Goals

- Review expressions of possession
- Learn about the different phonation types of vowels
- Introduce expressions of location
- Learn about existential (there is…) sentences

Content

- Words with different phonation types (Section 1)
- Prepositions, where-questions (Section 2.1)
- Here and there (Section 2.2)
- Posture verbs (Section 3)
Grammar Review: Inseparable vs. separable possession

In our last lesson, we learned that there are nouns that are inseparable and separable. Inseparable nouns refer to things like your name, family members, body parts, home, and clothes. They must have a possessor, which will directly follow the noun. The possessor could be a proper name, another noun, or an attached pronoun.

All other nouns are separable. They do not require a possessor, but they can have one if it’s preceded by *tse* ‘of’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inseparable</th>
<th>Separable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Hizh</em> (not possible)</td>
<td><em>yu’u</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>llizh Fe</em> Fe’s home</td>
<td>*yu’u <em>tse</em> <em>Fe</em> Fe’s house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>llizha</em> my home</td>
<td>*yu’u <em>tsia</em> my house</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Exercise*

With a partner, practice saying who various things belong to, using the correct possessive forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 1:</th>
<th>Example 2:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ni de’ bex tsia</em> ‘Here is my tomato.’</td>
<td><em>Ni de’ zxa Luis</em> ‘Here are Luis’s clothes.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Image of tomato" /> = mine</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Image of clothes" /> = Luis’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ![Image of banana](image3) = yours
2. ![Image of tomato](image4) = his (an elder)
3. ![Image of pants](image5) = his (non-elder)
4. ![Image of hat](image6) = Martín’s
5. = hers (a non-elder) 6. = hers (an elder)

7. = mine 8. = yours

9. = Maria 10. = Fe

11. = my mother 12. = mine
1. Pronunciation practice: Phonation types
Zapotec has five basic vowels. These are approximately the same ones as in Spanish:

- **a**  \( b\text{a}k\text{'e} \) ‘cow (vaca)’
- **e**  \( y\text{g}zh \) ‘town (pueblo)’
- **i**  \( i\z \) ‘year (año)’
- **o**  \( t\text{o}n\text{'e} \) ‘tall (alto)’
- **u**  \( z\text{xy}u\text{'a} \) ‘corn (maíz)’

But, each of these vowels has four different forms, or *phonation types*: basic, checked, creaky, and breathy.

- **a**  \( z\text{x}a\text{\text{\text{'n}} \) ‘under (abajo)’  **basic (básica)**
- **a’**  \( z\text{x}a' \) ‘clothes (ropa)’  **checked (cortada)**
- **a’\text{\text{\text{a}}}**  \( z\text{q'\text{a}} \) ‘corn (elote)’  **creaky (quebrada)**
- **ah**  \( z\text{ah} \) ‘bean (frijol)’  **breathy (susurrante)**

While these forms sound similar, they’re each different in the way air passes through your vocal folds (voice box) while you pronounce them. Using your vocal folds in this way is not crucial in English or Spanish, but it’s an important part of the Zapotec sound system.

**Basic vowels (a, e, i, o, u)**
These vowels are pronounced just as in Spanish, with air passing through your vocal folds normally. You do not have to do anything special.

**Creaky vowels (a’ a, e’e, i’i, o’o, u’u)**
These vowels are like long basic vowels that are interrupted by a *glottal stop* in the middle.

A glottal stop is produced when your vocal folds close shut, preventing any air from escaping from your lungs.

**Exercise**
First, say ‘uh-oh’. Notice how the air stops flowing between the two vowels ‘uh’ and ‘oh’. This is a glottal stop.

Next, try to make the creaky vowel *a’a* in Zapotec. To do this, say ‘uh-oh’ but replace both vowels with *a*.

**Checked vowels (a’, e’, i’, o’, u’)**
Checked vowels are pronounced like the basic vowels except that end with a glottal stop. By closing and not releasing your vocal folds, this gives an abrupt end to the vowel sound.
Exercise
First, make a long aaaa sound, tapering it off smoothly at the end. This is a basic vowel.

Next, make another aaaa, but this time cut it off abruptly at the end. If you exaggerate it, it might sound like you’re choking, or about to cough.

Repeat these cut-off aaaa, making them shorter and shorter each time. When it’s the length of a typical syllable, you’ve produced a checked vowel.

Breathy (ah, eh, ih, oh, uh)
Breathy vowels are pronounced while the vocal folds are slacker than usual, which lets much more air pass through compared to basic vowels. This gives them a ‘sighing’ or ‘whispering’ sound quality.

Exercise
Make each of the vowel sounds normally (basic vowel). Then pronounce them while sighing (breathy). Compare the clear sound of the basic version to the airy sound of the breathy one.

