

Speech Verbs In Xanaguía Zapotec Narrative

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0. Introduction

Longacre (ms:1) states, "...the QF [quotation formula] simply tells us that a speech act took place and who the speaker and (overt or inferred) addressee is. On the other hand the content of the *Quotation*, Q, tells us the nature of the speech act, i.e. flattery, compliance, suggestion, etc." It is my observation, however, that the QF can do more than tell us that a speech act took place and identify the speaker and addressee. Often the QF tells us much about the nature of the speech act itself.¹

In this paper I show that because of the types of verbs used in the QF of narratives in Xanaguía Zapotec², the QF indeed indicates much about the nature of the speech act. Specifically, two of the speech verbs can indicate three things: (a) whether the quotation is direct or indirect speech; (b) whether or not there is a first person addressee; and (c) whether or not the speaker is willing to vouch for what is said.

1. General speech verbs

In Xanaguía Zapotec, there are several verbs that are used to indicate speech of some type, be it spoken words or thoughts. The following examples are taken from a study of ten narrative texts³.

- (1) Ga dzok unab sap diidz lo ngol, dxap sap: "¿Lad tsia'1?"
 there thus C-asked frog words to buzzard H-says frog where P-go=2s
 'So then, the frog asked the buzzard, saying, "Where are you going?"'

¹The balance of Longacre's paper shows that, in fact, he agrees with the thesis I present here. He shows that QF's can show dominance, confrontation, key changes, etc. I would also add that sometimes the choice of speech verb used in the QF, such as, 'he retorted', is the only way of knowing the true nature of the speech act.

²Xanaguía Zapotec is an Otomanguan language spoken in the town of Santa Catarina Xanaguía, in the southeast district of Miahuatlán, not far from the Pacific coast, in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. Santa Catarina Xanaguía has approximately 650 inhabitants. There are two neighboring towns, San Francisco Ozolotepec, and San José Ozolotepec that speak mutually intelligible varieties of the same language. Although there are a few lexical and tonal differences among the three towns, the native speakers claim that the language is the same. The total population of speakers is approximately 2500. The data cited in this paper are exclusively from residents of Santa Catarina Xanaguía.

³The citations from Xanaguía Zapotec used in this paper are written in a practical orthography. Phonemes in Xanaguía Zapotec include the following: plosives p b t d ts[c] dz ch[č] dx[ǰ] k, g; fricatives s z x[š] zh[ž]; sonorants m n ñ l y w; simple vowels a e i o u ë[æ]; and glottalized vowels (vowel-glottal-echo) aa ee íi oo uu ëë. A u followed by an n represents a velar n [ŋ]. The fricative f occurs only in loan words from Spanish and is pronounced as a voiceless bilabial fricative. The sonorant r[ř] occurs only in loan words, though many of these have been permanently incorporated into the local language and are no longer recognized as loans. There are contrastive tones in Xanaguía Zapotec; however, they are not written since the homographs are usually distinguishable from the context. Abbreviations used in morpheme glosses are listed at the end of the paper.

- (2) ...**dxun** ngup **guilzhgab** lēn ldoo ngup: "¿Be skedz'n
 H-do armadillo thought inside heart armadillo Q H-endure=ls
 xneeg...?"
 like this
 '...the armadillo thought to himself: "Will I endure like this...?"'
- (3) ...ñē **uza** **lēn** ldoo ngup: "Zēt'n lo ubin..."
 and C-built inside heart armadillo F-die=ls of hunger
 '...and the armadillo said to himself: "I will surely die of hunger..."'
- (4) "Guun **gow'n** **xkib'n,**" **ukēb** ngup.
 thing P-eat=ls H-look.for=ls C-answer armadillo
 'I'm looking for something to eat," answered the armadillo.'
- (5) **Uzaa** **diidz** **men** **uya** **men** **uyasaan** **men** **xachib** **men**
 C-built words people C-go people C-go.leave people Poss-goat people
 dēn.
 countryside
 'The people decided together to go leave their goats in the countryside.'

