

Reported Speech in Coatlán-Loxicha Zapotec
Rosemary Beam de Azcona
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1. Background information

Coatlán-Loxicha Zapotec (CLZ) is a Southern Zapotec (Zapotecan, Otomanguan) language spoken in the southern part of the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. It is spoken by a few hundred people in 7 towns. Probably fewer than ten children are speakers.

Figure 1: CLZ in Oaxaca and Mexico



CLZ is a monosyllabic, tonal, head-marking, left-headed language with basic VAO & VS constituent order. Verbs take TAM-marking prefixes and may take person-marking enclitics. There are no suffixes.

Conservative Zapotec languages are agglutinating and tend to have disyllabic roots and monosyllabic prefixes, so that an inflected verb is often a trisyllable. However, many Zapotec languages have undergone either pre- or post-tonic vowel deletion. All Southern Zapotec languages have undergone deletion (or reduction) of all non-tonic vowels. These are monosyllabic languages where the only disyllabic words result from compounding and borrowing from Spanish. As a result of the vowel deletion, CLZ has developed fusional tendencies, including palatalization and nasalization. Tone and register changes mark potential aspect on verbs, first person possessors on nouns and first person subjects on verbs.

The main lexical categories are verb and noun. There are also determiners (demonstratives and focus markers but not articles) and adverbs. Quantifiers are verbs and most adjectives are derived from verbs. Words that act like prepositions are of three types: loan prepositions from Spanish, native nouns, and native words which were probably nouns historically but have lost their core meaning.

Nominal morphology is limited. A closed class of inalienably possessed nouns takes a prefix *x-* when possessed. Inalienably possessed nouns with eligible tones are marked with a floating high tone when the first person singular possesses. In the dialect spoken in Santa María Coatlán there are two pronouns (first person inclusive and

second person familiar) which take case marking (one case for subjects and possessors, another for objects). In that same dialect vowel-final words are nasalized when possessed by the first person singular.

Classifiers exist for types of plants, animals, and people. Most occur as separate words which are also used as nouns or pronouns. There are two additional animacy prefixes which are marked on nouns that refer to animals or supernatural forces.

Verbs are marked for only one inflectional category: potential (P), habitual (H), completive (C), certain future (F), irrealis (IRR), or imperative (IMP). Verbs that are dependant to an auxiliary or another head verb may be inflected for one of these categories (usually either the potential or the same inflectional category as the head verb) or may take one of two non-finite forms. A special non-finite form (M) exists for verbs that are the complement of a motion verb in a purpose clause. The other non-finite verb is the infinitive (INF) and is used in other constructions, often with auxiliaries to form progressive constructions. Verbs exist in derived pairs that are transitive:intransitive or active:passive. Tonal alternations, mainly the addition of a floating high tone and the deletion of glottalization, occur for potential aspect and first person singular subject marking. The distribution of these features is often restricted according to transitivity. In the largest class a potential-marking floating high tone marks intransitive verbs and a 1s-marking floating high tone marks transitive verbs. The stative (STAT) “aspect” in CLZ is a rare derivational category which occurs on some adjectives derived from verbs. There is also a participial which derives adjectives and nouns from verbs and is cognate with the Northern Zapotec infinitive.

There are both verbless clauses and copula clauses. I have not yet determined whether these should be considered variants of the same type of construction or not.

The main pronominal categories which exist are first person singular (1s), inclusive (1i), and exclusive (1e); second person respectful (2r) and familiar (2f); third person human respectful (3hr), familiar (3hf), and stranger (3hd); third person animal (3a), and third person inanimate (3i).

