

Chapter 13

TOPIC in Chatino

1. *Introduction*

Chatino is a Zapotecan language spoken in the highlands of southern Mexico in the state of Oaxaca (Rasch 1999). There are four distinct dialects of Chatino, and the one represented here is Yaitepec Chatino. The others are Zenzontepec Chatino, Tataltepec Chatino, and Panixlahuaca Chatino. The language has a complicated system of lexical tone, but to simplify matters, the marking of tone is omitted in this text, which was narrated by Cecilia Carmona and translated by Martín Suarez and Jeff Rasch.¹ The narrative is presented in the Appendix so that each clause is numbered separately. All the data cited in this paper were collected by Jeff Rasch in his fieldwork leading to Rasch (2000).

2. *Sketch of Chatino grammar*

Chatino seems to be primarily VSO, but other orders are possible in which the V is not initial (Rasch 2000.20, 21):

- (1) Liya nw-sta kitu7n
Mary C-break pot
'Máry broke the pot'

and compare this contrastive utterance (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 69), in which the asserted correction is sentence initial:

- (2) yu nw-s7i Xwa, s7i l7an
[ground C-buy John not house
'John bought a field, not a house'

The negative *s7i* in (2) is a negative copula (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 68) and

¹ The text is used with the permission of Martín Suárez and Jeff Rasch.

negates nouns, as in (2), and nominalized elements. The clausal negation is *ja* (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 67, 68):

- (3) *ja* ka 7a tza an lo jwinka ni
 no be.able more P.go 1pl.incl on plantation now
 ‘We can’t go to the plantation anymore’

Confirming that initial position signals FOCUS, we find that the copula *ka* is not sentence initial as in (4):

- (4) (a) *ka nu cha-kwchi s7we nnten
 be REL rabbit good person
 ‘The rabbit was an amiable person’
 (b) *kas7 we nnten nu cha-kwchi
 be good person REL rabbit
 ‘The rabbit was an amiable person’

but sentence internal (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, P. 74):

- (5) s7we nnten ka nu cha-kwchi
 good person be REL rabbit
 ‘The rabbit was an amiable person’
 *‘The amiable person was a rabbit’

“Every sentence-initial EVENT must be accompanied by nominal morphology following it, i.e., by a noun or one of the person marking clitics” (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 4) in Table 1. The clitics are used for the S on

| | Singular | Plural |
|----------------------|--|---|
| 1st person | <i>n</i> + tone contrast | <i>an/o</i> (Inclusive) <i>wa</i> (Exclusive) |
| 2nd person | tone contrast (familiar) <i>war^o</i> (respectful) | <i>wan</i> |
| 3rd person human | \emptyset | |
| 3rd person animal | <i>i7n</i> | |
| 3rd person inanimate | <i>an/o</i> | |

Table 1: *Chatino Person Marking Clitics.*

intransitive EVENTS and for the A of transitive ones. The O of transitive EVENTS are unmarked if they are inanimate, “while humans and animals construed as human-like are usually marked by the preposition *7in* ‘to’” (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 9):

(6) n-sna-7o Liya 7in Xwa
 N-run- Mary to John
 ‘Mary kidnapped John (and is fleeing with him)’
 (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 7)

(7) yjwi Ø 7in nu kw7na raka7n
 C-kill 3 in REL crocodile then
 ‘He killed the crocodile then’
 (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 9)

(8) nw-sla wan l7an kwa 7ni
 C-open 2pl house there say
 “‘Open that door,’ he said’

The same *7in* can mark the Recipient of an EVENT (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 15, 17):

(9) nw-ta Liya kija 7in Xwa S7we
 C-give Mary tortilla to John Juquila
 ‘Mary gave John a tortilla in Juquila’

(10) nw-ta Liya kija 7in Xwa 7o ya7 Ø
 C-give Mary tottrillato John with hand 3
 ‘Mary gave John a tortilla a tortilla with her hand’
 ‘Mary handed John a tortilla’

(11) nw-ta Liya ja-xlya 7in Tyu S7we 7o Xwa
 C-give Mary bread to Peter Juquila with John
 ‘Mary gave bread to Peter in Juquila with John’
 ‘Mary gave bread to Peter and John in Juquila’

“A noun referring to a recipient never occurs before the noun referring to the transferred entity in an event of giving” (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 14).

