

Nido de Lenguas: Clases

Class 3 – December 10, 2020

GOALS

- To learn a new greeting
- To review verbs for describing actions
- To learn how to ask and answer yes-no questions
- To learn how to pronounce ‘
- To learn about traditional dances in **Laxup**



Young dancers and musicians in **Laxup**

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

1. Dialogue from last class

Did you memorize the final dialogue from our last class? Get ready to perform it with one of your classmates!

Raquel: **Ba sesille' ya'nh!**
'They are ringing the bell!'

Beto: **Bixtse'nh sesille'nh?**
'Why are they ringing it?'

Raquel: **Tsja'ak bene' xuanha' ya'ado'.**
'The elders are going to the mountains.'

Beto: **Leduke'!**
'You're right!'

Raquel: **Bi de'e tsjaseka'ane' lla?**
'What are they going to bring?'

Beto: **Esu'uxe'e xhua', llit, meskal, yez,
de'e go yu' tsedzu'nh.**
'They are bringing corn, eggs, mezcal,
cigarettes, and other things to feed
the earth.'

Raquel: **Biyo'o lla!**
'Let's go home!'

Beto: **Biyej, ba za'a letek.**
'Go ahead, I will be home later.'

Exercise

Perform the dialogue with one of your classmates for everybody else.

2. Another greeting: What's your name?

Do you remember how to greet someone?

You: **Padziuxh!**
'Hello!'

Someone else: **Padziuxh!**
'Hello!'

When you meet someone new, it is polite to ask what their name is. For instance, if you were meeting Beto for first time, you would ask and he would respond as follows:

You: **Gak lhiu'?**
'What is your name?'

Beto: **Beto lhia'.**
'My name is Beto.'

Exercise

Maestra Fe will ask each student what their name is. You should respond in Zapotec using the following formula:

Maestra Fe: **Gak lhiu'?**

You: ____ **lhia'.**

3. Warm up: Verbs

Last time, we learned six verbs describing actions, which we used to make sentences:

shtahs	‘sleep (dormir)’	shnhabdille’	‘greet (saludar)’
ze	‘stand (estar parado)’	shnhide’	‘hug (abrazar)’
chehb	‘be scared (estar asustado)’	shnhupe’	‘kiss (besar)’

Exercise

Maestra Fe will hold up an illustration and ask students to say the *verb* that describes that action.

4. Asking and answering questions

A yes-no question is a question that you can answer with either “yes” or “no”. In Zapotec, you ask a yes-no question by adding the question word *e* to the beginning of a sentence:

E shtahs bi'i nhu'ulhe'nh? 'Is the girl sleeping?'

You can then answer this kind of question by saying **ò'o** 'yes' or **ó'o** 'no' in Zapotec:

A: **E shtahs bi'i nhu'ulhe'nh?**
'Is the girl sleeping?'

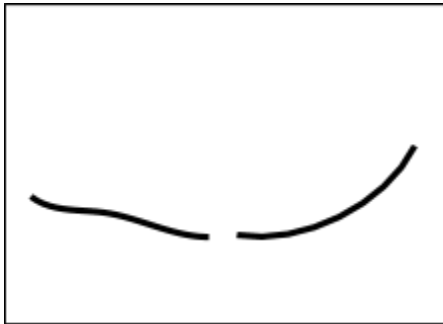
B: **Ò'o.**
'Yes.'

A: **E ze bi'i nhu'ulhe'nh?**
'Is the girl standing?'

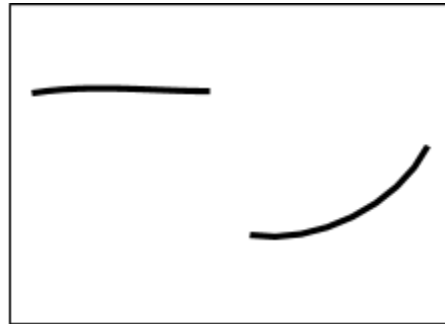
B: **Ó'o.**
'No.'



While these words may sound very similar to one another, they have different intonations:



Ò'o. 'Yes.'
([listen](#))



Ó'o. 'No.'
([listen](#))

Since the first syllable of **ò'o** 'yes' begins with a low tone, we write it with a grave accent (**ò**). Since the first syllable of **ó'o** 'no' begins with a high tone, we write it with an acute accent (**ó**).

