

PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN GUELAVIA ZAPOTEC

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The rank of an individual in a given social system is determined according to his relative age and/or importance in the community. Such a system is often reflected in the terms for address and reference used in everyday conversation. Personal pronouns, as shorthand for such terms, serve as the most concise indicators of rank in a given society. The personal pronouns of Guelavía Zapotec demonstrate the ranking of individuals in that society in a clear and unambiguous fashion.¹

Among the Guelavía Zapotecs, a person belongs to one of three generational groups. That is, he is treated as either a child, an adult, or a grandparent. A child does not become an adult in the eyes of the community until he has reached the age of twelve and has proven that he can do the work of an adult. Grandparents are those who are old enough to have grandchildren and those who have earned the respect of the rest of the community. This hierarchy is significant in determining all types of interpersonal behavior, being especially apparent in a linguistic context. For instance, the terms a speaker uses when addressing another show his own social standing relative to that of the addressee.

As substitutes for the names or descriptions of persons previously mentioned, personal pronouns are both a matter of convenience and a means to reduce redundancy. Discourse style in Guelavía Zapotec allows the use of pronouns once the identity of the referent has been established. Pronouns may appear as free forms in most places where nouns do, or they may occur as bound postclitics. Thus, unless the possibility of ambiguity exists, a speaker may usually substitute a free pronoun for a noun, or even more frequen

ly, replace a noun or free pronoun with a clitic.

This paper describes the personal pronouns of Guelavfa Zapotec, showing both the grammatical function and the meaning of each. The parameters of the system are person, number, familiar vs. formal, and bound vs. free.

There are three persons, each of which may be singular or plural in number. Third person is a more diverse category than the others, containing special pronouns to refer to men, children, animals, and inanimate objects. Second and third persons display the stratified nature of the social system, including both familiar and honorific pronouns. Familiar pronouns are used for perceived equals at any given generational level or for a person younger or less important. Honorific pronouns are employed when addressing or referring to any respected person, including older people, town officials, or people perceived as having a higher rank than the speaker. Outsiders or those who are obviously wealthy are often addressed or referred to by the honorific pronouns, even though they may be younger than the speaker. Honorific pronouns are also used for God and the saints.

There are no case distinctions in the pronoun system. Because the word order is relatively fixed (VSO), the function of a given pronoun is usually clear from its position in the sentence. There is, however, a distinction between free pronouns and postclitic pronouns, and the uses of these forms are closely tied to grammatical function.

Free pronouns may serve as subject, direct object, or indirect object of verbs, while clitic pronouns are more restricted. All clitic pronouns may be subject, but only third person clitic pronouns may be direct or indirect object, and only under certain conditions. If no indirect object occurs, the

direct object may be a clitic only if the subject is also a clitic. If an indirect object occurs, it comes between the subject and the direct object, and it may be a clitic only if the subject also is. In a sentence with an indirect object, the direct object may be a clitic only if both the subject and the indirect object also are. In other words, any element which is not a clitic blocks the use of a clitic to mark any subsequent element. It is rare, however, for all three elements to be expressed as clitics, partly because of ambiguity, and partly because the juxtaposition of certain clitics would create unacceptable vowel sequences. In such cases the final one or two elements are expressed as free pronouns or nouns.

One element of a sentence may be fronted to preverbal position for emphasis. A fronted element must be a noun or free pronoun, never a clitic, because there would be nothing for the clitic to be bound to. If the fronted element is the subject, a coreferential clitic pronoun is bound to the verb.

The possessor of a noun is marked by either a noun or a clitic pronoun, never a free pronoun. To form a possession phrase based on an ordinary noun, the prefix x- is attached to the noun, and the possessor follows: libri book (Sp. libro),² xlibri Bed Peter's (Sp. Pedro) book, xilibra my book. If the possessor appears as a noun, a periphrastic construction with the form xte (probably meaning possession of) may be used: libri xte Bed Peter's book (literally, book, possession of Peter). A similar construction using the related xten- may occur with the clitic as possessor: libri xtena my book (literally, book, possession of me). It is also possible to use either xte plus a noun or xten- plus a clitic without any noun preceding: xte Bed Peter's possession, xtena my possession. Inalienably possessed native nouns

generally do not occur with the x- prefix or in the periphrastic construction. Rather, such nouns are simply followed by the possessor: nii foot, niib her foot, nii María María's foot.³

In Zapotec, as in many other Otomanguean languages, prepositional phrases appear to be metaphorical extensions of possession phrases. A few nouns, usually body parts, have acquired prepositional function. The object of the preposition, therefore, like other possessors, is either a noun or a clitic pronoun. Examples: dets Bed behind Peter (or Peter's back), detsbi behind him (or his back).

