

Who's Who In Quiatoni Zapotec Narratives

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0. Introduction

This paper looks at how third person participants are tracked in San Pedro Quiatoni Zapotec (SPQZ)¹ narratives.

Although it has been shown (Piper 1993) that SPQZ is among a few Zapotec languages that violate Principles B and C of the binding conditions of Chomsky (1991),² this paper shows that there are other restrictions placed on the occurrence of nominal and pronominal forms of referential expression in this language which are only understood in the context of an entire discourse.

Thus in SPQZ it is not unusual to hear things similar to those given in (1).³

- (1)a. Tohb dzeh byääl_laadx behn nsaau behn lihdx behn.
 one day forgot person to.close person 3c.house person
 'One day she forgot to close up her house.'
- b. Na Li loh Li loh gihuahñ.
 saw Mary * Mary in mirror
 'Mary saw herself in the mirror.'
- c. Y ro'c pchaa_laadx bendxa'pa bengieea, goc xtiidx bendxa'pa
 and there liked the.woman the.man was.made word.of the.woman
 riopa bengieea.
 both.3c the.man

'And there she liked him, both of them made an agreement.'

Even though the above examples are very normal--indeed any pronoun substitution for the

¹San Pedro Quiatoni is located in the eastern end of the district of Tlacolula in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. Approximately 10,000 speakers are spread over a large area, including the municipio of San Pedro Quiatoni, four agencias and approximately 28 ranch groups.

²Principle A states that an anaphor must be co-indexed to a preceding referential expression. Principle B states that a pronominal referential expression may either be coindexed or not coindexed depending on certain grammatical structures. Principle C states that a nominal referential expression cannot be coindexed to any other nominal expression.

³SPQZ examples given in this paper are written using a practical orthography. Phonemes include voiceless stops p t c/qu(k) ' (?); voiced stops b d g; affricates ch(č) dx(č) dz ts; voiceless fricatives f s x(š, š); voiced fricatives v ll(ž, ž) z; nasals m n ñ; liquids l r rr(ř); semivowels y hu(w); simple vowels i e a ä(æ) u o; aspirated vowels ih(iI) eh(eE) ah(aA) äh(æ) uh(uU) oh(oO); laryngealized vowels ii(i' i) ee(e' e) aa(a' a) ää(æ' æ) uu(u' u) oo(o' o); and glottalized vowels i'(i?) e'(e?) a'(a?) ä'(æ?) u'(u?) o'(o?). Of these, those that only occur in Spanish loans are f v rr. Tone is not written because it is lexically determined.

nouns would result in ungrammatical constructions or different meanings⁴--participants in narratives, whether written or oral, are not usually tracked by their proper names,⁵ and noun phrases like *bengiee* 'man' (literally *behn* + *giee* 'person' + 'masculine') and *bendxa'p* 'woman' (literally *behn* + *dxa'p* 'person' + 'feminine') are only used when there is a contrast between them or for other reasons discussed below.

SPQZ has no word used exclusively as a third person free pronoun⁶ as it does for first and second persons. The repetition of the noun or noun phrase sometimes functions as a pronoun (as in the above examples), although the noun most frequently used as a pronoun is the word *behn* 'person', without any indication of whether the referent is singular or plural, male or female.

Another complication to tracking participants in SPQZ written narratives is that there is only one basic third person person-marking clitic *na*. This clitic can be used to refer to any third person entity, whether single or plural, human or animal, male or female, animate or inanimate. This will be glossed as 3c, which means 'third person common'.⁷

The native speaker is obviously not lost listening to or reading a narrative; there are basic structural rules for tracking participants through a narrative.⁸ In section 1 I discuss the introduction of participants in a narrative; in section 2 I discuss the tracking of participants that are in focus; and in section 3 I discuss the tracking of participants that are not in focus.⁹

⁴Substituting *na* in (1a) would result in an ungrammatical construction, as in (i):

- (i) **Tohb dzeh byääl_laadx behn nsaaua lihdxā.*
 one day forgot person to.close.3c house.3c
 'One day she forgot to close up her house.'