The *7o* suffix in (6) is what Rasch (2000, Chapter 3, p. 5) calls an ‘applicative’ morpheme, “which as a free word means ‘with’ [cf. (10)] or ‘and’ [cf. (11)], and is suffixed to the verb to indicate, among other things, that the PARTICIPANT denoted by the direct object is involved in the EVENT along with the subject (if the root is intransitive) or along with another, often unmentioned, PARTICIPANT that would have the same role as an object of the underived verb [cf. (12)]”:

- (12) nw-kkwa-7o Xwa sna Liya
 C-sweep- John sandal.3 Mary
 ‘John swept Mary’s sandal (along with something else, e.g. the dirt)’

The placement of the *7o* will distinguish between the ‘and’ and the ‘with’ glosses (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 31):

- (13) nw-nya Xwa l7an re **7o Tyu**
 C-build John house this with Peter
 ‘John built this house with Peter’
- (14) nw-nyaXwa **7o Tyu** l7an re
 C-build John with Peter house this
 ‘John and Peter built this house’

The same element can signal ‘comitative’ and ‘instrumental’ meanings (Rasch 200, Chapter 3, p. 103):

- (15) n-kila nu cha-kwchi 7o ska7 7in raka7n
 C-arrive REL rabbit with gourd of then
 ‘The rabbit arrived with his gourd then’
- (16) n-kun 7in ne7-kwna 7o kitun 7in
 C-shoot to thief with weapon of
 ‘S/he shot the thief with her/his weapon’

3. *TOPIC*

Concerning the prevalence of VSO order in narratives, Rasch (2000, Chapter 3, p. 74) observes:

Identifying the utterance-initial position with RHEME [FOCUS] accounts for many

of the non-verb-initial clauses in texts, and also explains the prevalence of VSO word order. In narratives, there is generally continuity of main participants, and what change are the activities or states in which the participants become involved. The verbs naming these events therefore usually appear clause-initially.

Entities in the Chatino narrative may be referred to in three ways: lexically, as in (1) in the text; by elision as in (14); and by the third person human pronoun *ne7*, “which is etymologically derived from and phonologically identical to the noun *ne7* ‘person’” (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 77), as in (25). The distribution of these three resources across the functions of transitive Agent, transitive Patient, intransitive Subject, Indirect Object, and obliques are as follows:

| | | | |
|------|---|------|--|
| (1) | womans _S | (24) | ne7 _S ... Ø _{OBL} (John) |
| (2) | mans _S | (25) | ne7 _S |
| (3) | Ø _S (man) ... Ø _{OBL} (woman) | (26) | John _S |
| (4) | John _S ... house _{OBL} | (27) | dog _S |
| (5) | Quote | (28) | Ø _A (dog) ... deerskin _O ... Ø _{POSS} (John) |
| (6) | Quote | (29) | Quote |
| (7) | womans _S ... John _{IO} | (30) | ne7 _S ... Ø _{IO} (John) |
| (8) | Quote | (31) | Quote |
| (9) | Ø _S (man) | (32) | Quote |
| (10) | mans _S | (33) | Quote |
| (11) | ? | (34) | Quote |
| (12) | Ø _S (man) | (35) | ne7 _S ... Ø _{IO} (John) |
| (13) | John _S | (36) | Quote |
| (14) | Ø _S (John) | (37) | Ø _S (John) |
| (15) | Ø _S (John) | (38) | Quote |
| (16) | Ø _S (John) ... ne7 _{OBL} | (39) | Quote |
| (17) | Ø _S (John) | (40) | Quote |
| (18) | Ø _A (John) ... deerskin _O ... chair _{OBL} | (41) | Ø _S (John) |
| (19) | Quote | (42) | Quote |
| (20) | Quote | (43) | Ø _S (John) |
| (21) | ne7 _S ... Ø _{OBL} | (44) | Quote |
| (22) | Quote | (45) | Ø _S (John) ... ne7 _{IO} |
| (23) | Ø _S (John) ... ne7 _{IO} | (46) | Quote |
| | | (47) | ne7 _S ... Ø _{IO} (John) |

- | | | | |
|------|---|---------|---|
| (48) | Quote | (82) | times |
| (49) | Quote | (83) | woman _A ... \emptyset _O (John) |
| (50) | Quote | (84) | \emptyset _S (she) |
| (51) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) | (85) | places |
| (52) | Quote | (86) | mothers |
| (53) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) | (87) | \emptyset _S (she) |
| (54) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{OBL} (John) | (88) | \emptyset _S (John) |
| (55) | ne7 _A ... \emptyset _O (John) | (89) | \emptyset _S (John) |
| (56) | John _S | (90/91) | deerskins |
| (57) | shoes ... foot OBL | (92) | Quote |
| (58) | ? | (93) | ne7 _S |
| (59) | clothings ... John _{POSS} | (94) | Quote |
| (60) | John _A ... deerskin _O ... \emptyset _{POSS} | (95) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{OBL} (John) |
| (61) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) | (96) | Quote |
| (62) | Quote | (97) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) |
| (63) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) | (98) | Quote |
| (64) | Quote | (99) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) |
| (65) | \emptyset _S (John) | (100) | Quote |
| (66) | \emptyset _A (John) ... mother _O | (101) | Quote |
| (67) | clothes _S | (102) | Quote |
| (68) | mother _A ... \emptyset _O (John) | (103) | Quote |
| (69) | \emptyset _S (John) | (104) | Quote |
| (70) | \emptyset _S (John) | (105) | Quote |
| (71) | mother _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) | (106) | Quote |
| (72) | Quote | (107) | Quote |
| (73) | \emptyset _S (she) | (108) | Quote |
| (74) | Quote | (109) | \emptyset _S (John) |
| (75) | Quote | (110) | Quote |
| (76) | ne7 _S | (111) | woman _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) |
| (77) | Quote | (112) | Quote |
| (78) | \emptyset _A (John) ... clothes _O ... \emptyset _{POSS} (John) | (113) | ne7 _S ... \emptyset _{IO} (John) |
| (79) | \emptyset _A (John) ... shoes _O ... \emptyset _{POSS} (John) | (114) | Quote |
| (80) | \emptyset _A (John) ... things _O ... \emptyset _{POSS} (John) | (115) | \emptyset _S (John) ... mother _{OBL} |
| (81) | deerskin _O ... \emptyset _{POSS} (John) ... \emptyset _A (John) | (116) | Quote |
| | | (117) | Quote |
| | | (118) | mother _S ... \emptyset _{OBL} (John) |
| | | (119) | Quote |
| | | (120) | Quote |
| | | (121) | \emptyset _S (John) |

