-ri cánduhu, xiníi.
 and IM NEG more-he CON=lie, CON=-see-I

Tído oní ní ndacoo-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...'

- (39) *Cúú ní quihin-rí Monteró lóhi, néhe-rí cuahan-ri.*
 and CMP got-he Montero little-I CON=carry-he PRG=go-he

Ndaa tóhón séndico nī nihi-ndú.
 even only síndico CMP find-we

'There were not any authorities there. We found only the *síndico*.'

- (43) Ña néhe yuhu vei cúu tghon Ndíos.
 3n CON=bring I PRG=come-I CON=is word God

Tá tóhón Ndíos yóho va dánaha nduhu.
 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, (44), 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.

- (44) Cúu sa nī nihi vá rá iin sacuaa chicáhno.
 and IM CMP find ASN he one deer huge

Cúu cáhno ndaho sacuaa nī sahní-rá, sahán...
 and big very deer CMP kill-he because

'And he found a huge deer. A very big deer he killed, because...'

There are two similar examples in the data of direct objects fronted for focus within subordinate clauses. One is given in (45).

- (45) Dá nī xini ñadihí ta cuihíná ñóó
 then CMP see wife man thief that

ña cuahá dihón néhe tasáhno ñóó.
 that much money CON=carry old.man that

'Then the thief's wife saw that the old man was carrying a lot of money.'

Finally, in the search for fronted direct objects, the two idiomatic expressions given in (46) and (47) were found.

- (46) Co tahán va ná queéá, ...
 tahon-ñaha
 NEG NEG-thing ASN OPT POT=do-we

'There is nothing else to do but... (here follows the solution).'

- (47) Coó ñáha tahon casáhan-ra.
 NEG thing NEG
 not yet POT=eat-he
 'He had not yet eaten.'

5. 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-S-(O)-Adverbial, as in (48).

- (48) Tído iin cuu ní xiti iin tatóho
 but one day CMP sow one man

iin yúcu xicá.
 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 *tucu* 'again' in (49).

- (49) Dá ní quee tucu-ra cuahan-ra nanducú-ñá-rá.
 then CMP leave again-he PRG=go-he POT=look-he-he
 'The he left again, going to look for him.'

In the database of twenty stories there are only eight clauses where two phrases are fronted before the verb. None of them has more than one noun phrase fronted. The fronted noun phrase is the topic or focus. Adverb phrases precede some of these and are setting for the clause. In (50) and (51), the fronted noun phrase is the focus.

- (50)
- | | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Setting | Focus | | | | |
| | ADV | SUBJ | | | V | |
| ... | <u>chií</u> | tá <u>sanahá</u> | <u>cuahá</u> | <u>ndaho</u> | <u>sacuaa</u> | ñoó <u>ní</u> <u>sa</u> <u>ndei</u> . |
| | | because long.ago | many | very | deer | those CMP DUR live |
| | | '...because very many deer lived long ago.' | | | | |

- (51) Setting Focus
 ADV ADV(goal) V-S V-S
 «Díñóhó ñaxiha ná cohó ndatohón» caá-na.
 first Tezoatlán OPT POT=go-we POT=ask-we CON=say-he
 '«First let's go to Tezoatlán to ask», he said.'

In other examples where two phrases are fronted, the adverb phrase follows the subject or object phrase and modifies the verb. In these cases, such as (52) through (54), the fronted noun phrase serves to change topics. Note that, unlike (50) and (51), there is a resumptive pronoun in the clause.

- (52) Topic Focus
 SUB ADV PHR V SUB
 Ta yuhú nda níno xíxio ní sahan yuhú.
 and I until below exceedingly CMP go I
 'And I went very far below.'
- (53) Topic Focus
 SUB ADV PHR V SUB ADV PHR
 Ta tíyóto yúcú ñóó níhi ndavaho ní caa-rí noo mesá.
 and mouse mountain that quick very CMP go.up-he on table
 'But the country mouse went up on the table very quickly.'
- (54) Topic Focus
 SUB ADV PHR
 Tído ndivéhe Ndíos tatá yuhú ndidaá cuu vá
 but thanks God father I every day ASN
 V S
 cáhan noó xihín, ña nádahani cantáhin
 CON=speak he.that with.me that NEG.IMP POT=get.together
 xihín tacuáchi quini.
 with young.people bad
 'But thank God, my father always told me not to be good friends with bad young people.'

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 (55) and (56).

- (55) Modifier Focus
 ADV PHR ADV PHR V SUB
 Ndaí vaha cháá cáhan yúhon xaan.
 Ndaa ví
 true EMPH good little CON=speak mouth-you there
 'It's true that your mouth speaks well.'

