

Nido de Lenguas: Clases

Class 1 – October 29, 2020

GOALS

- To introduce you to the town of **Laxup**, its culture, and its people
- To start using the Zapotec alphabet
- To learn some basic greetings
- To learn some words for describing people
- To find out how the holiday of **Tu Santw** is celebrated in **Laxup**



*An altar on the holiday of **Tu Santw** in **Laxup***

Workshop on the Languages of Meso-America
University of California, Santa Cruz
wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/

1. *Laxup* (Santiago Laxopa)



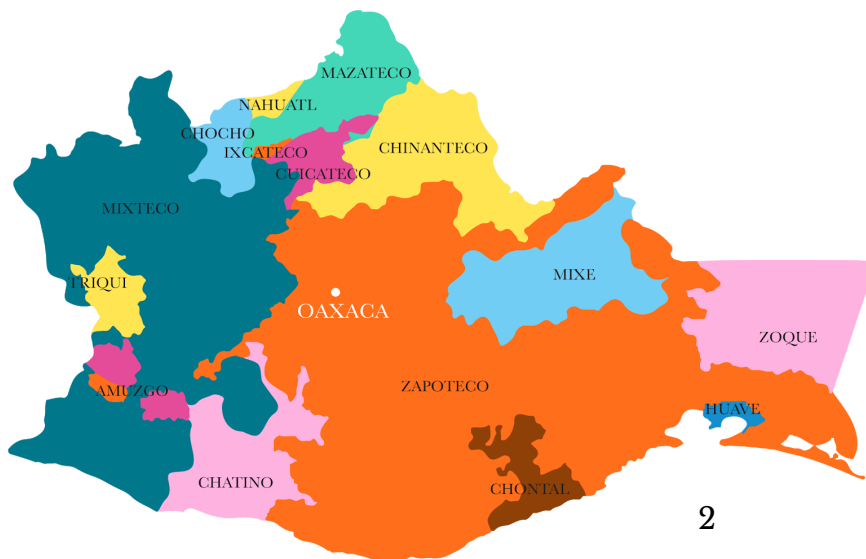
The small town of **Laxup** (Santiago Laxopa) is located high in the Sierra Juárez mountains in the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca, Mexico.

Today, **Laxup** has about 1,500 inhabitants, most of whom speak Zapotec. Spanish is used at school and when Laxopeños travel outside the town.

Some Laxopeños have left to live in Oaxaca City, Mexico City, and Saltillo, Coahuila. They stay in touch with their families by phone, and many return to their town during the annual *fiesta del pueblo*.



The language spoken in **Laxup** is one variety of Zapotec. Other Zapotec varieties are spoken from the Sierra Norte through the Valley to the Sierra Sur and Isthmus.



The Zapotec spoken in **Laxup** is only *one* of Oaxaca's many languages. There are 15 other language groups like Zapotec in Oaxaca for a total of 854 varieties.

2. Greetings

One of the first things you need to learn when starting a language is how to greet people. First, we will learn how to greet Maestra Fe at the beginning of class.

Dialogue 1: How to start class

Fe: **Padziuxh!**

‘Hello (informal)!’

Class: **Padziuxh e!**

‘Hello (formal)!’

Fe: **Gak zualhe?**

‘How are you all?’

Class: **Zuatu’ wenh.**

‘We are doing well.’

Exercise

Practice your part of Dialogue 1 with Maestra Fe.

Now, we can learn how to greet your fellow students. It is also how Laxopeños greet one another in a variety of different circumstances.

Dialogue 2: How to greet your classmates

You: **Padziuxh!**

‘Hello!’

Your friend: **Padziuxh!**

‘Hello!’

You: **Gak zuu’?**

‘How are you?’

Your friend: **Zua’ wenh.**

‘I’m doing well.’

Chixhe lhe’?

‘How about you?’

You: **Duxklhenu’, zua’ wenh.**

‘Thank you, I’m doing well.’

Exercise A

Practice *both* parts of Dialogue 2 with Maestra Fe.

Exercise B

In breakout rooms, practice Dialogue 2 with a classmate.

3. The Zapotec alphabet

Zapotec has 29 sounds: 5 vowels and 24 consonants.

Vowels

The 5 vowels are pretty much the same as in Spanish:

a e i o u

Consonants

Many of the consonants are like consonants in either English or Spanish:

b ch d dz g k m p
r s sh t ts w y z

But the rest of the consonants have special pronunciations in Zapotec. We won't try to master these all now, just become familiar with them.

- Some consonants have pronunciations that are *similar, but not exactly identical* to sounds in English or Spanish:

l	<u>l</u> age'	'leaf (hoja)'
lh	<u>lh</u> ape'	'hat (sombbrero)'
n	gu' <u>n</u>	'bull (toro)'
nh	bzi' <u>inh</u>	'mouse (ratón)'

- Some consonants are *unique* to Zapotec:

j	<u>j</u> id	'chicken (pollo)'
ll	<u>ll</u> it	'egg (huevo), bone (hueso)'
x	<u>x</u> uge'	'fingernail (uña)'
xh	<u>xh</u> ile'	'sheep (borrego)'

Later on, we will also be learning about two other symbols — ' and h — which do not represent sounds on their own. Instead, they change the pronunciation of the letter they occur next to. We will also be learning about these symbols later.

Exercise

Maestra Fe will show you a picture corresponding to one of the words above — with an unfamiliar consonant — and ask you to say the word in Zapotec.