Most of the data in this handout are taken from the following texts:

- “Cazador” The legend of the hunter. Narrated by Lázaro Díaz Pacheco of San Baltazar Loxicha. A traditional folktale merged with a local legend to become a morality tale. A hunter is abducted by supernatural beings who put him on trial for his wife’s adulterous meat-sharing. He is acquitted but aids the supernaturals in meting out punishment on his wife and compadre.
- “Tlacuache” The story of Compadre Puma and Compadre Possum. Narrated by José Santos Velásquez of Santa María Coatlán. A folktale about a possum who wants to learn to become a carnivore and big game hunter in order to please his wife. He gets help from his compadre, a puma, at his wife’s urging, but just isn’t cut out for it.
- “Juan Tonto” One of many Mexican “Juan Tonto” stories. Narrated by Lázaro Díaz Pacheco of San Baltazar Loxicha. An old European folktale (the

princess's secret). In this version Juan Tonto, a peasant, tricks an upper class gentleman to win the princess for his bride, thereby revealing the superiority of his own intelligence compared to that of the upper class.

- “León” The story of the Puma and the Possum. Narrated by Pedro Pacheco Pacheco of the Campo Nuevo Ranch, subdialect of San Miguel Coatlán. Another folktale with a puma and a possum. This time the possum is the trickster and eventually succeeds in killing the puma which is his natural predator.
- “Chivo” An account of goats. A conversational text in which Lázaro Díaz Pacheco of San Baltazar Loxicha interviews Pedro Pacheco Pacheco of the Campo Nuevo Ranch about the domestic life of goats.
- “Difuntos” The story of the people who died in 1962, whose ghosts we heard. Told by Lázaro Díaz Pacheco of San Baltazar Loxicha. This is a true story that occurred in LDP's childhood. His family was living on an isolated ranch and heard a strange noise at night. The next day they learned about two people who had died in town.
- “Hipólito” The legend of Hipólito Gómez. Told by Juan García of San Baltazar Loxicha. Some details related to the supernatural and the death of Hipólito Gómez are told by Juan García to Lázaro Díaz Pacheco (who is recording their conversation) in an informal setting.
- “Burro” An account of donkeys. A conversational text in which Lázaro Díaz Pacheco of San Baltazar Loxicha interviews Pedro Pacheco Pacheco of the Campo Nuevo Ranch about the domestic life of donkeys.

CLZ has no monoclausal speech report constructions of the types identified by Aikhenvald (2005).

2. Direct speech reports in CLZ

The speech content in a direct speech report is often accompanied by a change in pitch and other features in an attempt to mimick the quote's author, including the use of linguistic features associated with the author's, but not the reporter's, dialect.

2.1 The basic speech report construction

Direct speech in CLZ is most frequently reported by the irregular verb *-àb*. What morphologically ought to be the habitual form, *ndàb* (*nd-* is the habitual marker), is instead usually used like a completive with the expected completive form, *ngòb*, being non-existent (though such a form exists as the completive of the verb 'fall').

- (1) *Ndàb [mě gǒx,]A “télě⁷-l[^] ná nza⁷-y,* Cazador: 75-76
 C-say 3hr old if=2s NEG H-give=3i
 The old lady said, “if you don't give it,
- [Mě gôtz tě-l]A nza⁷-y*
 3hr female POS=2f H-give=3i
 Your wife gives it.”

The subject of *-àb* may be followed by a phrase headed by *ndô* ‘face’ which indicates to whom the speech is directed.

- (2) *Ndàb [mbál nděz]_A [ndô mbál mbi⁷zh,_{LOC}* Tlacuache: 16-17
 C-say compadre possum face compadre puma
 Said Compadre Possum to Compadre Puma,

“*Kompádh^r, kompádh^r á [lě⁷ bě⁷l]_{VCS} [ta⁷ bâ]_{VCC}”?
 compadre compadre COMP FOC meat 3i there
 “Compadre, Compadre, is that the meat?”*

-àb is usually accompanied by a subject, though this may be omitted when the verb is repeated and the subject is still clear.

- (3) *Ndàb kábáyér [ndô réy]_{LOC}* Juan Tonto: 56-57
 C-say gentleman face king
 The gentleman said to the king,

Ndàb, “Nâ wní [xta⁷ no⁷ xìn-á]_O.”
 C-say 1s P-know¹ REL-3i H²-bear offspring=2r
 (He) said, “I know what your child bears.”