We’ve discovered words that have nearly every combination of vowel (a, e, i, o, u) and phonation type (basic, checked, creaky, breathy). Listen to the instructor say each word below, repeating after her.

Basic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Phonation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>begx</td>
<td>tomato (tomate)</td>
<td>basic (básica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>wi</td>
<td>orange (naranja)</td>
<td>basic (básica)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u</td>
<td>zhyme</td>
<td>basket (cesta)</td>
<td>basic (básica)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Creaky

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Phonation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i’i</td>
<td>bi’i</td>
<td>child (niña/niño)</td>
<td>creaky (quebrada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o’o</td>
<td>xo’o</td>
<td>your mother (tu madre)</td>
<td>creaky (quebrada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u’u</td>
<td>gu’unn</td>
<td>bull (toro)</td>
<td>creaky (quebrada)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Checked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Phonation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e’</td>
<td>bake’</td>
<td>cow (vaca)</td>
<td>checked (cortada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o’</td>
<td>bi’ido’</td>
<td>child (niño/a)</td>
<td>checked (cortada)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u’</td>
<td>beku’</td>
<td>dog (perro)</td>
<td>checked (cortada)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breathy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Phonation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eh</td>
<td>behll</td>
<td>snake (serpiente)</td>
<td>breathy (susurrante)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ih</td>
<td>zti’dw</td>
<td>cat (gato)</td>
<td>breathy (susurrante)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uh</td>
<td>duh</td>
<td>rope (mecate)</td>
<td>breathy (susurrante)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise
Listen to the instructor pronounce some words. Say which phonation type each vowel has.
2. Grammar: Talking about location
2.1 Locative prepositions

Prepositions are words that describe location relative to some noun. Here are some examples.

- **lu’u** ‘inside’
- **lo** ‘in front of’
- **kuzhe** ‘behind’
- **lawe** ‘on’
- **zxan** ‘under / beneath’
- **kwit** ‘next to’
Prepositions precede the location they modify, as in English or Spanish.

*kuzhe lizha’n* ‘behind my home’  
*lu’u lizha’n* ‘inside my home’

You can ask where something is using the question word *gan* ‘where’. Here’s a simple example:

**Q:** *Gan ______-(e)n?*  
**A:** [Lu’u/kuzhe/zxan…] _____-(e)n.  
‘Where is the _______?’  
‘[Inside/behind/under…] the _______.’

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**Exercise, Part 1**
Ask and tell where things are in the pictures.

**Example**  
**Q:** *Gan zxile’n?*  
‘Where is the sheep?’  
**A:** *Kuzhe maestre’n.*  
‘Behind the teacher.’

**Q:** *Gan yixo’n?*  
‘Where is the avocado?’  
**A:** *Kwit zxile’n.*  
‘Next to the sheep.’

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.
Exercise, Part 2
Maestra Fe has pictures of different foods and animals. Practice asking and telling where she places them using the same sentence structures as in Part 1.

Exercise, Part 3
Maestra Fe has pictures of foods. Practice asking her to put things in specific places with the following sentence.

Bxua’ ______-(e)’n [preposition] ______-(e)’n.
‘Put the _____ [preposition] the _____.’

Example
Bxua’ bexe’n zxan mese’n.  ‘Put the tomato on the table.’
2.2 Here and there
Just as in English and Spanish, Zapotec has words to express the location with respect to who’s speaking: *ni* ‘here (aquí)’ and *na* ‘there (ahi).’

**Exercise**
Maestra Fe has pictures of foods and animals and will ask you where they are. Answer using *ni* or *na* depending on where they are.

Example
Q: *Gan zxile’n?* ‘Where is the sheep?’
A: *Ni.* ‘Here.’

3. Grammar: Existential sentences
Existential sentences are ones like ‘there is a(n) _____ here/there’ or ‘hay un(a) _____ aquí/ahi’. In Zapotec, these sentences have the following form.

*Ni/na [verb] tu _____.* ‘There is a _____ here/there.’

The verb you use here depends on what kind of noun you are talking about: whether it’s non-living or living, and what posture it’s in.
3.1 Simple existential sentences

For many non-living things, Zapotec uses the verb *de* ‘lie (estar acostado)’.

*Na de tu bex.*
‘There is a tomato there.’

*Ni de tu tzxuaz.*
‘There is a peach here.’

*Na de tu yet.*
‘There is a tortilla there.’

But for living things, the existential verb you use depends on **posture**: whether they’re standing (*ze*), sitting (*dzi*), or lying down (*de*).

*Na ze tu beku*.  
‘There is a dog there [it’s standing].’