| | | | |
|-------|---|-------|--|
| (122) | Quote | (134) | ne7 _S ... Ø _{POSS} (her) |
| (123) | Ø _S (John) | (135) | ne7 _A ... John _O |
| (124) | Quote | (136) | Quote |
| (125) | mother _S ... Ø _{IO} (John) | (137) | ne7 _S ... Ø _{IO} (John) |
| (126) | Quote | (138) | Quote |
| (127) | woman _S | (139) | Ø _S (John) |
| (128) | ne7 _S | (140) | ne7 _S ... Ø _{OBL} (John) ... place _{OBL} |
| (129) | Quote | (141) | ne7 _S |
| (130) | Quote | (142) | ? |
| (131) | Quote | (143) | 3sg _S ... Ø _{IO} (it) |
| (132) | Ø _S (she) | | |
| (133) | ne7 _A ... hand _O ... Ø _{POSS} (her) | | |

Table 1: Tracking PARTICIPANTS in a Chatino text.

Figure 1 summarizes the interaction between the functions A, S, and O, plus IO (IndirectObject), OBL (Obliques) and Poss (Possessives).

| | A | S | O | IO | OBL | Poss |
|------|---|----|----|----|-----|------|
| Noun | 3 | 21 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| Ø | 7 | 26 | 3 | 15 | 8 | 8 |
| ne? | 3 | 22 | Ø | 2 | 1 | Ø |

Figure 1: Forms of PARTICIPANTS in Chatino.

3.1 The use of N_A , N_S , \emptyset_A , and \emptyset_S .

In this section, we examine the use of a lexical noun versus \emptyset and discover that the opposition by itself is insufficient to account for the patterns in the text.

3.1.1 The use of nouns.

The Chatino pattern shares properties with Bella Coola. The similarity with Bella Coola turns on the use of \emptyset and noun to track a same or different PARTICIPANT central to the narrative (Davis & Saunders Ms.). The Chatino usage is confirmed by the fact that the use of a noun in the A and the S

position indicates a change from the preceding utterance. This is true of the N_A in 60, 68, and 83 as well of the N_S in 2, 4, 7, 13, 26, 27, 56, 57, 59, 67, 71, 82, 85, 86, 90, 111, 118, 125, and 127. Sentences 1 and 10 are exceptions. Sentence 1 is the first in the narrative. Sentence 10 with *nu ki7yu* ‘the male’ is the same PARTICIPANT as that in sentence 9. But notice this sequence:

- (10) lo-7 y-a nu ki7yu
 and-not C-go REL male
 ‘and the boy didn’t go’
- (11) nu ka
 REL be
 ‘?’
- (12) cha7 tza k-ja7 nu kw7an raka7n
 so.that P.go P-sleep REL woman then
 ‘to sleep with that girl’
- (13) ka7n-nu Xwa jin kwnya7 ka7n y-a raka7n
 then John skin deer that C-go then
 ‘then deerskin John was the one that went’

In sentence 13, we find an SV construction. This is an order which indicates that the preverbal intransitive S is FOCUSED. If FOCUS identifies a PARTICIPANT, i.e., ‘Deerskin John’, as a ‘contrastive’ or an ‘unexpected alternative’, then the PARTICIPANT with which he stands in contrast is the ‘man’ in sentence 10: ‘and the boy didn’t go to sleep with the girl. Deerskin John went’. Cf. Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 82.

The pattern of using a noun when the PARTICIPANT does not continue from the preceding clause extends beyond the grammatical function of A and S. There are a total of 18 nouns in other functions. $Noun_O$ appears ten times: 18, 28, 60, 66, 78, 79, 80, 81, 133, and 135. $Noun_{IO}$ occurs only twice in sentences 7 and 18. $Noun_{OBL}$ occurs five times: 4, 18, 57, 115, and 140. And there is one $Noun_{POSS}$ in sentence 59. In **all** of these instances the referent of the noun does **not** appear in the clause before it.