- (56) Modifier Focus
 ADV PHR ADV PHR V SUB
 Ndáa ndí cuu caon ndáho nī sahan yuhū.
 perhaps quick very CMP go I
 'Perhaps I went very quickly.'

Another way of fronting adverbials is with the adverbial followed by *quían*, which is a contraction of *cúú-ñā* 'be-complementizer'. Most of the examples in the data are of *viti quían* 'now it is that...' They are all found in dialogue and indicate that now it's time for something to happen, as in (57), or now someone has realized something, as in (58).

- (57) *Viti quían* cohō vaá
 cúú-ñā
 now CON=be-COM POT=go-we ASN-we
 'Now let's go.' OR: 'Now it's time for us to go.'

- (58) *Viti quían* nī candaā inon ndi ndóho ñayuu
 cúú-ñā
 now CON=be-COM CMP understand inside-you what CON=suffer people
 quéechóon-na dá sásáhan-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 quian* in the data. There are also two examples of other fronted adverbials with a slightly different construction involving *quíán*, given in (59) and (60). The first, (59), is not part of a dialogue, but is part of a personal experience story, so the narrator is in effect speaking.

- (59) Dá too va quíán dá nī saā taa néhe choon.
 cúú-ñá
 then while ASN CON=be-it then CMP arrive men CON=carry work
 'Then it was a little while and the authorities arrived.'

- (60) *Míandaā* cuití quíán cáhan yghó
 cúú-ñá
 truly very CON=be-it CON=speak you
 'It's very true what you say.'

Section 5.1 discusses adverbials in the setting position in more detail, and Section 5.2 discusses adverbials in the focus position.

5.1. 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.³

It is very common to begin a major episode in a story with the adverb phrase of setting *iin cuu* 'one day' and a later episode with *iinga cuu* 'another day'. For example, one of the hunting stories begins as in (61).

- (61) *Iin cuu ni sahan-ndu ni sadiquí-ndu sacuaa.*
 one day CMP go-we CMP hunt-we deer
 'One day we went deer-hunting.'

Other time adverbials in this position include *tá sanaha* 'long ago', *sa io tiempo* 'long ago', *iinga naha* '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 (62).

- (62) *Diha ni ndoho yuhu iin cuu noó sa ioi*
 thus(catap) CMP experience I one day where DUR be-I

yúcu, ni sa xiti.
 mountain CMP DUR plow-I

'Thus it happened to me one day where I was on the mountain plowing.'

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

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

³The position of adverbial clauses of time setting is also sentence initial, e.g. *Tá ni tyunoo, ...* 'When a new day came, ...' or *Dá ni casndaá tohon ca ohon sahini, ...* 'Then arrived approximately five o'clock...'

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 (63).

(63) T_a cu_ih_iná ñóó s_a náca_a va roón ndáti-ra
 man thief that IM CON=be ASN he-that CON=wait-he

íchi_i noó yáha tasáhno ñóó.
 path where CON=pass old.man that

'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 (64).

(64) Daví n_i sa_a-ra_a noó ndíhi íchi_i ñóó.
 then CMP arrive-he where CON=end path that

Ñóó ndéi u_u tacuáli saha iin yító.
 there CON=be two children foot one tree

'Then he arrived at the end of the path. There (in that place) were two children there under a tree.'

Sometimes several clauses in a row begin with ñóó, referring back to the same place already mentioned, as in (65). 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)'.

(65) Dá n_i sa_a tasáhno ñóó noó ñóho tacu_ií.
 then CMP arrive elderly.man that where CON=be water

Ñóó s_a caondei-ra coh_o-rr tacu_ií,
 there IM POT=lean.over-he POT=drink-he water,

n_i cahan-ra.
 CMP think-he

Ñóó n_i queta ta cu_ihná, n_i cahan-ra
 there CMP leave man thief CMP think-he

cui_ondaa-ra di_hón ta_sáhno ñoo
 POT=take-he money elderly.man that

Ñoo na_cuí_n ndi_{ch}i ta_sáhno ñoo;
 there CMP=stand.up elderly.man that

ni se_indaa-ra di_hndi ta cui_hná ñoo.
 CMP kick-he seat man thief that

Ñoo ni nduu-ra bú_rro.
 there 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 ñoo 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 cúú 'and (emotional impact)' or dá 'then') could be substituted for the latter two fronted ñoo's in (65).

The adverb ñoo 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.

5.2. Adverbials in the focus position

Most locative adverbials that are fronted, other than ñoo '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. Examples of locative adverbials of goal include (66) and (67).

(66) «Din_ñóhó ñaxiha ná coh_o ndat_ohón» caá-na.
 first Tezoatlán OPT POT=go-we POT=ask CON=said-they
 '«First let's go ask in Tezoatlán», they said.'

