

Nido de Lenguas: Clases

Class 4 – October 30, 2024

GOALS

- To learn how to pronounce **j**
- To learn some adjectives for describing people
- To learn how to combine adjectives with nouns
- 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. 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: **E ba belho'o?**
'Are you back?'

Beto: **O'ó, ze nhua' za'a.**
'Yes, I have brought some corn.'

Raquel: **Wenh gulhe! E dzunh xna'dzu'nh yetgu' za'a?**
'Great! Is our mother making *tamales de elote*?'

Beto: **O'ó.**
'Yes.'

Raquel: **Nhude' shtsuxe', txhube' za'anh?**
'Who is shucking the corn and removing the kernels?'

Beto: **Dziu'!**
'Us!'

Raquel: **Wakkse!**
'Okay!'

Exercise

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

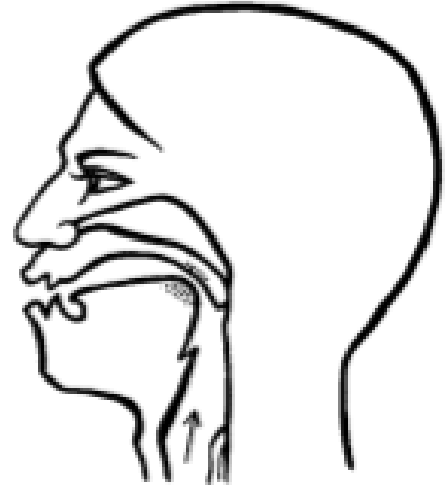
2. j

In Zapotec, the letter **j** is pronounced in a similar manner as in Spanish. It is produced with the rear of the tongue almost pressed up against the very back part of the palate to make a turbulent sound.

jia	'chicken'
neje	'yesterday'
bej	'well (pozo)'
yetj	'sugar cane'
gasj	'black'

Exercise

Pronounce each word after Maestra Fe, paying close attention to what your tongue is doing when you pronounce the **j** sound.



3. Adjectives

Adjectives are words that describe a property or quality. Here are some useful adjectives in Zapotec for describing how big or small people are:

tone'	'tall'	chaparw	'short'
las	'skinny'	xhenh	'fat'

and some more for describing how old they are (ages are approximate):

7–15 years

16–25 years

26–59 years

>60 years



xkwide'
'little, young
(chica/o)'

wegu'
'young (joven)'

wak
'adult (grande)'

gulhe
'elderly (mayor)'

Exercise

Maestra Fe will hold up an illustration of a person and ask a student to describe them using just one of these adjectives. (If more than one is applicable, pick one.)

Tarjetas

Memorize these adjectives using these digital flashcards:

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

4. Combining adjectives with nouns

Of course, people don't go around using adjectives alone. To describe someone, you combine an adjective with a noun.

Languages differ in how they do this. In English, the **adjective** *precedes* the **noun**, while in Spanish the **adjective** *mostly follows* the **noun**:

English
tall *child*
elderly *person*

Spanish
niña *alta*
persona *mayor*

In Zapotec, the **adjective** *always follows* the **noun**:

bi'i *tone'* 'tall child'
bene' *gulhe* 'elderly person'

Exercise

Below each image is a combination of a noun and an adjective. When Maestra Fe calls on you, describe the image in Zapotec, combining the noun and adjective *in the correct order*.

(a)



skinny + child

(b)



fat + person

(c)



adult + person

(d)



short + child

(e)



elderly + person

(f)



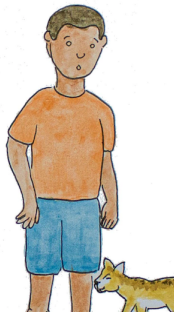
short + person

(g)



skinny + person

(h)



little + child

(i)



young + person

5. More than one adjective

The words we have been using to describe people's gender — whether they are male or female — are actually combinations of nouns and adjectives:

bi'i <u>nhu'ulhe</u>	'girl'	bene' <u>nhu'ulhe</u>	'woman'
bi'i <u>xyag</u>	'boy'	bene' <u>xyag</u>	'man'

More than one adjective can be used together; they all still *follow* the noun.