Because of the similarity between A and O versus IO, OBL and POSS with regard to how nouns are used, there appears to be **no** function that can be attributed to the A and O to distinguish them from IO, OBL, and POSS.

3.1.2 *Use of elision*

Sentences 18, 28, 66, 79, 80, and 81 are transitive sentences with an elided A, and which **continue** the same PARTICIPANT in the A or S in the preceding clause.² Sentences 3, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 41, 43, 45, 70, 73, 84, 89, 91, 123, and 132 are intransitive clauses with an elided S PARTICIPANT which is **identical** with the A or S PARTICIPANT in the preceding clause.

There are apparent exceptions to the use of elision, and they fall into three classes. Sentences 9, 23, 37, 65, 109, 115, 121, and 139 have \emptyset_S 's that **differ** from those in the immediately preceding clause ... but the clauses in each case are quoted material. When we look backward past the quotations to the last narrative clause preceding these 'exceptions', we find that the \emptyset_S is in fact identical with **some** PARTICIPANT in the clause, but **not necessarily** a PARTICIPANT in the A or the S function. The nearest narrative clause preceding sentence 23 with an \emptyset_S is sentence 21:

- (19) kwa xtya ste7
 there P.put.2sg clothing.2sg
 “put your clothes on the chair”
- (20) cha7 k-ja7 an
 so.that P-sleep 1pl.incl
 “so that we can sleep”
- (21) jwin ne7 7in- \emptyset raka7n
 said person to-3 then
 ‘she said’
- (22) j7an j7an
 yes yes
 “yes, yes,”
- (23) jwin- \emptyset 7in ne7 raka7n
 said-3 to person then
 ‘he said to her then’

The \emptyset_S of sentence 23 is Deerskin John, but \emptyset_S of 21 is **not**; it is the woman. But if we look elsewhere in 21, we find *7in- \emptyset* ‘to him’, which **is** the same

² Sentence 78 has an \emptyset_A , which is **discontinuous** with the PARTICIPANT preceding it. This sentence will be discussed below.

PARTICIPANT as the \emptyset_S ‘he’ in 23. This kind of relation recurs in 37 (vis-à-vis 35), 65 (vis-à-vis 63), 109 (vis-à-vis 99), 115 (vis-à-vis 113), 121 (vis-à-vis 118), and 139 (vis-à-vis 137). The sense of continuity apparently is ‘blind’ to quotations, which do not disrupt the chain of ongoing TOPICS.

Sentence 69 has another interpretation and illustrates a second kind of ‘exception’. Beginning with clause 69, we have to work our way back to 66 to find that the \emptyset_S ‘he’ that is the same as the \emptyset_S ‘he’ in 69:

- (66) ka7n n-kya n-kya-l7an- \emptyset jy7an- \emptyset raka7n
 then C-go C-visit-3 mother-3 then
 ‘then he went to visit his mother then’
- (67) s7we ste7- \emptyset raka7n
 good clothing-3 then
 ‘his clothing was good then’
- (68) ja y7wi-lyo 7a jy7an- \emptyset 7in- \emptyset
 no C.know more mother-3 to-3
 ‘his mother didn’t recognize him’
- (69) n-kila- \emptyset raka7n
 C-arrive-3 then
 ‘he arrived then’

Sentence 69 shows a pattern similar to the previous ‘exceptions’ except that we have to pass through sentences 68 and 67 to return to an \emptyset_S that is the same as the one in 69, but in the interval there is a *7in- \emptyset* ‘him’ in 68 and a *ste7- \emptyset* ‘his clothing’ in 66, and both the ‘him’ and the ‘his’ are the same individual.³

³ Sentence 88 has another explanation. Sentences 84 through 87 appear to be asides that stand between 88 and 83:

- (82) ka7n nu-ka-ti nw-tiya ya7
 then DSC C-arrive time
 ‘then the time came’
- (83) xa-nu n-kya-nti7an nu kw7an ka7n 7in- \emptyset raka7n
 when C-follow REL woman that to-3 then
 ‘when that woman (his wife) went to look for (lit. followed) him’
- (84) cha7-nu si n-kila- \emptyset
 so.that yes C-arrive-3

Two conclusions seem to follow from the use of \emptyset . First, it **does** signal continuity of PARTICIPANTS across clauses, and second, that continuity seems **not** to privilege the A and S functions as against others, in the way the use of nouns (cf. above) seemed not to.