In a narrative, the first quote in an episode is usually introduced by the phrase *ndàb author (ndô author’s addressee)* and may optionally be followed by it as well. Subsequent quotations can contain this formula preceding, following, framing, or inserted into the middle of the quotation itself. When the reporting marker breaks up the speech content it appears that it can only do so at a clause break.

- (4) “*Tlě⁷-á sě⁷,*” *ndàb nděz, “yá-nh⁷ [ni⁷ tě sâ]_{LOC}.”* León: 9
 if-2r FUT-walk C-say possum P-go.P=1i house POS 1e³
 “If you’ll go,” said the possum, “let’s go to my house.”
- (5) “*Kómó ña⁷n kómpádr*” *ndàb mbi⁷zh,* “*yá-nh⁷.*” León: 10
 why NEG compadre C-say puma P-go.P=1i
 “Why not, compadre,” said the puma, “let’s go.”

Non-initial quoted sentences, including quoted responses to earlier quotations and subsequent sentences in a longer quoted passage, tend to have the ‘s/he said’ phrase follow the quotation more often than preceding it.

¹ Though this form appears often in this text as ‘know’ I had not documented it yet as such in my lexical database where I have two other *ni* verbs documented which mean ‘try’ and ‘see.’

² This is an irregular habitual form and looks phonologically more like a stative.

³ In San Baltazar Loxicha the first person exclusive pronoun *sâ* is usually used with plural reference but in the Coatlanes the pronoun can also be substituted for the first person singular pronoun *nâ*.

- (6) *Wê châ ndàb kábáyér* “*mà xna⁷-l[?]?*” Juan Tonto: 50-51
 DET then C-say gentleman where POS-mother=2f
 Then the gentleman said, “where is your mother?”

“*Xna⁷-n[^] nàx gústós pásádós,*” *ndàb Jwánh.*
 POS-mother=1s STAT-lie.down pleasures past C-say Juan
 “My mother is laid up on account of past pleasures” said Juan. (‘past pleasures’ is code-switching into Spanish and means she’s given birth).

- (7) *Ndàb ár,* “*ñá⁷n [xta⁷ ndún nâ* Cazador: 58-60
 C-say 3hf nothing REL-3i H-do.1s 1s
 He said, “I don’t do anything (lit. ‘nothing is what I do’)

[ndô yîzhlu nzó-n[^]]LOC]VCC.
 face world H-stand.1s=1s
 in the world where I am.⁴

Ñá⁷n [xta⁷ ndún nâ]VCC” ndàb ár.
 nothing REL-3i H-do.1s 1s C-say 3hf
 I don’t do anything.” he said.

Though the verb *-àb* is more widely used in direct speech reports, the verb *-ni⁷* can also be used. They are semantically very close and perhaps mean roughly ‘tell’ (*-àb*) and ‘say’ (*-ni⁷*). Here *-ni⁷* is used to report written language seen on a posted sign, but it can also be used to report spoken language.

- (8) *Ná ñi⁷ “nâ nkwǎn [dûb mbyô* Juan Tonto 6-7
 and? P-say 1s H-see.1s one AN-young.man
 And it says “I am searching for a boy

gǎk [xìn yûzh nâ]CS]o.”.
 P-become offspring in-law 1s
 to be my son-in-law.”

2.2 Special types of direct speech

2.2.1 Reported onomatopoeia

Similar to (or a type of) a direct speech report are constructions which introduce onomatopoeia. When the sound referred to by the onomatopoeia is made by an animate being (an animal, human---including humans’ body parts, or supernatural) then the verb *-b-èzh* ‘scream’ is the most commonly used verb.

- (9) “*Wě⁷ wě⁷ wě⁷” nbèzh chǐb. Ntyu⁷b chǐb zhówê.* Chivo: 28-29
 onomatopoeia H-scream goat H-pursue goat then
 “*Wě⁷ wě⁷ wě⁷” screams the goat (when) the goat pursues (the female) then.*

Lí mód ñi⁷ sâ nzádi⁷zh chǐb
 like.this way C-say 1e H-[give-word: talk] goat
 In this way we say that the goat *talks*.