Asking and answering yes-no questions

E _____?

'Is/Are _____?'

Ò,ò.
'Yes.'

or

Ó'ò.
'No.'

Exercise A

Listen to Maestra Fe's questions about the pictures she is holding up and answer by saying ò'ò 'yes' or ó'ò 'no'.

Exercise B: Guess What Happened?

With a partner, play "Guess What Happened?", using the playing board below. In each game, one person is the Asker and the other is the Answerer. The board contains nine "stories", each describing a different sequence of events. The Answerer picks one of these stories and the other has to guess "what happened" by asking yes-no questions. The Answerer can only respond by saying ò'ò 'yes' or ó'ò 'no'. The game ends with the Asker has picked the right story.

Just as a reminder, here are some nouns that we learned earlier for describing people:

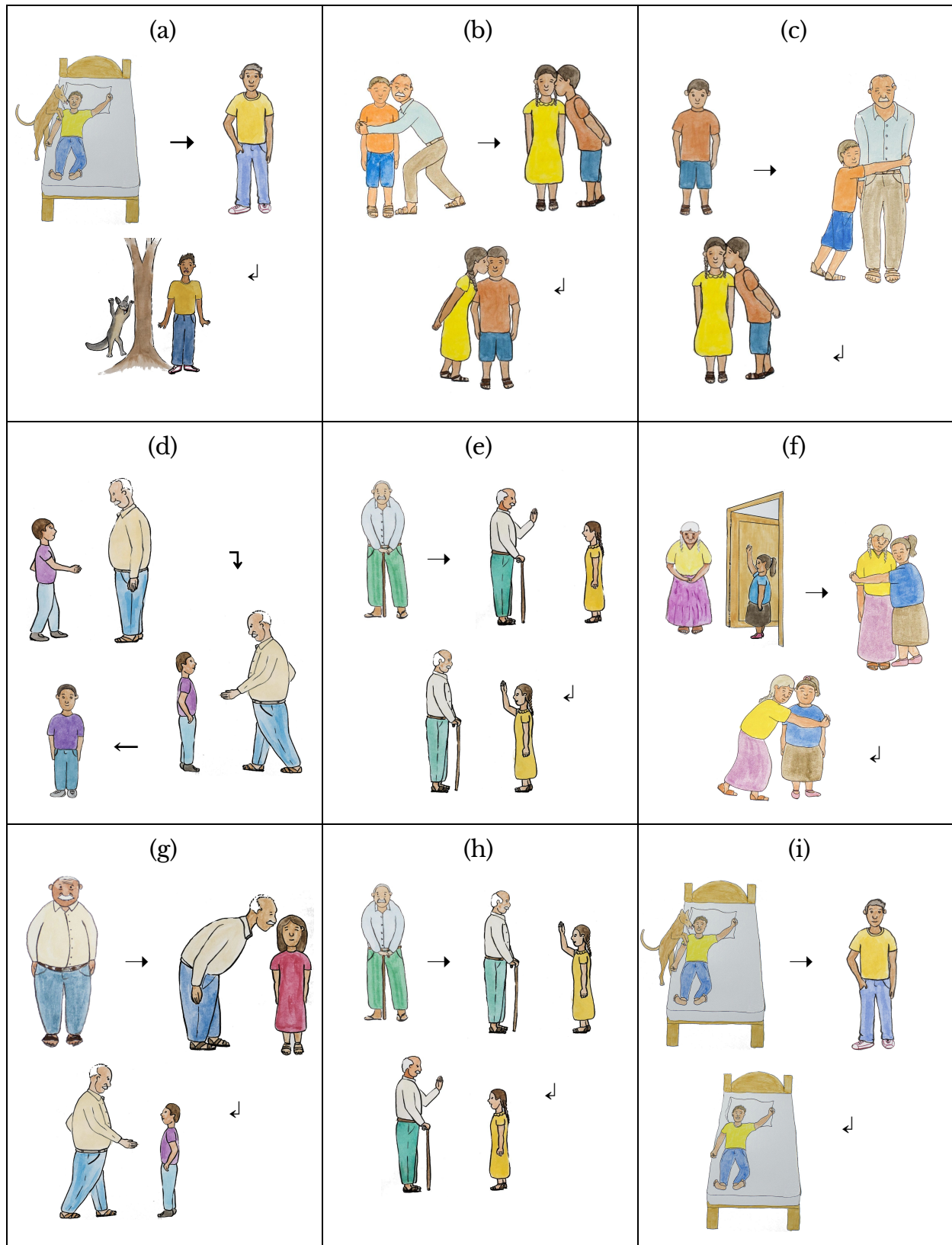
bi'i nhu'ulhe 'girl'