Now, the last apparent exception in sentence 9 has an explanation:

- (7) jwin nu kw7an ka7n 7in Xwa ka7n
 said REL woman that to John then
 ‘the girl said to John (note: should be: to the boy)’
- (8) s7we lye
 good much
 ‘‘good,’’
- (9) jwin- \emptyset
 said-3
 ‘he said’

The \emptyset_S of sentence 9 is the same as a PARTICIPANT in sentence 7, but the PARTICIPANT in 7 is not encoded by \emptyset because it, in its turn, is **not** identical with a PARTICIPANT in the nearest preceding narrative clause (non-quoted material). The PARTICIPANT identical to \emptyset_S in sentence 9 is the noun *Xwa*

-
- ‘yes, she arrived’
- (85) ka s7en
 be place
 ‘it was the place’
- (86) n-t7in jy7an- \emptyset
 N-live mother-3
 ‘where his mother lived’
- (87) n-kila- \emptyset raka7n
 C-arrive-3 then
 ‘she arrived’
- (88) n-tkwa ti- \emptyset raka7n
 N-sit only-3 then
 ‘he was sitting there’

‘Then the time came when she followed him ... Yes, she arrived at the place where his mother lived. She arrived ... He was sitting there’. This passage describes the wife’s movements, but it is not until some **26 clauses later** (clause 114) that Deerskin John and his mother recognize her arrival in the narrative. There is another exceptional property to this passage to which we will return below.

‘John’, and the \emptyset_S in sentence 9 is then the correct choice to express identity to some PARTICIPANT in the preceding narrative clause.⁴

3.2 *The insufficiency of N and \emptyset*

Like Bella Coola, Chatino exploits the use of nouns and of \emptyset to track changed and continuous PARTICIPANTS, yet there are some notable differences. First, the use of nouns and of \emptyset is extended to **all** functions, apparently neutralizing the functional privilege of A and S which is present in Bella Coola. Second, since the A and S functions are not involved, the simple contrast between noun and \emptyset is not sufficient to manage the thread of TOPIC. Without some **additional** principle, how are we to know who is speaking to whom in sentence 21 and in sentence 23:

- (19) kwa xtya ste7
 there P.put.2sg clothing.2sg
 “put your clothes on the chair”
- (20) cha7 k-ja7 an
 so.that P-sleep 1pl.incl
 “so that we can sleep”
- (21) jwin ne7 7in- \emptyset raka7n
 said person to-3 then
 ‘she said to him’
- (22) j7an j7an
 yes yes
 “yes, yes,”
- (23) jwin- \emptyset 7in ne7 raka7n
 said-3 to person then
 ‘he said to her then’

⁴ There is an apparent error in the telling of the story. The narrator should have chosen *ki7yu* to refer to the boy, but she mistakenly says that the woman spoke to Deerskin John, who is yet to present himself.

4. *The pattern of TOPIC in Chatino*

Like elision, *ne7* in the A or S functions seems to signal a PARTICIPANT which is present in the preceding clause.⁵ This is true of 55, 134, and 135 in the A function, and true of *ne7* in the S function in sentences 25, 35, 47, 51, 53, 54, 63, 76, 95, 97, 99, 113, 128, 137, and 141.⁶ Sentence 97, for example, follows quoted material and when we move backwards through it to the last clause of the narrative in 95, we find the **same** PARTICIPANT coded by *ne7*:

- (94) ta kwi7 ka re a
 or same be.2sg here QU
 “are you really here,”
- (95) nty-kwi7 **ne7** 7o-Ø
 N-talk person with-3
 ‘she said to him’
- (96) la nw-7ni da ste7
 where C.do QU.2sg clothing.2sg
 “what did you do with your clothes”
- (97) jwin **ne7** 7in-Ø
 said person to-3
 ‘she said to him’

The explanation which works for 97 will not work for sentence 21:⁷

- (18) ka7n-nu nw-stya-Ø kjin kwnya7 ka7n 7in-Ø lo
 then C-put-3 skin deer that of-3 surface
 yka-xlya raka7n
 chair then
 ‘he put his deerskin on a chair then’

⁵ Recall that *ne7* is also a lexical item meaning ‘person’, and it will appear in that function occasionally in this text, e.g. sentences 70, 117, 119, and 127.

⁶ Other functions, such as IO and OBL, can have *ne7* referring to a PARTICIPANT which is the same individual in the preceding clause, e.g. sentences 16 and 23. There are no *ne7* in the O or the POSS function in this text.

⁷ *Ne7* is where the similarity between Chatino and Thai emerges. *Ne7* also appears in the OBL function (16) and in the IO (23 and 45).

- (19) kwa xtya ste7
 there P.put.2sg clothing.2sg
 “put your clothes on the chair”
- (20) cha7 k-ja7 an
 so.that P-sleep 1pl.incl
 “so that we can sleep”
- (21) jwin **ne7** 7in-Ø raka7n
 said person to-3 then
 ‘she said’

The *ne7* in sentence 21 follows two clauses of quoted material (19 and 20), but when we arrive at clause 18, we find that the A of the clause is **not** the woman of clause 21, but John, and there is no woman anywhere in that clause. The same explanatory strategy by which we expect to find the referent of *ne7* in the first preceding (non-quoted) clause also **fails** for sentences 16, 21, 30, 45, 61, 93, 111, 133, and 140. Some as yet unrecognized principle seems to be at work here.

If we return to Table 1, we find two remarkable asymmetries. **None** of the 28 occurrences of *ne7* **ever** refers to Deerskin John (Rasch 2000, Chapter 3, p. 88). On the other hand, \emptyset occurs 67 times. In all but 12 of those appearances, \emptyset marks Deerskin John: 3 (twice), 9, 12, 28, 73, 84, 87, 132, 133, 134, and 143. This suggests that

\emptyset tracks Deerskin John as the central thematic character, and *ne7* tracks peripheral characters.