Substituting *behn* or *na* in (1b) would result in a different meanings, as in (ii) and (iii):

- (ii) *Na Li loh behn loh gihuahñ.*
 saw Mary * person in mirror
 'Mary saw the person in the mirror.'
- (iii) *Na Li loh na loh gihuahñ.*
 saw Mary * 3c in mirror
 'Mary saw him in the mirror.'

⁵This seems to be related to the fact that vocatives are rarely used in conversations. Once I was in a room with a woman while her son was just outside doing something for her. She said something, I thought to him, and repeated it three times. Maybe because he hadn't responded, I looked at her and discovered she was speaking to me!

⁶*Ndec* 'that one' comes closest to being a third person free pronoun, but its use is limited to reference to an entity within sight of the speaker and obligatorily indicates that entity's location as well. *Ndec* never occurs in the narratives analyzed for this paper.

⁷*Na* appears as *na* when it occurs after a vowel-final word, as in *bdoĩ na* 'it sold' and *bslioh na* 'his eye'; it appears as *a* when it occurs after a consonant-final word, as in *rähba* 'he said' and *xchiina* 'his things'. Other third person person-marking clitics also occur in specific contexts; for example, in oral texts, *na* becomes *ma*; and *ll* is used only with animate participants to indicate indulgence, fondness or a participant younger than others.

⁸This is not to indicate that participants are tracked solely by these structural rules; they are also tracked by pragmatic clues given in the surrounding context. These latter considerations, however, are not discussed in this paper.

⁹Participants are divided into participants in focus vs. participants not in focus, instead of major vs. minor participants, because no logical rules could be worked out for the divisions of major vs. minor participants. By looking at participants in focus vs. those not in focus, however, everything fell into place.

1. Introduction of participants

Participants in SPQZ narratives are introduced by proper names, if names are used in the narrative, as in (2). If names are not used, then participants are introduced by indefinite noun phrases, as in (3).

(2) Ngohldxigo'n ni'c nac tsääl Nguisliedx.

Ngohldxigo'n this was husband Nguisliedx

'Ngohldxigo'n was the spouse of Nguisliedx.'

(3)a. Byu' tohb behn naca ndzeb ro' xin ca gooz pchihn,...

there.was a person is.3c too.much very very * hunt deer

'There was a person who was very very much a hunter of deer...'

b. Ndee nac chop behn ni rbixloh, tohba nac beniaa.

this is two person that transform one is animal.spirit

'This is about two people that transform, one of which is able to change into an animal.'

2. Tracking of participants that are in focus

In this paper, the term *focus* refers to the effect, as in a theater, of participants being in the spotlight for a given portion of a narrative. Although there is normally only one spotlight, there may be more than one spotlight. Those participants not in the spotlight are referred to here as not in focus.

If more than one participant is in focus, all retain their proper names or identifying noun phrases while they are in focus. As Newberg (1987) says, "A participant ... which must `share the stage' with other participants will be more difficult to identify than a participant which ... does not have to be distinguished from other participants." However, when one of the participants that are in focus is fronted for contrast, emphasis, etc. or is the subject of juxtaposed verbs, *na* is used subsequently instead of repeating its proper name or identifying noun phrase, because in these constructions it need not be distinguished from other participants. Examples are given in (4) through (6).

(4) Tsana rieh Nguisliedxa risa'na ni rauh Ngohldxigo'n benin re
when goes Nguisliedx to.leave.3c that eat Ngohldxigo'n children these

riop ca na byu'_na_cuidad dion ca_lo ra rieh Nguisliedxa.

both * 3c watched.3c to.see where there goes Nguisliedx

'When Nguisliedx would go and leave what Ngohldxigo'n would eat, both of these children watched to see where Nguisliedx would go.'

(5)a. Y ro'c bengieea dur zä na dahñ, y rahn aca
and then the.man often went 3c fields and was.seeing ?.3c

loh bendxa'pa, nac balluaan pchihna.