⁴ This could also be translated as ‘in the life I’m in.’

Onomatopoeic sounds made by inanimate objects are reported in a similar construction where they are usually reported with the verb *-zìd* ‘sound.’

- (10) “*Mbrônh*”, *ngwzìd* [*yû* *wë`*]_{AS?}.
 onomatopoeia C-sound earth landslide
 “*Mbrônh*,” sounded the landslide.

2.2.2 Reported thought

Though not actual speech, the apparent or deduced thoughts of others can be presented the same way as direct speech is presented, but where a verb ‘think’ introduces the “speech,” or rather “thought,” content.

- (11) *Zi7lta7* *ndùn* *be7y* *xa7* Difuntos: 73-74
 early H-[do X⁵: think] 3hd
 Early in the morning they think,

 “*Xé* *mód* *lí* *nbèzh* [*gǎn* *wê*]_{AS?}”
 INTERROG way like.this H-scream dead.person DET
 “Why does the dead person scream like this then?”

3. Indirect speech reports

A speech report can also be given without a reporting verb. In (12) the authors and their addressee are understood from the motion clause which introduces the speech content.

- (12) *Lók* *ndá* *nâ-x* [*ndô* *réy*]_{LOC}, Juan Tonto: 8-9
 many H-go M-see=3hd face king
 Many go to the king,

Nâ *gǎk* [*xìn* *yûzh-á*]_{CC}
 1s P-become.P offspring in-law=2r
 “I am going to be your son-in-law”

This example is presented like a direct speech report. However, it is not the case that several men would be saying the exact same thing in this context, all in unison or one after the other. Rather, the speech content presented here is understood as the general intention of all the men who went to see the king. It is like saying in English, “And after the exam I had all these students coming to me saying ‘Can I have a point back for the phonetic transcription question.’” In this case it is not credible that every student said the exact same thing, word for word, to the professor, but this can be represented in much the same way as a direct speech report, right down to mimicking the whining that one commonly hears in the intonation of a student who wants a higher grade.

⁵ The morpheme *be7y* does not occur in isolation. Used with the verb *-ùn* ‘do,’ as here, it means to have a thought or desire or to intend to do something. Some other occurrences of the morpheme are: *-ni7* (‘speak’) *be7y* ‘send, order;’ *yà* (‘tree, pole, wooden object) *be7y* ‘pole used by the authorities to measure cadavers (for coffins);’ *yî* (‘rock’) *be7y* ‘besuara (stone found inside some deer intestines, believed to have magical properties that can aid hunters). In discussing the besuara LDP once glossed the *be7y* morpheme as ‘destiny.’

Aikhenvald (2005) described speech reports as existing on a continuum. Though direct speech is intended to closely reproduce actual speech, the construction used in CLZ to report direct speech is also used when the reported speech is obviously not verbatim. In many instances all that indicates the indirectness of a speech report is context and semantics, rather than morphology or syntax. In (13) the reporter cannot remember the name of the person mentioned in the reported speech.

- (13) *Ndàb xa7* ‘[*tál gǎn ndě7*]_S *ngùth.*’ Difuntos: 56
 C-say 3hd such-and-such⁶ dead.person DET_{this} C-die.C
 They said ‘such-and-such a person died.’

In (14) the third person stranger pronoun is used impersonally to report rumors heard around town, rather like the English ‘they say that...’ but without the complementizer used in English. This pronoun lends itself to this use because the familiar and respectful third person pronouns ought to indicate a person or people that one knows while the stranger pronoun could be any person in general from another town, or just unspecified people.

- (14) [*En lugar ndâ-m’ go7z mbzhîn*]_{LOC}, *ndàb xa7* Hipólito: 4-6
 in place H-go=3hr hunt AN-deer H-say 3hd
 In the place where they used to go hunt deer, they said
- nkén-gâ [tò’p yîx bë7l mbzhîn]*_S.
 H-hang.vi two net meat AN-deer
 there were two nets full of deer meat hanging.