Four of the occurrences of \emptyset indexing someone other than Deerskin John appear either at the beginning or then end of the text. In sentences 3, 9, and 12, four of the uses of \emptyset to index a PARTICIPANT other than Deerskin John occur in the text’s introductory portion, before the thread of the narrative is set and before Deerskin John has assumed the center stage. At this point, he has yet to make his entrance; he is hiding behind the house and eavesdropping. It is only at sentence 13 that Deerskin John is foregrounded.⁸ Sentence 143 is the last in the narrative, and it is clearly directed at the

⁸ It may be significant that *ne7* does not appear until sentence 17, **after** Deerskin John has assumed the central role in the narrative in sentence 13. Until there is a central character, there can be no peripheral ones. They are **all** present in an undifferentiated way.

audience. It is not part of the narrative.

The passage of clauses from 122 to 137 is particularly revealing, and it contains three of the ‘exceptional’ uses of \emptyset in 132, 133, and 134 and one of the exceptional uses of *ne7* in 133.

- (122) jyan kw7an 7yan
 come woman of.1sg
 “my woman is coming”
- (123) nty-kwi7- \emptyset raka7n
 N-talk-3 then
 ‘he said then’
- (124) 7an-da-i
 uhuh
 “well, good,”
- (125) jwin jy7an- \emptyset 7in- \emptyset raka7n
 said mother-3 to-3 then
 ‘his mother said to him then’
- (126) ta nte n-kila Xwa a
 or here C-arrive John QU
 “so John came here?”
- (127) nty-kwi7 ne7 kw7an ka7n
 N-talk person woman that
 ‘the woman said’
- (128) nw-tiya ne7
 C-arrive person
 ‘when she arrived at the house’
- (129) nte na7
 here 1sg
 “I am here”

- (130) ka n jy7an Xwa
 be 1sg mother John
 “who am the mother of John”
- (131) 7an-da-i
 uhhuh
 “uhuh,”
- (132) jwin-Ø raka7n
 said-3 then
 ‘she (John’s wife) said then’
- (133) nw-snyi ne7 ya7-Ø raka7n
 C-seize person hand-3 then
 ‘then she greeted her (lit. took her hand)’
- (134) cha7 ka jy7an-la ne7 7in-Ø
 because be mother.in.law person to-3
 ‘because she was her mother in law (lit. because she mother-in-lawed her)’
- (135) ka7n n-kya 7o nu-ka-ti ne7 7in Xwa raka7n
 then C-go appl. DSC person to John then
 ‘then she took John then’
- (136) kya an ni
 P.go 1pl.incl now
 “let’s go now”
- (137) jwin ne7 7in-Ø raka7n
 said person to-3 then
 ‘she said to him’

John has gone to visit his mother (66 - 77); he has sold his fancy clothes (78 - 80) and put on his deerskin again (81). Deerskin John’s wife has gone looking for him (82 - 87). John’s mother and John discuss the fate of his clothes (88 - 113). The wife arrives (114), and John’s mother wonders at the fancy person his wife is (117 - 121). Now, in sentences 122 and 123, Deerskin John announces his wife’s arrival. John’s mother acknowledges the

arrival in sentences 124 and 125. In sentence 126, the wife speaks, and she is identified as *ne7 kw7an ka7n* ‘that female person’ in sentence 127 and following that in sentence 128 as *ne7*. In sentences 129 and 130, John’s mother announces her presence (introduces herself) without attribution. In sentence 131, John’s wife greets John’s mother and is identified (unexpectedly) in 132 by \emptyset . In sentence 133, the mother takes the daughter-in-law’s hand. The mother is identified (unexpectedly) by *ne7* and the daughter-in-law is again (unexpectedly) identified by \emptyset in *ya7- \emptyset* ‘her hand’. In sentence 134, the explanation for the behavior is that the mother did this because she was mother-in-law to the wife, and the mother is again signaled by *ne7* and the daughter-in-law by \emptyset in *7in- \emptyset* ‘to her’. But in sentence 135, it is the same person, now as wife, who appears as *ne7* to take John away.

When John is compared to another, he is the central character, and the others are *ne7*. This is what allows us to unravel the references in sentences in 19 - 23 above. The ‘failures’ in 16, 21, 30, 45, 61, 93, 111, 133, and 140, in which *ne7* does **not** repeat a PARTICIPANT from the preceding clause, are no longer exceptions since *ne7* is tracking the peripheral character, which is not also be present in the preceding clause.⁹ But in the exchange in the sentences where the wife and daughter-in-law are engaged one-on-one with Deerskin John to the side, the relationships change, and it is the daughter-in-law who becomes the central character, while the mother is the peripheral one. Only when the same daughter-in-law/wife relates to John as wife in 125 does her coding switch from \emptyset (central) to *ne7* (peripheral).