(67) Viti sa naha va yuhu
 now IM CON=know ASN I

ña ñoho cohin ta yaa va nduui.
 that 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.'

An example of a locative adverbial of source is given in (68).

- (68) Xíca ndaho ni quii-ra.
 far very CMP come-he
 'From very far he came.'

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 (69).

- (69) Yóho va candei nduhu nda casaa ví naná nduhu.
 here ASN POT=stay we until POT=arrive EMPH mother we
 'Here we'll stay until our mother arrives.'

Examples (70) and (71) show parallel contrastive focus of adverbials.

- (70) Tído nino ndaho ni sahan-ra,
 but upwards very CMP go-they

ta yuhu nda nino xíxio ni sahan yuhu.
 and I until downwards very.much CMP go I
 'But they went way up, and I went way down.'

- (71) Dá ni taán-ñá-rá ini vehe caa,
 then CMP put-us-they in house metal

dá chicáa-ra yuhu xihín oni taxíni vehe caa nino
 then CMP=put-they I with three drunks house metal below

ta vehe caa nino ni sa cáa ditoi xihín Abrán.
 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, cue cue 'slowly' in (72) could also be placed between the verb and subject.

- (72) Tá ni saa-ra,
 when CMP arrive-he

 cue cue ni cuhu-ra cuahan-ra tein tehe ñoó.
 slowly CMP enter-he PRG=go-he among squash.plants those
 'When he arrived, he slowly went in amongst the squash plants.'

One of the adverbs of manner *tucu* 'once again' normally comes between the verb and the subject. In a larger data base of MT stories I counted around 75 examples of *tucu* in that position. It seldom (only 5 times) occurred with the particle of assertion *va*, when in that position. On the other hand, when *tucu* '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 *tucu* fronted is given in (73).

- (73) *Tucu va ni canacono ta dito ilo cuahan-ra.*
 again ASN CMP run Mr. uncle rabbit PRG=go-he
 'Once again uncle rabbit ran away.'

However, in one case, *tucu* 'once again' is fronted along with a focused direct object, and the meaning of the adverb changes. This is given in (74).

- (74) *Tucu va dehe-ra ni taxi-ra.*
 once.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 *tucu va* 'once again ASN' is between the verb and subject, as in (75), native speaker reaction is that the meaning is then ambiguous.

- (75) *Ni taxi tucu va-ra dehe-ra.*
 CMP run.off once.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 *vaha* 'well' as it occurs in (76).

- (76) *Ndehé rá, vaha ni chindeí yohó.*
 IMP=look ? well CMP help you
 'Look, I helped you very well.'

By rearranging the adverb in (76), the meaning of *vaha* is 'much' or 'enough', as in (77).

- (77) *Ni chindee vahi yoho.*
 vaha-I
 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. It can also occur after the verb and subject in special circumstances.

There are a few time adverbials 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. One such example is *ndidaá cuu va* 'every day ASN', or more freely translated 'all the time', which appears *after* a fronted topic and before the verb; thus it is in the focus position. This is illustrated in (78) and (79).

- (78) *Tído ndivéhe Ndíos, tatá yuhu ndidaá cuu vá*
 but thank God father I every day ASN

cáhan nqó xihín, ña...
na-ñoo xihin-i
 CON=say he-that with-I that

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

- (79) *Itaan, dá ná cohó*
 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) *Na cohó itaan.*
 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) *Tóhon cá uxí ní casáa-na vehe yuhu.*
 about bell ten CMP arrive-they house I
 'About 10:00 they arrived at my house.'

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

- (82) a. cuahá ndaho cuiá
 many very years
 ‘for many years’
- b. tóó vá
 while ASN
 ‘for a while’

Notice the use of words commonly found in focus expressions, viz. ndaho ‘very’ and va ‘ASN’.

Although iinga cuu ‘another day’ is a common adverbial of setting, in the example in (83) words typical of focus are added (ndaá ‘even’ and vi ‘intensifier’). Thus this is an example of focus rather than setting.

- (83) Dá ndaá iinga ví cuu, dá ní sei-rián.
 then until other EMPH day then CMP eat-he-them
 ‘It wasn’t until the next day that he ate them.’

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Abbreviations

anap	anaphoric
ASN	particle of assertion
CMP	completive aspect
CNTR	contrary to expectation

COM	complementizer
CON	continuative aspect
DUR	durative verbal prefix
EMPH	intensifier, particle of emphasis
INTERR	interrogative particle
IM	'immediately' (with continuative aspect)
	'about to' (with potential aspect)
	'already' (with completive aspect)
NEG	negative
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