As seen in examples (13) and (14), a complementizer is not generally used in indirect speech reports in CLZ, even though a complementizer is used in non-reported indirect questions, as discussed further below.

4. Discourse markers as grammaticalized (?) speech report constructions

Related to, or a type of, indirect speech report construction are rhetorical devices used in narratives. These vary from person to person, with different speakers having favorite phrases to break up their speech with. Some English speakers use a verb of cognition in this way ‘...you know...you know...you know...’ but the phrases I have noticed in CLZ are impersonal phrases with verbs of speech like ‘...we say...’ (15) and ‘...as is said...’ (16).

- (15) ...*pára go7 bŭr yo7, go7 bŭr nzhǒp* Burro: 22-25
 for P-bear donkey cargo P-bear donkey dried.maize.kernel
 ...so that the donkey will carry cargo, so that the donkey will carry cornseed,
- o go7 bŭr nzâ o go7 bŭr fértílsánt ñi7 sâ*
 or P-bear donkey bean or P-bear donkey fertilizer H⁷-say 1e
 or carry beans, or that the donkey will carry fertilizer, we say.

⁶ Spanish *tal*.

⁷ I had transcribed this word as *ñi7* with a palatal nasal. In the San Baltazar Loxicha dialect this would make it the potential aspect form rather than the habitual, which seems to be indicated by the translation given in Spanish, ‘decimos.’ It may be that I mistranscribed the word, that there is a dialect difference, or that there is something else going on here that I do not know about.

Nzhâ-y zé nâ nàx yě̀l
 H-go.away=3i place REL STAT-lie.down cornstalk
 It⁸ goes to the place where the corn stalks are.

Găk ábónár yě̀l ñi⁷ sâ.
 P-COPULA fertilize⁹ cornstalk H-say 1e
 The corn plants are going to be fertilized, we say.

- (16) *Ngyô stúb bés, xé nzélé[^],* Cazador: 5-9
 C-COPULA F-one time INTERROG H-[X-name: be.named]
 There was another time, as is said,

xé nzélé[^], Ngwâ ár go⁷z mbzhîn,
 INTERROG H-[X-name: be.named] C-go 3hf hunt AN-deer
 As is said, he went to hunt deer,

mbìth ká ár má.
 C-kill always 3hf 3a
 and he killed it like always.

Gór nâ ngòb má ndô yú, xé nzélé[^]...
 hour REL C-fall 3a face floor INTERROG H-[X-name]
 When the animal fell to the ground, as is said...

While the *xé nzélé[^]* phrase seen in (16) seems more formulaic and perhaps grammaticalized, the *ñi⁷ sâ* of (15) is identical to a direct speech report. However, in comparison with an actual direct speech report the context of (15) is not the reporting of direct speech. The person speaking in (15), Pedro Pacheco Pacheco, is telling about knowledge that he or anyone in his community would have about their domestic animals. One could view the verb *ñi⁷* here as the reporting verb in an indirect speech report, with the whole text being common knowledge, information people talk about but which is not being quoted directly. Or, one might view this phrase, *ñi⁷ sâ* as a grammaticalized narrative device which is evolving from a speech report construction.

Whether we are talking about a synchronic indirect speech report construction or something which has arisen from one, there are two features that can be pointed out as associated with indirectness here. Linguistically, the habitual aspect marked on the ‘say’ verb is one indication of indirectness. Something that is said habitually¹⁰ is not something that can be quoted verbatim unless the speech content reported is a formula

⁸ A donkey would normally be referenced with the 3a pronoun rather than the 3i pronoun used here. I do not entirely understand why the 3i pronoun is used here but it may be being used as an impersonal pronoun, as a way of saying ‘one goes there...’

⁹ A Spanish loan infinitive. These are often used with auxiliary verbs in CLZ to form compound verbs.