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⁹ Concerning the remaining ‘exceptional’ uses of \emptyset . Clauses 84 and 87 have an ‘exceptional’ reference to John’s wife with \emptyset , but it is that passage (84 - 87) which was recognized above as an aside. Sentence 73 refers to John’s mother in this way *jwin- \emptyset* ‘she said’, but three clauses later, in this way, *jwin ne7* ‘she said’. Finally, sentence 28 apparently has a \emptyset_A of *nk-jwa-ki* ‘drag’ referring to the dog of the preceding clause.

Appendix

Xwa kjin kwnya7

Deerskin John

- (1) n-tiya ska nu kw7an
N-be one REL woman
'There was a girl'
- (2) lo n-tun ska nu ki7yu
and N-stand one REL male
'and a boy was standing'
- (3) nty-kwi7-Ø 7o-Ø
N-talk-3 with-3
'talking with her'
- (4) lo sen n-tun Xwa ka7n ti chu7n l7an
and quiet N-stand John then at back house
'and John was standing behind the house, eavesdropping'
- (5) lo nu-ka-ti nti7 jyan
and DSC soon come.2sg
'and then, "soon you will come"'
- (6) k-ja7 an
P-sleep 1pl.incl
'to spend the night with me'
- (7) jwin nu kw7an ka7n 7in Xwa ka7n
said REL woman that to John then
'the girl said to John (note: should be: to the boy)'
- (8) s7we lye
good much
'good,'

- (9) jwin-Ø
said-3
'he said'
- (10) lo-7 y-a nu ki7yu
and-not C-go REL male
'and the boy didn't go'
- (11) nu ka
REL be
'?'
- (12) cha7 tza k-ja7 nu kw7an raka7n
so.that P.go P-sleep REL woman then
'to sleep with that girl'
- (13) ka7n-nu Xwa jin kwnya7 ka7n y-a raka7n
then John skin deer that C-go then
'then deerskin John was the one that went'
- (14) lo xa-nu nw-tiya-Ø
and when C-arrive-3
'and when he came'
- (15) cha7 k-ja7-Ø raka7n i
so.that P-sleep-3 then DSC
'to spend the night with her'
- (16) ka7n-nu wa wa l-ja7-Ø 7o ne7 raka7n
then already already N-sleep-3 with person then
'then he was already sleeping with her then'
- (17) wa nw-tiya-Ø raka7n
already C-arrive-3 then
'he already arrived then'
- (18) ka7n-nu nw-stya-Ø kjin kwnya7 ka7n 7in-Ø lo
then C-put-3 skin deer that of-3 surface

- yka-xlyɑ raka7n
 chair then
 ‘he put his deerskin on a chair then’
- (19) kwa xtyɑ ste7
 there P.put.2sg clothing.2sg
 ‘put your clothes on the chair’
- (20) cha7 k-ja7 an
 so.that P-sleep 1pl.incl
 ‘so that we can sleep’
- (21) jwin ne7 7in-∅ raka7n
 said person to-3 then
 ‘she said’
- (22) j7an j7an
 yes yes
 ‘yes, yes,’
- (23) jwin-∅ 7in ne7 raka7n
 said-3 to person then
 ‘he said to her then’
- (24) lo la wa y-ja7 ne7 7o-∅
 and how already C-sleep person with-3
 ‘when she had already spent the night with him,’
- (25) nw-ki-ti7 ne7
 C-find.out person
 ‘she found out’
- (26) cha7 ka Xwa raka7n
 that be John then
 ‘that it was John’
- (27) lo y-a xni7
 and C-go dog
 ‘and the dog went’

- (28) nk-jwa-ki kjin kwnya7 ka7n 7in-Ø raka7n
 C-drag skin deer that of-3 then
 ‘to take his deerskin’
- (29) Xwa
 John
 “John,”
- (30) nty-kwi7 ne7 7o-Ø raka7n
 N-talk person with-3 then
 ‘she said to him then’
- (31) nu-ka-ti ta na 7win ka a
 DSC or thing 2sg be QU
 “it is you,”
- (32) lo s7i 7win
 and is.not 2sg
 “and you were not the one”
- (33) n-k7an
 N-be
 “who was (supposed) ”
- (34) cha7 kan
 thing come
 “to come”
- (35) jwin ne7 7in-Ø raka7n
 said person to-3 then
 ‘she said to him’
- (36) na7 ka n
 1sg be 1sg
 “it is me”
- (37) jwin-Ø raka7n
 said-3 then
 ‘he said then’

- (38) na-7 y-ka 7a na
and-not C-be more thing
“and you won’t be able”
- (39) kw-7ni na
P-do.2sg thing
“to do anything”
- (40) wa y-ja7 n 7o ni
already C-sleep 1sg with.2sg now
“because I have already slept with you”
- (41) jwin-Ø raka7n
said-3 then
‘he said then’
- (42) ni in ty7en n 7in ni in
now DSC P.marry 1sg to.2sg now DSC
“now I am going to marry you,”
- (43) jwin-Ø raka7n
said-3 then
‘he said’
- (44) ka kw7o n 7in
be spouse 1sg to.2sg
“I will be-spouse you”
- (45) jwin-Ø 7in ne7 raka7n
said-3 to person then
‘he said to her’
- (46) s7we lye si ka7n
good much if that
“well, that’s fine,”
- (47) jwin ne7 7in-Ø
said person to-3
‘she said to him’