It is likely that the free pronoun form developed from possessed nouns in a similar fashion: the clitic indicating the person and number was attached to a root, the meaning of which has since been lost. In many second and third person pronouns this root is laa-, possibly signifying person or animate being; in the remaining categories various other forms appear.

The following sections discuss the forms and uses of the personal pronouns, beginning with the first person.

1. First Person Pronouns

The first person singular pronoun is naa:

Naa chaa Bac. I am going to Tlacolula (henceforth T.).

Laab btaazbi naa. He/she hit me.

Since naa is homophonous with naa my hand, and easily confused with na it is or said (uninflected form of the verb) on the phrase level, where laryngealization is lost, an occasional ambiguity results. To deal with such cases, the form nare is substituted for the pronoun naa.⁴ Thus the second sentence above, which may also mean he/she hit my hand, could be clarified by replacing naa with nare:

Laab btaazbi nare. He/she hit me.

The bound clitic -a is used to mark the first person subject of a verb or the possessor of a noun:

rcaaza I want
 xlibra my book

Various morphophonemic changes take place when the clitic -a is attached to vowel-final stems, whether these vowels are plain, laryngealized, or checked. In each case, laryngealization or checking on the stem vowel is retained.

Vowels of the same oral quality reduce to one:

rgua + -a = rgua I shave
 rcuaa + -a = rcuaa I write

High central vowel -i is deleted before -a:

xlibri + -a = xlibra my book

Because they are extremely rare, no examples of verbs with stem-final -i are provided.

Mid vowels -e and -o become high before -a:

reste + -a = restia I get up
 rsiacldée + -a = rsiacldiia I bless
 rzialo + -a = rzialua I complete
 rsiacdoo + -a = rsiacdúua I tame

High vowels -i and -u are unchanged before -a:

rsi + -a = rsia I clean
 rbii + -a = rbiia I appear, present myself
 rliu + -a = rliua I teach
 rguu + -a = rgúua I do/make

The pronoun *duuni* is the plural form of the first person:

Dunni choon Bac. We are going to T.

Laadeb btaazdeb dunni. They hit us.

The first person plural clitic has two forms: *-ni* (following a consonant) and *-n* (following a vowel). It may function as the subject of a verb or the possessor of a noun:

rdxapni we have

xtuun our rope

No grammatically marked inclusive/exclusive distinction in the first person plural has been noted to date.

2. Second Person Pronouns

The second person singular familiar is *liú*. It is similar in meaning to the Spanish forms 'tú' and 'ti':

Liú chuu Bac. You are going to T.

Laab btaazbi liú. He/she hit you.

The bound clitic *-u* may indicate the subject of a verb or the possessor of a noun:

runnu you do/make

xcamillu your shirt (sp. *camisa*)

When the clitic *-u* is postposed to vowel-final stems, several morphophonemic changes occur, regardless of whether the final vowels are plain, laryngealized, or checked. The laryngealization or checking on the stem vowel is retained in each case. Vowels of the same oral quality reduce to one:

rliu + -u = rliu you teach

rziruu + -u = rziruu you tell the truth

High central vowel -i is deleted before -u:

xlibri + -u = xlibru your book

No examples of verb stems ending in -i are given because they are extremely rare.

The mid vowel -e becomes high before -u:

reste + -u = restiu you get up

ree + -u = riku you take, drink

A final -o, and sometimes -a, lowers the -u to -o and then is deleted:

rzialo + -u = rzialo you complete

rsiacdoo + -u = rsiacdoo you tame

rdiacá + -u = rdiacó you appear, seem

rguillaa + -u = rguiloo you break

Less frequently, a final -a is deleted before lowering the -u:

rnitexga + -u = rnitexgu you notice, warn

rgiaa + -u = rgiuu you see

Finally, the high vowel -i remains unchanged before -u:

rsi + -u = rsiu you clean

rbii + -u = rbiiu you appear, present yourself

The plural form of the second person familiar is laat:

Laat chiaat Bac. You (pl) are going to T.

Laadeb btaazdeb laat. They hit you (pl).

The clitic appears in two forms: -ti (following a consonant) and -t (following a vowel). It functions as the subject of a verb or the possessor of a noun:

rlluunti you (pl) run

xriit your (pl) water gourd

The honorific form of the second person singular is laabiu. It is similar in meaning to the formal second person of Spanish (usted):

Laabiu chiabiu Bac. You are going to T.

Laab btaazbi laabiu. He/she hit you.