¹⁰ Two caveats: there are some indications that speakers are beginning to use the habitual form of verbs for non-habitual present tense actions. This may be diffusion from Spanish, a language in which the so-called “present tense” is usually used to express habitual aspect but can also be used in certain contexts to indicate real present tense. Secondly, though I argue that a habitual-marked verb should be less likely to report direct, as opposed to indirect, speech, it is curious then that the verb most commonly used to report direct speech, *-àb*, is irregular in having a form which is phonologically a habitual form but semantically a completive.

which is always said in the same way, such as a greeting or a prayer. Secondly, though any pronoun could be the author of direct speech, certain pronouns may be a stronger indication of the indirectness of reported speech. The first person exclusive pronoun used here can have either singular or plural reference, though the first person inclusive could only have plural reference. Since people don't usually speak in unison with one voice, any indication of a plural subject is an indication that the speech reported is less than completely direct.

5. Under-differentiation of direct vs. indirect speech reports

There seems to be an overall preference for the reporting of direct speech over indirect speech in CLZ. While TAM categories marked on the reporting verb and the pronominal category of that verb's subject may give some indication of the directness of the speech content, the level of directness of a speech report in CLZ is indicated more by context than by structural differences.

5.1 Personal deixis

I have not found examples of shifts in personal deixis in comparing indirect and direct speech reports. It may be that such indirect speech report constructions with changes in personal deixis are possible even though I have not found them in the texts examined, or it may be that direct speech reports are especially preferred in the very context where one would expect this type of deictic shift, for example, when the reported speech conveys a suggestion or command made by another person. However, one does see a deictic shift when comparing non-reporting speech with the speech content in a direct speech report. For instance, in the text labelled "cazador", the hunter's wife is referred to in the text, outside of reported speech, as *chě⁷l ár* (17), *mě gôtz tě ár* (18), *mě gôtz* (19), and *ár* (20). However, in (1) above a female supernatural addresses the hunter in reported direct speech and refers to his wife as *mě gôtz tě-l* 'your (2f's alienably possessed) woman.'

(17) *Ngwdà [tě' chě⁷l ár]_A má.* Cazador: 11
 C-eat all spouse 3hf 3a
 He ate it with his wife and family.

(18) *Ndâ xmbál ár nà mě gôtz tě ár.* Cazador: 14
 H-go POS-compadre 3hf and/with 3hr female POS 3hf
 The man's compadre and the man's wife go.

(19) *Nà mě gôtz ndâp rélasyónés nà xmbál.* Cazador: 15
 and 3hr female H-have relations with POS-compadre
 And the woman has relations with their compadre.

(20) *Nà nza⁷ ár bě⁷l, ndâ xmbál ár.* Cazador: 16
 and H-give 3hf meat H-eat POS-compadre 3hf
 And she gives him meat, so her¹¹ compadre eats.

¹¹ Here the 3hf pronoun is ambiguous. It could mean 'her' (the woman's) or 'his' (the hunter's) or 'their' compadre.

5.2 Temporal and spatial deixis

Again, though I cannot say absolutely that there are no changes in spatial or temporal deixis between direct and indirect speech reports, I have not found any examples of this. Just as with personal deixis though, a difference may be seen when comparing reported speech to live speech. In (13) above, though I argued that the speech was not completely direct because of the fact that the reporter could not remember the name of a person mentioned in the reported speech, the demonstrative *ndě⁷* associated with that un-named person is different than the one used to refer to the same person in non-reported speech in this text, as in (21). Even though the reported speech in (13) is not a verbatim quote, the choice of demonstrative used seems to be an attempt to show the relative closeness (in time perhaps more than in space) of the speech author to the dead person vs. the closeness of the reporter to the dead person.

- (21) *Găb nhó [tǒp gǎn wê]_S nzho7b [wizh wê]_{TEMP} Difuntos: 32*
P-say.P 1i two dead.person DET_{that} H-hang sun DET_{that}
We're going to say that two just-deceased people were haunting that day.