* the.woman is owner the.deer

b. Tsana ryoca ro' yu' laa pchihñ ziädni na.
When would.return.3c to house Emp deer was.bringing.with 3c

c. Y tsana zä na dahñ dur rahna loh bendxa'p
and when went 3c fields often was.seeing.3c * woman

rec, ya ba goc xcheh ro ni'c, re bengieea riopa
that already * was time much that are the.man both.3c

balluaan pchihñ y tsääl bengiee nad te na gacbee.
owner deer and wife man no Emp 3c realize

'And then the man would always go to the fields and again see the woman that was the owner of the deer. When he would return home, he was always bringing a deer. And when he would go to the fields, he would always see that woman; already it was a long time like that: the two of them, the man and the owner of the deer, were together, and the man's wife didn't realize anything.'

(6) Behn ni sii bura blää aca domih cuä' na,
person that buys donkey took.out ?.3c money side 3c

bsloh aca catsaa na cuent domih.
started ?.3c to.exchange 3c account money

Mer cadxaa cuent domih lla bllo'n bura
just was.being.exchanged account money * defecated donkey

tohb dzoon domih, pura de gaay pes cob, rähb behn ni
a pile money all of five pesos new said person that

cato' bur: ...
is.selling donkey

'The man that buys the donkey took money out of his pocket and started to exchange the money. Just when the money was being exchanged the donkey defecated a pile of money, all new peso coins of five pesos each; the man that was selling the donkey said, ...'

In (4), both parents of the children are explicitly named. In (5a), 'the man' is fronted; because of this fronting and since it is a noun phrase, na is used to identify him subsequently because he doesn't need to be distinguished from the other participants, because he is the only subject of the verbs, until he's mention again in (5c) by a compound noun phrase in conjunction with the deer owner: bengieea riopa bendxa'pa. Also in (5c), 'the man's wife' is fronted and subsequently referred to as na. In (7), the two participants are referred to by unique noun phrases.

The identifying noun phrase may change, however, at different points in the narrative, either to a completely different noun phrase or to a modification of a previously used noun phrase. Notice the tracking of the main participants through part of "The Story of the Man Who Has Donkeys", as shown in (7).

(7) The Donkey Owner

The Donkey Buyers

- a. rap behn tsohn color bur
has person three colors donkey
'he has donkeys of three different colors'
- b. behn ni nuuy lloba
person that carry corn
'the man that carries corn'
- c. behn ni rap bur
person that has donkey
'the man that has donkeys'
- d. behn ni rsii bur
person that buys donkey
'the man that buys a donkey'
- e. behn ni rto' bura
person that sells donkey
'the man that sells donkeys'
- f. behn ni sii bura
person that buys donkey
'the man that buys the donkey'
- g. behn ni cato' bur
person that is selling donkey
'the man that is selling the donkey'
- h. behn ni bllii bura
person that bought donkey
'the man that bought the donkey'
- i. behn ni pto' bura
person that sold donkey
'the man that sold the donkey'
- j. behn ni pto' bur
person that sold donkey
'the man that sold the donkey'
- k. behn ni bllii bur
person that bought donkey
'the man that bought the donkey'
- l. behn ni rap bur
person that has donkey
'the man that has burros'

m. behn ni rsii bur
 person that buys donkey
 'the man that buys a donkey'

n. behn ni rto' bur
 person that sells donkey
 'the man that sells donkeys'

o. balluaan bura
 owner donkey
 'the owner of the donkeys'

In references (7a) through (7c), the principal characters are introduced according to their respective roles at the beginning of the story. Next 'the man that carries corn' is interested in buying a donkey after 'the man that has donkeys of three different colors' offers to sell him a donkey. They are then referred to by these roles, as in (7d) and (7e). Next they go to see the donkeys and their role references again change: 'the man that buys a donkey' picks one out and is paying 'the man that is selling a donkey', as in (7f) and (7g). When the transaction is over, their role references again change to reflect their new status, as in (7h) through (7k). When another man comes to buy a donkey from 'the man that has donkeys' but never buys one, their respective identifications are repeated through that part of the narrative, as in (7l) through (7n). In the climax of the narrative, all the donkeys that 'the man that has donkeys' owns die. Thus, in the denouement, he is referred to as in (7o).