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Download an alphabet poster for Zapotec here:

<http://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/clases/2021/alphabet-poster.pdf>

Print it out and hang it up at home to help you memorize all the sounds in Zapotec.



Tarjetas

Practice the Zapotec alphabet using these digital flashcards:

<https://babel.ucsc.edu/tarjetas/alphabet/>

4. Describing people

We are going to start learning how to speak Zapotec with some words for describing people. Many of these come in pairs:

bi'i nhu'ulhe	'girl'	bene' nhu'ulhe	'woman'
bi'i xyag	'boy'	bene' xyag	'man'

You'll notice that these words all have two parts. The first part describes how old a person is — **bi'i** is used for young people and **bene'** is used for adults.

Here are some other pairs of words that describe people using the same pattern:

bi'i weya'a	'dancer (younger)'	bene' weya'a	'dancer (older)'
bi'i dzul	'singer (younger)'	bene' dzul	'singer (older)'
bi'i skwel	'student'	bene' skwel	'teacher'

Exercise

Maestra Fe will show you a picture of a person. Describe them using one of the words above.

Tarjetas

Practice these words describing people using these digital flashcards:

<https://babel.ucsc.edu/tarjetas/people/>

5. Final dialogue: *Tu Santw*

We will end every class with a dialogue, which will introduce you to some aspect of life in Laxopa as well as get you started speaking Zapotec. Before the next class, memorize the dialogue below, so that you can perform it with one of your classmates for everybody else.

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Laxopeños celebrate the important holiday of **Tu Santw** '*Día de los Muertos*' (November 1–3) beginning several days ahead of time. The Sunday before, the people gather to clean the **kabsantw** 'cemetery (panteón)', placing flowers and candles throughout.

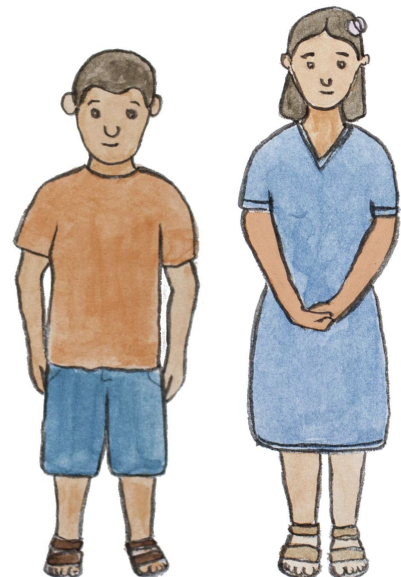


On October 28, each family makes an altar in their home. Every day until November 1, they place a candle and glass of water for the souls of those who have departed. Starting on November 1, they start to put out food, too, for the souls of the saints, and children and adults who have passed away.

Food plays an important role in **Tu Santw**. There are special foods that are prepared just for this holiday: **yetgu** 'tamales' of all kinds, including **jid** 'chicken', **bedzjw** 'turkey', and **kuch** 'pork', as well as **yi'inhdo' gazj**, a special *mole negro*. During the celebration, Laxopeños take food to the cemetery to eat with their ancestors.

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Meet Raquel and Beto, a sister and brother who live in **Laxup**. The following dialogue takes place on November 1, when Beto meets Raquel in one of the town's streets:



Beto: **Padziuxh, Raquel! Ga chejo’?**
‘Hello, Raquel! Where are you going?’

Raquel: **Kabsantw’nh cha’a.**
‘I am going to the cemetery.’

Tsjawia’ de xaxtawa’.
‘I am going to visit my
grandparents.’

Beto: **E nha’nh gawu’?**
‘Are you going to eat there?’

Raquel: **O’ó, nhi ba nusha’a bi’nh gawa’.**
‘Yes, here is what I am going to
eat.’

Beto: **Bi nushu’u gawu’? Blhu’i neda’!**
‘What are you going to eat? Show me!’

Raquel: **Nhi nusha’a yi’inhdo’ gazj.**
‘I am taking mole negro.’

Nha’ nusha’a yetgu kuch.
‘And I am taking pork tamales.’

Beto: **Sia gulhe gawu’!**
‘That’s going to be delicious!’

Exercise

Listen carefully to Maestra Fe recite the dialogue above. Then repeat each sentence after her.

You can practice the dialogue at home by listening to the recording here:

<http://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/clases/2021/1-dialogue.mp3>

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Learn about Senderos’ *Día de los Muertos* celebration in Santa Cruz here:

<http://scsenderos.org/events/dia-de-los-muertos/>

6. Homework

6.1. *Sequence.* The sentences below form a conversation, but they are out of order. Write a number next to each sentence, indicating what their correct order is.

- Fe: *Zua' wenh.*
----- You: *Padziuxh e!*
----- You: *Zua' wenh. Chixhe lhe'?*
----- Fe: *Gak zuu'?*
----- Fe: *Padziuxh!*

6.2. *Complete.* Write the missing words or phrases in the conversations below.

Fe: *Padziuxh, _____.*

You: _____ *. Gak zuu'?*

Fe: *Zua' wenh. _____?*

You: *Zua' _____.*

6.3. *Memorize.* Listen to the final dialogue online several times:

<http://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/clases/2021/1-dialogue.mp3>

Then, memorize the dialogue. Practice being both Beto and Raquel. If you can, practice with your classmates too. We will start our next class by asking students to perform the dialogue.

6.4. *Vocabulary.* Practice the vocabulary in this lesson on your own device using the digital flashcards you can find here:

<http://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/tarjetas/>