In (1) the expression 'asked...words', specifies that the speech act is a question. This is accompanied by the general speech verb *dxap*. In (2) and (3), similar expressions are used to show that the speech act is a thought. In (4) the speech verb 'answered' indicates that the speech act is in response to another. And in (5), the expression 'built words' reports that there was discussion even though the actual words used were not cited.

2. Direct Speech

The most common verbs used in quotation formulas in Xanaguá Zapotec are the two general verbs of speaking *dxap* and *xnee*. *Dxap* is always used to indicate direct speech to second or third person addressee. It usually occurs in the habitual or continuous aspect, although it is most frequently used to indicate a completed or one-time speech act as in (1) above. *Dxap* occasionally occurs in the potential aspect form *guiap*, in which case it is used to describe word-for-word what someone will say to another person. This use of *dxap* is illustrated in (6).

- (6) Or **ilan** Mary, **tser** **guiap** **damna'n** lo Mary: "Gwa **lidzaa.**"
 when P-arrives Mary maybe P-says my mother to Mary: Imp-go your.home
 'When Mary arrives, my mother may say to her, "Go home..."'

3. Indirect Speech

Xnee is used primarily to indicate indirect speech and, although most commonly used in the habitual aspect, it can occur in most other aspects except for the stative and "absolutely sure" future. In the following examples, *xnee* occurs in the habitual aspect in (7) and (8), in the irrealis aspect in (9),

and in the completive aspect in (10)⁴.

- (7) Guun nak guun dxon'n xnee blo men guedz.
 thing St-is thing H-hear=ls H-say some people village
 'This thing is what I have heard certain people of the village say.'
- (8) Xnee men or dxaxoob lni 25 de noviembre...
 H-say people when H-arrives fiesta 25 of November...
 'People say that when the 25th of November fiesta arrives...'
- (9) Nana, needa men lo'n zhik nak....
 now, Ir-say-neg people to me like St-is
 'Now, people didn't tell me what it was like...'
- (10) ...ñë unee wen men...
 and C-say well people
 '...and the people spoke well (to each other).'

4. First Person Addressee

Xnee is also used when direct speech is directed to a first person addressee. The following exchange is taken from a personal narrative text. In sentences b and d, where the narrator addresses another person, dxap is used. In sentences a and c, however, where the other person addresses the narrator, xnee is used.

- (11) a. Xnee men lo'n na, "¿Be nlatda'l
 H-say person face=ls now Q St-empty-Neg=you
 'The person says to me, "You wouldn't be available to..."'
- b. Ornu dxap'n lo men na, "¿Be ndxoob xyowaa nax guedznu?
 then H-say=ls to person now Q much Poss-load=2s St-lie town-that
 'So I said to the person, "Do you have a lot of stuff in that town?"'
- c. Lëë men xnee lo'n na, "Tson kaj nako".
 * person H-say face=ls now three box St-be-Obj
 'So the person says to me: "It's three boxes."'
- d. Ornu dxap'n lo men, "Ikedzda'n gwey'n tson kajnu".
 then H-say=ls face person P-bear-Neg=ls P-carry=ls three box-that
 'Then I said to the person: "I won't be able to carry those three boxes."'

⁴In (7) and (8) xnee consists of the habitual marker x and the following root nee 'say'. In (9) needa consists of the irrealis marker n (phonologically blended with the root) and the root nee 'say', followed by the negation marker da. In (10) unee consists of the completive marker u and the following root nee 'say'.

5. Summary

What can the two uses of *xnee* shown in sections 3 and 4 have in common semantically? On the one hand, *xnee* is used to report indirect speech in third person narrative, and on the other hand, it is used to report direct speech addressed to the narrator (first person).