When only one participant is in focus, it is referred to as behn subsequent to its introduction as a proper name or a noun phrase, as shown in (8), where behn refers to a couple.¹⁰

(8) Byu' tohb behn₁ naca prob pero lletle ca cos ni deed
 there.was a person₁ is.3c poor but there.is.no Emp thing that give

 behn₁ gau xmbal₂ behn₁.
 person₁ to.eat close.friends.of₂ person₁

'There was a couple₁ that was poor, but they₁ was so poor that they₁ didn't have anything to give to their₁ close friends₂ to eat.'

Two thirds of the way through this same narrative, the focus temporarily changes from the couple to their good friends, as shown in (9). This new couple is the referent of behn at this point.

(9) Zec hueh xmbal₂ behn₁ bzääl domih leen tohb pan tohb
 then went close.friends.of₂ person₁ put.in money into a bread a

 zargiät pan. Hueh za_laadx behn₂ xmbal₁ behn₂ y
 tortilla.cloth bread went to.give person₂ close.friends.of₁ person₂ and

¹⁰The free translation of (8) uses 'a couple' and 'they' where the literal translation uses 'person'. The context of the narrative along with the meaning of behn 'person', with no indication of gender or number, shows that this couple is here being treated as one participant. Subscript numbers are used to distinguish referents.

xmbal₁ behn₂ nada₁ ca ñauh ria pan ro'c.
close.friends.of₁ person₂ no.3c₁ * they.didn't.eat the bread that

'Then their₁ close friends₂ went and put money into a piece of bread, and the bread into a tortilla cloth. They₂ went to give it to their₂ close friends₁ and their₂ close friends₁ didn't eat any of that bread.'

A similar example is given in (10), where behn refers back to 'a woman'.

- (10) Byu' tohb bendxa'p stob. Behn re nac behn tohb sa behn.
there.was a woman lone person this is person one only person

Xcompañer behn nac xpäi'c behn.
companion.of person is dog.of person

'There was a lone woman. This person is only one person (all alone). Her companion is her dog.'

Once a unique participant is in focus and is identified as behn, only behn is used to identify it as long as it remains in focus, as shown in (11) and (12).

- (11) Behn ni bllii bura rquit_ro'_ca_laadxä, bläs behn domih
person that bought donkey is.very.happy.3c lifted.up person money

loh xquie' bur y cua' behn bur zieni behn.
from excrement.of donkey and took person donkey to.take.with person

'The man that bought the donkey was very happy; he picked up the money from the donkey's excrement and took the donkey with him.'

- (12) Been behn xpensar behn ya nad ra behn chie
did person thoughts.of person no.longer no * person to.go

golnihdx. Ya nad ra behn guuy yoo, rähb behn:
to.be.an.employee no.longer no * person carry load said person

'He thought about how he would no longer have to go to be an employee. No longer would he carry loads, so he said,...'

3. Tracking of participants that are not in focus

If a participant is not in focus, it retains its proper name, the noun phrase used to introduce it or some other identifying noun phrase whenever it must be distinguished from other participants. As with participants in focus, the identifying noun phrase of a participant not in focus may change throughout the narrative. The use of a proper name or a noun phrase to identify a participant not in focus can occur whether or not the participant was in focus previously.

Example (13) illustrates this principle for a participant that was previously in focus. In one part of "The Story of Ngohldxigo'n and Nguisliedx", an old man is in focus and is referred to with behn. Then, when Nguisliedx leaves, he is no longer in focus and is referred to as 'old man'

again.

- (13) «...» rähb behn. «...» räh Nguisliedx, «...» Zec goc xio' tas
 said person said Nguisliedx then was far.away really
 zä Nguisliedx, briääl za benina ro' bengola.
 went Nguisliedx left too the.children mouth the.old.man
 ‘“...,” he said. “...,” Nguisliedx said, “...” Then when Nguisliedx was
 far away, the children got out of the old man’s mouth.’