*Na dzi tu beku*.  
‘There is a dog there [it’s sitting].’

*Ni de tu beku*.  
‘There is a dog here [it’s lying down].’

*Na ze tu nu’ule.*  
‘There is a woman there [she’s standing].’

*Na dzi tu nu’ule.*  
‘There is a woman there [she’s sitting].’

*Ni de tu nu’ule.*  
‘There is a woman here [she’s lying down].’
Exercise
Complete the following existential sentences with the appropriate verb.

1. Na _______ tu behll.
   ‘There is a snake there.’

2. Ni _______ tu lape.
   ‘There is a hat here.’

3. Ni _______ tu zxihdw.
   ‘There is a cat here.’

   ‘There is corn here.’

5. Na _______ tu gu’unn.
   ‘There is a bull there.’

   ‘There is a frog there.’

7. Na _______ tu me’edo’.
   ‘There is a baby there.’

8. Na _______ tu yele’.
   ‘There is a banana there.’

   ‘There is a rope here.’
3.2 Complex existential sentences

All the existential sentences in the previous section begin with a location word, *ni* ‘here’ or *na* ‘there’. It’s also possible to specify a more specific location using a preposition. To do so, just add a preposition+noun to the end.

*Na de tu bex.*
‘There is a tomato *there*.’

Or

*Na de tu bex lu’u zhume tsia’n.*
‘There is a tomato *in my basket*.’

*Ni dzi tu zxihdw.*
‘There is a cat *here* [it’s sitting].’

Or

*Ni dzi tu zxihdw kwit yu’un.*
‘There is a cat *here next to the house* [it’s sitting].’

*Na de tu yet.*
‘There is a tortilla *here*.’

Or

*Na de tu yet zxan yage’n.*
‘There is a tortilla *under the tree*.’
Exercise

Maestra Fe has pictures of foods and animals. Practice telling where she places them using ‘stand’ (ze), ‘lie’ (de), and ‘sit’ (dzi).

Example
Ze tu zxile zxan mesen.
‘There is a sheep [standing] under the table.’

Vocabulary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronouns</th>
<th>separate</th>
<th>attached</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I, me</td>
<td>neda’</td>
<td>-a’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you (sg.)</td>
<td>le’</td>
<td>-u’ or -o’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she, he, her, him (an elder)</td>
<td>lle’</td>
<td>-e’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>she, he, her, him (a non-elder)</td>
<td>lleba’</td>
<td>-ba’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it (an animal)</td>
<td>lleb</td>
<td>-b or -eb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it (a thing)</td>
<td>llen</td>
<td>-n or -en</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepositions</th>
<th>Locations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lu’u</td>
<td>yu’u</td>
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<tr>
<td>lo</td>
<td>mes</td>
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<td>kazhe</td>
<td>zhume</td>
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<td>lawe</td>
<td>yag</td>
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<td>zxan</td>
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<td>jalawa’</td>
<td>na’a’</td>
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<td>xben’</td>
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<td>yidnaga’</td>
<td>ni’a’</td>
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<tr>
<th>Clothing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zxa’a’</td>
<td>xlapa’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lang’</td>
<td>lape tsia’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foods

yet ‘tortilla’ yele’ ‘banana’

bex ‘tomato’ wi ‘orange’
tzua ‘peach’ yixo’ ‘avocado’
zxua ‘corn (maíz)’ za’a ‘corn (elote)’

Animals

zxile ‘sheep’ beku’ ‘dog’

bluzh ‘frog, toad’ zxihdw ‘cat’

beh ‘snake’ gu’unn ‘bull’

Other

yezh ‘town’ duh ‘rope (mecate)’

nu’ule ‘woman’ bi’i ‘child (niña/niño)’

me’edo ‘baby’ bi’ido’ ‘child (niño/a)’

4. Homework

Part 1. Translate the following.

1. There is a banana here. / Hay un plátano aquí.

________________________________________________________________

2. Where is the dog? / ¿Dónde está el perro?

________________________________________________________________

3. There is a tomato on the tortilla. / Hay un tomate encima de la tortilla.

________________________________________________________________

4. There is a cat [sitting] in front of the house. / Hay un gato [sentado] delante de la casa.

________________________________________________________________

5. Put the peach under the hat. / Pon el durazno debajo del sombrero.

________________________________________________________________
Part 2. Match the sentences to the pictures. Choose all that apply.

1. Na de tu yixo'.
2. Na de tu zxile’ lo yage’n.
3. Bxua’ wi’n lu’u zhume’n.
4. Na dzi tu blluzh kuzhe gu’unnen.
5. Na de tu za’a kwit yele’n.

A. 
B. 
C. 
D. 
E. 
F. 
G. 
H. 
I.