While (21) resembles an indirect speech report itself, the reporting phrase *găb nhó* is used as a rhetorical device, similar to those shown in (15) and (16) above. By saying *găb nhó*, LDP is beginning the plot of the text, after a long introduction, and is constructing a shared reality with the listener of the text (me). Since not everyone would believe that there can be ghosts that haunt places, this expression is saying to the listener, 'let us suppose that... (whether you actually believe it or not).' Since the potential aspect form of the verb, *găb*, indicates that the speech may occur at some future moment, or in this case immediately, the speech is not in fact being reported since it has not yet taken place.

5.3 Indirect questions and commands

Indirect questions and commands both need more investigation in this language. The few data that I have found do not distinguish these morphosyntactically from direct questions and commands.

5.3.1 Indirect commands

Two TAM categories are used to form commands in CLZ. The imperative is used to form blunt commands in which a second person subject is implied but not overt. The potential aspect is used instead if the command is negative, or when the command is affirmative but intended to be polite. When the potential is used for a command the second person subject is overt. The one example I have found of an indirect command happens to be a negative command. It is possible that the potential aspect is also used for affirmative indirect commands, but it may also be that the potential is dictated in this case by the fact that the command is negative.

- (22) *Xùz lô ndàb ná gúl ndâtz lô.*
father 2f C-say NEG P-[play.music foot: dance] 2f
Your father said (for you) not to dance.

5.3.2 Indirect questions

The examples I have of indirect questions do not happen to be examples of reported speech. In each case the speaker is also the questioner. In (23) the indirect question is headed by *télé⁷* 'if,' which is one of two disyllabic words (the other being *bélé⁷* 'same, self') in CLZ that contain the embedded focus marker marker *lě⁷*. Both (24) and (25) contain the complementizer *xâl* which is also used to form direct yes-no questions in CLZ.

- (23) *Nàt ñó télë⁷-n[^] sǎ.*
 now let's.see if=1s F-go.1s
 Now to find out if I will (be able to) go.
- (24) *Nâ wi⁷ [tô má]_O xâl na⁷n [bît lǔzh má]_{CC}.*
 1s P-see mouth 3a COMPNEG seed tongue 3a
 I'm going to look at the animal's mouth to see whether it doesn't have any
 tongue-sores.
- (25) *Zén nâ-y xâl ngúyě[^]-y.*
 P-grab.1s 1s=3i COMP [X-green: ripe]=3i
 I'm going to grab it to see if it's ripe.

6. The syntactic role of speech report content

It is not clear whether reporting verbs like *-àb* ought to be considered transitive with the speech content acting as an object, or whether these verbs should be considered intransitive and the speech content therefore not an object. Two pieces of syntactic evidence point to different answers for CLZ.

6.1 Focus marking

Zapotec normally has VAO order but when an argument is in focus position the order may change to AVO or OVA. As best I can remember, I have never seen both O and A simultaneously fronted to pre-verbal position (for focus or topic marking or for any other reason), though I expect that *if* it were possible to do this then the arguments would follow the near-universal tendency for A to precede O and thus render an AOV order. Not thinking about a quotation as an object, as I searched for examples of pre-verbal subjects of reporting verbs I expected to find something like *mě ndàb* either preceding the quote or following the quote, or to find out that while this type of subject-fronting is possible in other types of clauses, it might not have been in speech report constructions. The only example that I did find is shown in (26) below and contains only an onomatopoeia as the reported speech content. Surprisingly, while the verb stayed in clause-final position, its subject did not simply front to immediately before the verb but in fact moved before the onomatopoeic quotation. This may be an indication that the speech content can function as an object and the transitive subject of the reporting verb must precede that object when both occur pre-verbally.

In CLZ focus can be marked simply by fronting an argument to pre-verbal position, or by adding one of two markers to a pre-verbal focussed argument or to a verb itself. The two focus markers, which may have somewhat different meanings, not yet completely analyzed, are *ka⁷* and *lě⁷*. *Ka⁷* follows the focussed item and can also be used in a way that translates as 'yes.' *Lě⁷* is a pre-posed marker cognate with the focus marker cited in the literature for other Zapotec languages (e.g. Lee, 1997 and Piper 1994) and is sometimes translated as a determiner, making its complement definite. In (26) the author of the "speech" occurs preceding the verb and marked with *lě⁷* but the subject and verb of the speech report construction are discontinuous and separated by the "speech" content in the form of an onomatopoeia.