The clitic -biu expresses the subject of a verb or the possessor of a noun:

rdxulaazbiu you like

xcurachbiu your sandal (Sp. huarache)

The most respectful way of addressing two or more people is the second person plural honorific, laagipti:

Laagipti chiagipti Bac. You (pl) are going to T.

Laadeb btaazdeb laagipti. They hit you (pl).

The clitic -gipti marks the subject of a verb or the possessor of a noun:

rliugipti you (pl) teach

de xallilygipti your (pl) chairs

3. Third Person Pronouns

In Guelavía Zapotec, as in many languages, the third person is the most heterogeneous category of pronouns. There are familiar and honorific pronouns, pronouns applied strictly to males, those used for children, and pronouns referring to animals or inanimate objects. In each of the third person plural forms, whether bound or free, the plural marker -de- appears. This plural marker also occurs as a free particle which optionally precedes nouns, pluralizing them:

de gún bulls

de yax avocados

Third person singular familiar laab refers to either a male or a female:

Laab chiab Bac. He/she is going to T.

Laab btaazbi laab. He/she hit him/her.

The clitic has two forms: -b (following a vowel) and -bi (following a consonant). It marks the subject or object of a verb or the possessor of a noun:

reb he/she goes
 rcaaznib we love him/her
 xmiłbi his/her money

The plural of the familiar form is laadeb, referring to two or more males and/or females:

Laadeb chiadeb Bac. They are going to T.
 Laadeb btaazdeb laadeb. They hit them.

The clitic -deb is attached to verbs indicating the subject or object:

renedeb they take
 rcaazbideb he/she loves them

The clitic may also show the possessor of a noun:

xcurraldeb their fence (Sp. corral)

The singular honorific laany is the most respectful way to refer to either a male or a female:

Laany chiany Bac. He/she is going to T.
 Laab btaazbi laany. He/she hit him/her.

The clitic form -ny marks the subject or object of a verb or the possessor of a noun:

rsubny he/she put
 rcaazany I love him/her.
 xarrudxny his ox goad (Sp. garrocha)

The most polite way to refer to a group of males and/or females is laadeny:

Laadeny chiadeny Bac. They are going to T.
 Laadeb btaazdeb laadeny. They hit them.

The clitic form -deny appears on verbs to show the subject or object:

rxaclaazdeny they are fed up with (figurative)

rcaaznideny we love them

It also indicates the possessor of a noun:

xpurrdeny their burro (Sp. burro)

The special forms laall (sg) and laadell (pl) are used only by men when referring to other men:

Laall chiall Bac. He is going to T.

Laab btaazbi laall He/she hit him.

Laadell chiadell Bac. They are going to T.

Laadeb btaazdeb laadell. They hit them.

Women do not employ these forms to refer to men nor do they use a corresponding form to refer to other women. These male pronouns are less restricted by generational boundaries than other pronouns, and express familiarity between men who use them.

The singular clitic forms of the male pronoun which indicate the subject or object of a verb or the possessor of a noun are -lli (following consonants) and -ll (following vowels):

riúull he enters

rcaaznill we love him

xpantlonlli his pants (Sp. pantalón)

The plural clitic -dell may also be bound to a verb marking the subject or object, or to a noun marking possessor:

zedell they went

rcaaztidell you (pl) love them

xmigudell their friend (Sp. amigo)

Children of either sex are referred to as laaby (sg) or laadeby (pl) by either their elders or other children:

Laaby chiaby Bac.	<u>He/she is going to T.</u>
Laab btaazbi laaby.	<u>He/she hit him/her.</u>
Laadeby chiadeb Bac.	<u>They are going to T.</u>
Laadeb btaazdeb laadeby.	<u>They hit them.</u>

The clitics -by (sg) and -deby (pl) mark the subject or object of a verb or possessor of a noun:

rúunby	<u>he/she cries</u>
rcaazaby	<u>I love him/her</u>
xpayby	<u>her rebozo, shawl</u> (Sp. paño)
rgitdeby	<u>they play</u>
rcaazadeby	<u>I love them</u>
xcomiddeby	<u>their food</u> (Sp. comida)

Animals are referred to as laam (sg) or laadem (pl):

Laam chiam Bac.	<u>It is going to T.</u>
Laab btaazbi laam.	<u>He/she hit it.</u>
Laadem chiadem Bac.	<u>They are going to T.</u>
Laab btaazbi laadem.	<u>He/she hit them.</u>

The singular clitic representing the subject or object of a verb or the possessor of a noun has two forms: -mi (following consonants) and -m (following vowels):

rom	<u>it eats</u>
rcaazúm	<u>you love it</u>
xpitiaazmi	<u>its nest</u>

The plural clitic is -dem

rduxdem	<u>they bark</u>
rcaaznidem	<u>we love them</u>
xcuevdem	<u>their cave</u> (Sp. cueva)

Inanimate objects are referred to as ngui (sg) and dengui (pl). These pronouns appear in a free form only when fronted to preverbal position for emphasis and when answering the question 'which thing(s)?'.