bene' nhu'ulhe 'woman'

bi'i xyag 'boy'

bene' xyag 'man'

"Guess What Happened?" Playing Board



5. '

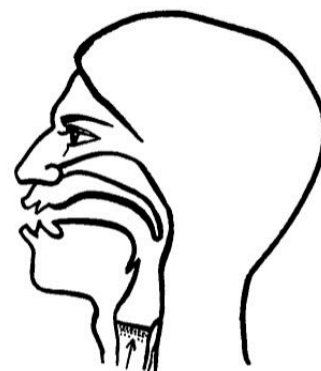
As you know, Zapotec has five vowels: *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*. These sound much like the vowels in Spanish. But they receive a special pronunciation when they combine with the apostrophe symbol '.

a'	<u>cha'</u>	'pot (cazuela)'
a'a	<u>za'a</u>	'corn (elote)'

As you pronounce a vowel, air passes through your vocal folds, making them vibrate. When no ' is present, your vocal folds should be relaxed, allowing air to flow through them freely:

a	<u>ya</u>	'temazcal'
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But, when ' is present after a vowel, the air stream is stopped *abruptly* by closing the vocal folds. Practice doing this:



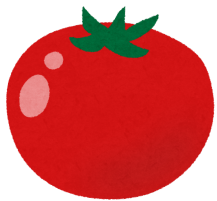
1. First, make a long *aaaa* sound, tapering it smoothly at the end. This is the basic vowel *a*.
2. Now, make another *aaaa*, but this time cut it off abruptly at the end. If you exaggerate, it might sound like you are choking or about to cough.
3. Repeat these cut-off *aaaas*, making them shorter and shorter. Now you are making the vowel *a'*.

When ' occurs between two vowels, the air stream is interrupted in the same way, but then it is allowed to restart. You can practice doing this as follows:

1. First, say 'uh-oh'. Notice how the air flow stops between 'uh' and 'oh'.
2. Next, replace 'uh' and 'oh' with the *aaaa* sound. Now you are making the vowel *a'a* in Zapotec.

Exercise A

Listen to Maestra Fe pronounce the words below (all ones you have seen before). Try and spell each word, concentrating on *whether* an apostrophe should be added to the vowel, and if so *how*. After you have written the word down, raise your hand to volunteer your answer to the class.



tomato (tomate)



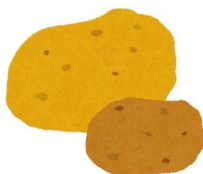
corn (elote)



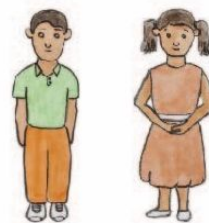
chicken (pollo)



topil



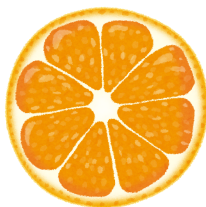
potato (papa)



child (niña/o)



hat (sombrero)



orange (naranja)



bull (toro)



mouse (ratón)



sheep (borrego)



pot (cazuela)

Exercise B

Now, we will play a game that requires you to pronounce vowels with the apostrophe. In Zapotec, there are many words whose meanings are differentiated solely by whether an apostrophe is present or not.

With a partner, pick one word in each set below to pronounce. Can your partner guess which one you are saying? Take turns being the Speaker and Guesser. (Some of these words are new: don't try to learn them now. Just concentrate on how they are pronounced.)