- (26) [Lě⁷ chīb mách wē¹²]_{AS?} “wě⁷ wě⁷ wě⁷” nbèzh. Chivo: 30
 FOC goat male DET onomatopoeia H-scream
 The male goat screams “wě⁷ wě⁷ wě⁷.”

6.2 Constituent order & obliques

A contradictory piece of evidence involves the way that recipients and beneficiaries are usually expressed syntactically. In Zapotec these are expressed through phrases headed by words which some (Lillehaugen, 2003 & 2004) analyze as prepositions, but which I tend to view conservatively as nouns, usually body parts. These phrases might be viewed as locative noun phrases which express where a person does or aims an action, e.g. giving in people’s hands, speaking at people’s faces. These phrases are oblique and follow the core arguments of A, S and O.

- (15) Nâ wzälè`d [chõnáyo⁷ pés]_O. Wzá-n[^] [dúbáyo⁷
 1s P-give.1s-gift three-hundred peso P-give.1s=1s one-hundred
 pés]_O [ya⁷ mē gõt. té-n[^]]_{LOC (recip.)}. Wzá-n[^] stúbáyo⁷
 peso hand 3hr female POS.1s=1s P-give.1s=1s F-one-hundred
 [ya⁷ mbzha⁷ té-n[^]]_{LOC (recipient)}. Wzá-n[^] stúbáyo⁷ [ya⁷ mbě`z
 hand AN-girl POS.1s=1s P-give.1s=1s F-one-hundredhand AN-baby
 byî té-n[^]]_{LOC (recipient)}.
 male POS.1s=1s

I’m going to give away three hundred pesos. I’m going to give one hundred pesos to my wife, another one hundred to my daughter, and another one hundred to my little boy.

To my knowledge I have not seen such a locative phrase intervene between a verb and its core arguments, though such an adjunct can precede the verb. In other words, the verb and its core arguments form a syntactic unit [VAO] or [VS] and phrases like temporal and locative phrases may precede (LOC V A O) or follow (V A O LOC) this unit but may not break it up (*V LOC A O, *V A LOC O, *V LOC S). As seen in (3) above, the original addressee of reported speech is indicated through a locative phrase headed by *ndô* ‘face’ which follows the reporting verb and its subject. This string of V S/A *ndô*-phrase may either precede or follow the quotation but I have not seen a quotation intervene between the VS/A string and the *ndô*-phrase. If the quotation were in fact an object, it would not be expected that the phrase headed by *ndô* could precede it in this way, coming between the verb and one of its core arguments.

¹² There was some disagreement about how this sentence should be transcribed. Its author was Pedro Pacheco Pacheco but I transcribed the text only with Lázaro Díaz Pacheco. LDP heard the sequence *lě⁷ chīb mách lě⁷* preceding the onomatopoeia and I heard something like *le⁷ chīb mách wē mbě⁷*. As far as I know, the focus marker/determiner *lě⁷* cannot occur in isolation in CLZ and must precede a focussed argument, so that what LDP heard would either be a speech error or a way of focussing the onomatopoeia itself. What I heard contains a word, *mbě⁷* that I do not know to exist in the language with any meaning, and is most likely a mishearing of the onomatopoeia. What I have transcribed above is what seems the most reasonable transcription to me at the present time, but the recording should be listened to again.

Thus, in CLZ speech report constructions the speech content in some ways functions as a complement clause but is not truly the same as other complement clauses.

7. Conclusion

This investigation into reported speech in CLZ has revealed some gaps in the recorded data which should now be filled with the next visit to the field. From the available evidence though, it appears that CLZ does not distinguish direct and indirect speech through morpho-syntactic means. The only clear cases of indirect speech are ones where the context is such that a verbatim quotation is impossible or at least unlikely. Even in these cases the constructions used appear to be the same in every important regard as the constructions used for direct speech reports. Interesting differences do exist however, between reported speech and live speech.

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