The corresponding clitics are used more frequently: -ni (sg) and -deni (pl). These clitics occur on a verb to mark inanimate subject or object, and on a noun to show possession:

gubizni	<u>it dried up</u> (a tree or a plant)
btaazani	<u>I hit it.</u>
bldani	<u>its shade</u>
azedeni	<u>they already went</u>
btaazadeni	<u>I hit them</u>
bldadeni	<u>their shade</u>

A chart of the personal pronouns follows:

<u>Person/Number</u>		<u>Free Pronoun</u>	<u>Clitic</u>
first	sg.	naa (nare)	-a
	pl.	dunnɛ	-n/-nɛ
second (fam.)	sg.	liú	-u
	pl.	laat	-t/-tɛ
second (hon.)	sg.	laabiu	-biu
	pl.	laagiptɛ	-giptɛ
third (fam.)	sg.	laab	-b/-bɛ
	pl.	laadeb	-deb
third (hon.)	sg.	laany	-ny
	pl.	laadeny	-deny
third (male)	sg.	laall	-ll/-llɛ
	pl.	laadell	-dell
third (child.)	sg.	laaby	-by
	pl.	laadeby	-deby
third (an.)	sg.	laam	-m/-mɛ
	pl.	laadem	-dem
third (inan.)	sg.	ngui	-ni
	pl.	dengui	-deni

NOTES

¹Gelavía Zapotec is an Otomanguean language spoken by approximately 30,000 people living in twenty villages in the area of San Juan Guelavía, located in the district of Tlacolula in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. The present paper is based upon data gathered by the author while he was living in San Juan Guelavía from April 1973 through May 1980.

The consonant phonemes of Guelavía Zapotec can be grouped in fortis-lenis pairs. The fortis consonants are p, t, k, c, č, s, š, mm, nn, and l. Their lenis counterparts are b, d, g, z, j, z, ž, m, n, and l. The semivowels are w and y.

The following symbols, which are more similar to those used in Spanish, have been substituted in the practical orthography adopted by the author: c for phonemic k before a, o or u; qu for k before e, i, or i; gu for g before e, i, and i (g remains g before a, o, or u); ts for c; ch for č; dz for z; dx for j; x for š; ll for ž; and either ü (after g) or u (after other consonants) for w. Because fortis l is so infrequent, both lenis and fortis laterals are written as l.

There are six vowels, each of which may occur plain, laryngealized, or checked: i, e, i, a, u, and o. Since the orthography was chosen for efficiency and readability by the native speaker, the phonemic distinctions are not all marked. Both laryngealized and checked vowels are written as double vowels. Where a minimal contrast exists between two words, an acute accent (´) is written on the first vowel to indicate that the vowel is checked. On the phrase level, in unstressed syllables, morphophonemic rules reduce checked vowels to laryngealized vowels, and laryngealized vowels to plain vowels.

Stress normally falls on the penult, but occasionally occurs on the ultima. In this case it is marked by an acute accent on the vowel.

For further information on the phonology of GZ, consult Ted E. Jones and Lyle M. Knudson, "Guelavía Zapotec Phonemes," pp. 163-80 in William R. Merrifield, ed., Studies in Otomanguean Phonology, SIL Publications in Linguistics, No. 54 (Dallas: Summer Institute

of Linguistics and University of Texas at Arlington, 1977).

²The information in parentheses indicates the word in Spanish (Sp.) which has been borrowed and subsequently modified by speakers of Guelavía Zapotec.

Other abbreviations appearing in the paper are sg. for singular and pl. for plural.

³Attaching the x- prefix introduces certain morphophonemic changes. Stem-initial lenis consonants are replaced by their fortis counterparts: bay rebozo, shawl (Sp. paño) and xpay- rebozo of--. A stem-initial y is lost following x-: yallily chair and xallily- chair of --.

⁴Nare is probably formed by attaching to naa the bound demonstrative -re, which means this or here. Although no other pronouns occur with this clitic, it is found attached to nouns to show distance and relationship to the speaker. Thus, gúnre means this bull here. This modification is logical, since in any given situation the speaker (first person) may always refer to himself as present.