What do these two situations have in common? I propose the following explanation. In the case of indirect speech, the use of *xnee* avoids reporting the exact words of the speaker. The narrator is a third party who is free to summarize, adapt, and even slant the words that were originally spoken. In the case of a quotation directed to a first person addressee, the narrator and the addressee are the same person. Here also, the narrator reserves the right to report the speech directed to him 'as he pleases', i.e. the exact content of what was said to him is a private matter which he can divulge to the extent that he pleases. Thus the use of the verb *xnee* seems to imply a reluctance on the part of the speaker to report exactly what was said or an unwillingness to accept responsibility for it. That is, *xnee* indicates that the speaker doesn't vouch personally for the truthfulness of what was said to him originally. Instead, he sidesteps the responsibility.

6. Rare Uses

Given this explanation of the uses of *xnee*, let us now observe two less common uses of *xnee* and *dxap*. The first is given in the following example.

- (12) a. Tib inëë lëë tib men unee lo'n, "Tsian wiyy guedx
 one time * one person C-say face=1s P-go=1p fetch pine.pitch

Guiy Siren, ñë naa ilë nupo gweyaa."
 Mount Siren and 1s P-break some-Obj P-carry=2s

'Once a person said to me, "Let's go fetch pine pitch from Guiy Siren and I will break some for you to carry."'

- b. Ornu lëë naa dxapo lo damna'n, ñë damna'n
 then * 1s H-say-Obj face Poss-mother=1s and Poss-mother=1s

unee lo'n, "Gwa",...
 C-say face=1s Imp-go

'Then I said it to my mother and my mother said to me, "Go."'

Notice that *xnee* is used both in (12a) and (12b) when the narrator is addressee, but that in (12b) the narrator uses *dxap* with the inanimate object clitic to refer to what he had said to his mother. Had he paraphrased his words, or intended for the reader to think that he had paraphrased his words, he would have used *xneew*, where the *w* is an orthographic variant of *o*. Here the use of *dxap* indicates that he intends for the hearer of the narrative to understand that he told his mother word-for-word what had been said to him previously. This is an extension of the use of *dxap* for direct speech discussed in section 2, only here he doesn't report the words he used.

A surprising use of *xnee* is given in example (13). The narrator is telling us about the time when he borrowed a donkey from his sister in order to run an errand. The donkey is ahead of him on the trail and takes a wrong path which leads to a place where the road is washed out and the donkey

gets trapped. Then the narrator, alone at that point, addresses himself using *xnee*⁵.

- (13) *Xne'n naor*, "Naor na, *ɨkwaan nak guun gun'n?*"
 H-say=1s now now now what St-is thing P-do=1s
 'I said then, "So now what am I going to do?"'

It seems odd that the narrator used *xnee* here when clearly he could vouch for what he himself had said. In this case, then, the rule of not being able to use *dxap* with a first person addressee must take precedent over the idea of being able to vouch for the truthfulness of what is being said.

7. Conclusion

The use of *dxap* versus *xnee* in Xanagúfa Zapotec tell us much more than that a speech act took place and who the speaker and addressee was. By their use in the QF we see whether direct versus indirect speech is being used, whether there is a first person addressee, and whether the speaker is willing to vouch for what is being said.

This willingness to vouch for what is being said reflects a general rule of conversation in Xanagúfa Zapotec such that a speaker is not obligated to divulge the actual content of what is addressed to him. This fits well into the cultural mores of Xanagúfa where divulgence of one's intended place of arrival, one's business dealings, and one's accomplishments are either not talked about or they are discussed in a less than truthful way. Truth and one's obligation to vouch for it are handled in a different way from that to which we are accustomed, given our cultural background. The people of Xanagúfa handle truth in a way that is clearly not unethical or less valuable within the confines of their culture.

Reference

Longacre, Robert E. Ms. The dynamics of reported dialogue in Narrative.

Abbreviations

C	completive
F	future
H	habitual
Imp	imperative
Ir	irrealis
Neg	negative
Obj	inanimate object

⁵In most verbs, when the root contains a glottalized vowel, the vowel becomes a simple vowel in first person singular. Thus here, *xnee* becomes *xne*.

P	potential
Poss	possession
Q	question
St	stative
1s	first person singular
2s	second person singular
1p	first person plural
-	affix boundary
=	clitic boundary
*	non-glossable particle