Example (14) illustrates this principle for a participant that never was in focus. In "The Story of the Orphan Boy", the robbers are never in focus and only appear in this section.

- (14) Ro'c blää loh chop behni'x ca laihd loh na, rähba loh
 there showed face two person.big.old is cloth face 3c said.3c to
 behn: «...» «...» rähb behn. Blohll tas rähb behn ni'c,
 person said person finished just said person that
 lla bgui't gobaan rec behn riop xpur te behn.
 * killed robbers those person both donkey.of Emp person
 ‘There two big old dudes showed their faces, they had cloths on their
 faces and they said to him, “....” “...,” said he. He just finished
 saying that when those robbers killed both of them, him and his donkey.’

If a participant is not in focus and need not be distinguished from another participant, na is used in subsequent references, as shown in (15).

- (15) Ni'c zäädni behn tohb ca behn, tsana lla bien tohb
 that was.coming.saying person₁ one * person₁ when * saw a
 bengiee na behn, asta pen te nuuya llob. Xio' ra
 man₂ saw person₁ * hardly Emp carries.3c₂ corn far.away still
 zya'pa dech ga na nuuya lloba asta loh yuh zu
 was.coming.up.3c₂ back * 3c₂ carries.3c₂ corn * to ground was
 ica y nehz derech ga zya'pa.
 head.3c₂ and path right * was.coming.up.3c₂
 ‘He₁ was coming along saying that to himself₂ when he₂ saw a man₂ that
 could hardly carry his₂ load of corn. He₂ was coming up still a long ways
 away, on his₂ back he₂ carried the corn, his₂ head was down to the
 ground, and he₂ was coming up on the straight path.’

In (15), the man carrying corn is not in focus at this point, although three sentences later he is in focus. To return to the analogy of a spotlight used in the theater, the man carrying corn is coming on to the stage and soon will be in a spotlight.

In (16), an excerpt from the beginning of "The Story of the Deer Owner", only one of the main participants is introduced in the background and setting. *Na* is used to identify him instead of *behn*, which would be expected since he appears to be the only participant on stage, until one realizes that the deer he kills (always object and never subject) are the participants in focus. This is indicated by the emphazier *laa* preceding the deer that he kills.

- (16) *Byu'* *tohb behn naca ndzeb ro' xin ca gooz pchihn, rieh na*
 there.was a person is.3c too.much very very * hunt deer goes 3c
- dahñ ryoca laa pchihn nuuya ba ziäädni na. Ya*
 fields would.return.3c Emp deer carries.3c * would.bring.with 3c now
- ba goc xcheh ro ni'c ndzeb ro' ca rgihn behna pchihn,*
 already was time a.long that too.much very * hits he deer
- zä na dahñ yoca laa pchihn ziäädni na.*
 was.going 3c fields would.return.3c Emp deer would.bring.with 3c

'There was a person that was very much a hunter of deer, when he would go out to the fields and then return, he would always be bringing back a deer. Now it was already a long time that he was such a hunter of deer, when he would go to the fields and return, he would be bringing back a deer.'

4. Summary

This paper discusses the tracking of third-person participants in SPQZ narratives. The following structural rules apply:

1. Proper names and noun phrases are used (a) to introduce participants; (b) for participant tracking when more than one participant is in focus; and (c) for participant tracking for any participant not in focus.
2. *Behn* is used for participant tracking when only one participant is in focus.
3. *Na* is used when continued identification is not necessary for participants previously tracked by proper names or noun phrases, whether or not those participants are in focus at that point; or, alternatively, *na* is used when continued identification is not necessary for participants not being tracked by *behn* at that point.

Thus, even though SPQZ violates the putative universals of government and binding, it does follow the continuum of participant accessibility proposed by Talmy Givón (1983). Newberg (1987) explains the continuum as "... an ordered array of syntactic devices. Devices which are less marked syntactically and carry less semantic content correlate with less topic accessibility. Devices which are more marked and carry more semantic content correlate with greater topic accessibility."

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