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | yu
yu'u | 'earth (tierra)'
'house (casa)' |
| 2. | ya
ya'a | 'temazcal'
'mountain (montaña)' |
| 3. | ga
ga' | 'where (dónde)'
'green (verde)' |
| 4. | de
de'e | 'ash (ceniza)'
'thing (cosa)' |
| 5. | lhe
lhe'
lhe'e | 'name (nombre)'
'you (tú)'
'you all (ustedes)' |
| 6. | bi
bi'i | 'what, which (que, cual)'
'child (niña/o)' |
| 7. | La'
la'a | 'Oaxaca'
'gash (raja)' |

6. Final dialogue: Dance in Laxup

Music and dance are very important to the people of **Laxup** and other towns throughout the Sierra Norte. *Jarabes* are a type of song and group dance whose structure and story are passed down in each town from generation to generation.

The *danza de los negritos* features eight dancers wearing colorful ribbons on their backs and a black hat topped with a depiction of a toucan's head. The full dance may last more than half an hour and is accompanied by a traditional *banda*.

The story of this dance involves a man who goes out into the mountains looking for an herb to cure his son. Today, when dancers perform this dance, they often dedicate their performance, sometimes to the health of a loved one.

Raquel and Beto are getting ready to perform the *danza de los negritos* at the fiesta. Raquel helps Beto remember all the parts of his outfit, and explains that today she will be dedicating her dancing to the health of her ailing husband.

Raquel: **Ba bllinh oxh chejdzu lni'nh!**
'It's time to go to the fiesta!'

Beto: **Ba nhuxa'a lhape' gasj tsia'nh.**
'I have my black hat.'

Bi xha'nh guxa' yitu?
'What other clothing should I bring?'

Raquel: **Xho' wiya'anh.**
'Your dancing outfit.'

Beto: **Gunhlahlla'nh, duxklhenhu'.**
'I forgot it, thank you.'

Bixtse'nh eyo'o ne'ella?
'Why are you dancing today?'

Raquel: **Eya'a kwents enaba' yiyak bene' tsia'nh.**
'I will dance to ask my husband to get better.'

Beto: **Wenh lanh enabu' tsee'.**
'It's good that you're asking for him.'

Raquel: **Yo'o tsjaya'adzu lla!**
'Let's go dance!'

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/2021/3-dialogue.mp3>

7. Homework

7.1. Write a story. With the nouns and verbs you have learned, write a short story in Zapotec. Try and make it as interesting as possible by making use of all the words you know.

7.2. More yes-no questions. In today's class, we learned how to ask yes-no questions. This means that we can greet someone in a yet another way:

E Beto'nh lhiu'?
'Is your name Beto?'

They could then respond by saying 'yes' or 'no':

Ò'o, Beto'nh lhia'.
'Yes, my name is Beto.'

or

Ó'o, Raquele'nh lhia'.
'No, my name is Raquel.'

Find a friend and greet them in this new way. Ask them about their name using a yes-no question. Then, repeat this activity in the reverse direction.

7.3. Extended conversation. In the dialogue from our first class, we saw Beto ask a new type of question:

Bixtse'nh sesille'nh?
'Why are they ringing it?'

This is a why-question, since it uses the word **bixtse'nh** 'why' and asks about the reason for something. We can use a why-question to extend the conversation. For instance:

A: **E shtahs bi'i nhu'ulhe'nh?**
'Is the girl sleeping?'
B: **Ò'o.**
'Yes.'
A: **Bixtse'nh shtahs bi'i nhu'ulhe'nh?**
'Why is the girl sleeping?'

With a friend, practice this dialogue. Then, try to add on, using the verbs and nouns you know. How long can you keep the conversation going? To make it more interesting, here are some more nouns and verbs from the dialogues in one of our previous classes:

Things

xhua'	'corn (maíz)'	llit	'egg(s)'
yetgu	'tamale (tamal)'	zwia'	'cacao'
lhape'	'hat (sombrero)'	yi'inhdo' gasj	'mole negro'

People

xa'ag	'topil'	bene' xwanh	'town elder (anciano)'
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Places

ya'ado'	'mountains (montañas)'	kabsantw	'cemetery (panteón)'
lni	'fiesta'		

Actions

nhuxe'e	'hold (agarrar)'	chej	'go (ir)'
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7.4. *Memorize.* Listen to the final dialogue online several times:

<http://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/clases/2021/3-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.

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You can look up the meaning or pronunciation for any word in the online Zapotec dictionary:

<http://zapotec.ucsc.edu/slz/dictionary.html>