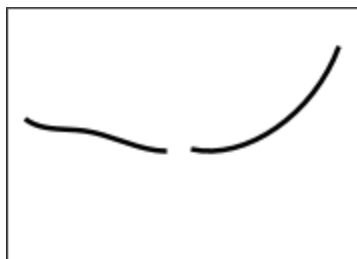
bi'i <u>nhu'ulhe tone'</u>	'tall girl'
bene' <u>xyag xhenh gulhe</u>	'fat elderly man'

Exercise: Guess who

With a partner, play “Guess Who?”, using the playing board below. In each game, one person is the Asker and the other is the Answerer. The board contains nine pictures of people. The Answerer picks one of these people and the other has to “guess who” by asking yes-no questions. The Answerer can only respond by saying **o'ó** ‘yes’ or **o'o** ‘no’. The game ends with the Asker has picked the right picture.

Asking and answering yes-no questions		
E _____?		
'Is/Are _____?'		
O'ó.	or	O'o.
'Yes.'		'No.'

Remember that the words **o'ó** ‘yes’ or **o'o** ‘no’ may sound very similar to one another, but they have different intonations:

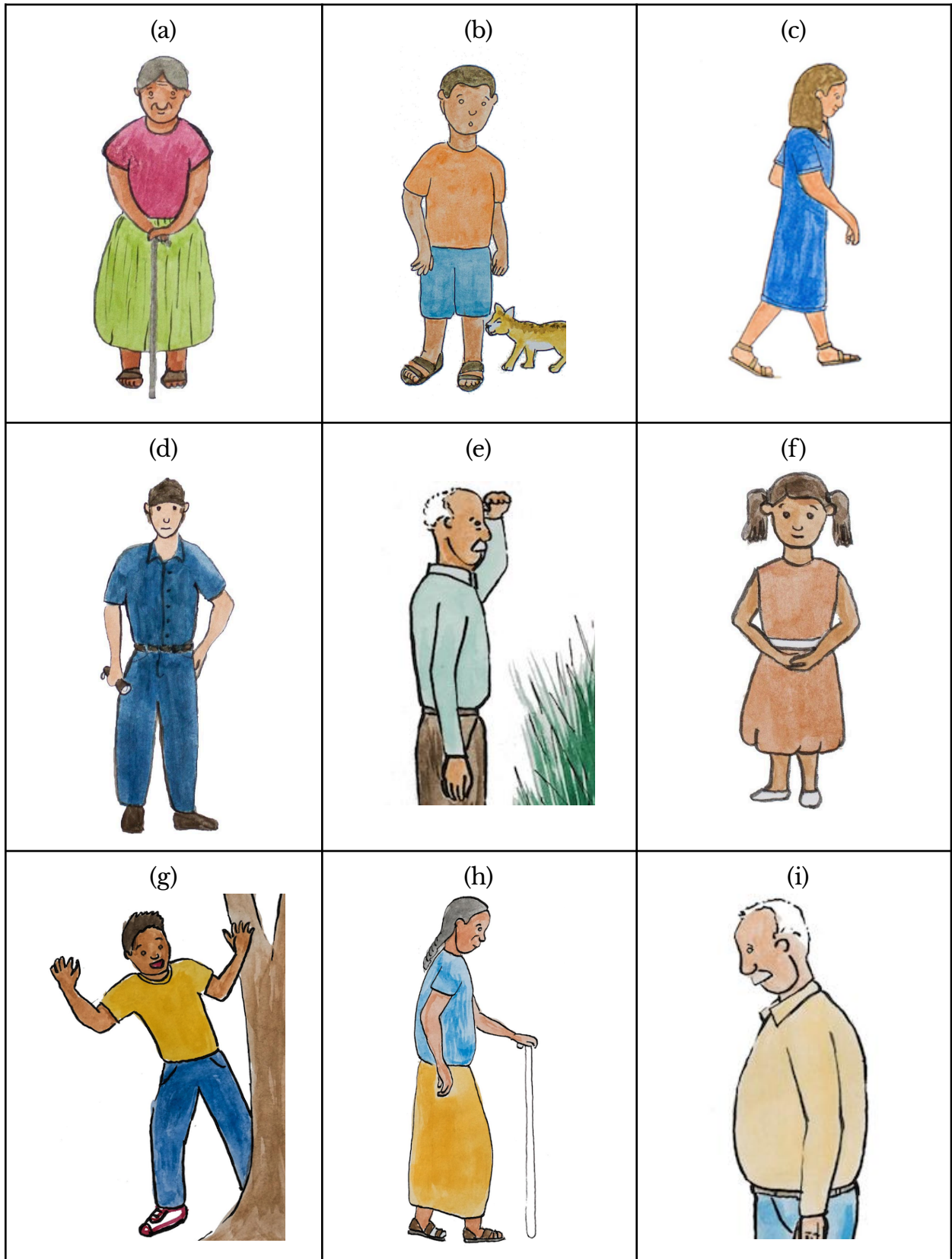


O'ó. 'Yes.'
([listen](#))



O'o. 'No.'
([listen](#))

"Guess Who?" Playing Board



6. Final dialogue: Tu Santw

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** **gasj**, a special *mole negro*. During the celebration, Laxopeños take food to the cemetery to eat with their ancestors.

The following dialogue takes place on November 1. Beto and Raquel at home when they see their elderly neighbor walk past outside:

Beto: **Ga chej bene’ nhu’ulhe
gulhe’nh?**
‘Where is the elderly woman
going?’

Raquel: **Cheje’ kabsantw.**
‘She is going to the cemetery.’

Beto: **E nella’nh Tu Santw?**
‘Is today Día de los Muertos?’

Raquel: **O’ó.**
‘Yes.’

Beto: **E chejdzu kabstanw?**
‘Are we going to the cemetery?’

Raquel: O'ó, dzunha' yi'inhdo' gasj nha'
yetgu' kuch na'a.
'Yes, I am making mole negro and
pork tamales now.'

Beto: **Sia gulhe!**
'Very 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:

<https://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/clases/2024/2024-4-dialogue.mp3>

7. Homework

7.1. *Word jumbles.* We have now learned where adjectives appear in relation to nouns. Below, you will find a “jumble” of nouns and adjectives in the wrong order. Rearrange each of them so that nouns and adjectives appear in the correct order.

1. tone' bi'i xyag

Correction: _____

2. gulhe nhu'ulhe bene'

Correction: _____

3. weya'a las bi'i chaparw

Correction: _____

4. xkwide' nhu'ulhe bi'i xhenh

Correction: _____

5. skwel wak bene' tone'

Correction: _____

7.2. *Translation.* Translate each of the (now correct) combinations above into English or Spanish.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

7.3. *Is this the right person?* Each question below asks about the person in the picture. First, translate the question into English or Spanish. Then, answer the question by circling either ò'ò 'yes' or ó'ò 'no'. If you don't remember how these words are pronounced, go back to review them on p. 7.



1. E bene' xyag wegu' tone'?

Translation: _____

Choose one: ó'ó ò'ò



2. E bi'i nhu'ule xkwide'?

Translation: _____

Choose one: ó'ó ò'ò



3. E bene' nhu'ule xhenh?

Translation: _____

Choose one: ó'ó ò'ò



4. E bi'i nhu'ulhe chaparw?

Translation: _____

Choose one: ó'ó ò'ò

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

<https://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/clases/2024/2024-4-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:

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