- (48) ni nwudu
what way
“there’s no avoiding it”
- (49) ja y-ka
no C-be.able
“there’s no way”
- (50) wa y-ja7 n 7o
already C-sleep 1sg with.2sg
“I have already slept with you”
- (51) jwin ne7 7in-Ø
said person to-3
‘she said to him’
- (52) s7we
good
“that’s fine,”
- (53) jwin ne7 7in-Ø raka7n
said person to-3 then
‘she said’
- (54) ka7n jwi-kw7o ne7 7o-Ø raka7n
then C.marry person with-3 then
‘then she married him’
- (55) nw-t7en ne7 7in-Ø
C-marry person to-3
‘she married him’
- (56) nu-ka-ti ka7n-nu wa nkwa kwriya7 Xwa ka7n
DSC then already C.pass wealth John that
‘then that John was already rich’
- (57) y-7wi zapatu kya7-Ø
C-be shoe foot-3
‘he already had shoes ‘

- (58) y-7wi
C-be
'there was'
- (59) wa jwi ste7 Xwa raka7n
already C.be.found clothing John then
'John was already dressed well then (lit. already found his clothes then)'
- (60) wa nkwla7-sti Xwa kjin kwnya7 7in-Ø raka7n
already C.abandon John skin deer of-3 then
'and he left his deerskin aside'
- (61) ka7n nu-ka-ti ka7n-nu wa jwin ne7 7in-Ø
then DSC then already said person to-3
raka7n
then
'then she (his wife) said to him then'
- (62) kya l7an jy7an ni
P.go.2sg C.see mother.2sg now
'now you are going to visit your mother,'
- (63) jwin ne7 7in-Ø raka7n
said person to-3 then
'she said to him'
- (64) ki-7a n
P-go 1sg
'I'll go,'
- (65) jwin-Ø raka7n
said-3 then
'he said then'
- (66) ka7n n-kya n-kya-l7an-Ø jy7an-Ø raka7n
then C-go C-visit-3 mother-3 then
'then he went to visit his mother then'

- (67) s7we ste7-Ø raka7n
good clothing-3 then
'his clothing was good then'
- (68) ja y7wi-lyo 7a jy7an-Ø 7in-Ø
no C.know more mother-3 to-3
'his mother didn't recognize him'
- (69) n-kila-Ø raka7n
C-arrive-3 then
'he arrived then'
- (70) ne7 xa7 wa ka-Ø raka7n
person fancy already be-3 then
'he had become a well-dressed person'
- (71) ka7n-nu jwin jy7an-Ø 7in-Ø raka7n
then said mother-3 to-3 then
'then his mother said to him'
- (72) chu Xwa nte wa nkyan ni an
? John here already C.come.2sg now DSC
“? John, you have come here now?”
- (73) jwin-Ø
said-3
'she said'
- (74) wa n-kyan n
already C-come 1sg
“I have come”
- (75) 7an s7we
DSC good
“ah, that is good”
- (76) jwin ne7
said person
'she said'

- (77) k-yan-lya snye7
 P-come.on.in.2sg child
 ‘come on in, son’
- (78) s7we-wa y-jwi7-Ø ste7-Ø raka7n
 little.by.little C-sell-3 clothing-3 then
 ‘then John began to sell his clothes’
- (79) wa y-jwi7-Ø zapatu 7in-Ø
 already C-sell-3 shoe of-3
 ‘he sold his shoes’
- (80) wa y-jwi7-Ø na 7in-Ø
 already C-sell-3 thing of-3
 ‘he sold his things’
- (81) wa kwi7 kjin kwnya7n ka7n 7in-Ø n-kya
 already same skin deer that of-3 C.go
 na-Ø xya7 raka7n
 N.look.for-3 again then
 ‘then John went back to look for his deerskin again’
- (82) ka7n nu-ka-ti nw-tiya ya7
 then DSC C-arrive time
 ‘then the time came’
- (83) xa-nu n-kya-nti7an nu kw7an ka7n 7in-Ø raka7n
 when C-follow REL woman that to-3 then
 ‘when that woman (his wife) went to look for (lit. followed) him’
- (84) cha7-nu si n-kila-Ø
 so.that yes C-arrive-3
 ‘yes, she arrived’
- (85) ka s7en
 be place
 ‘it was the place’

- (86) n-t7in jy7an-Ø
N-live mother-3
'where his mother lived'
- (87) n-kila-Ø raka7n
C-arrive-3 then
'she arrived'
- (88) n-tkwa ti-Ø raka7n
N-sit only-3 then
'he was sitting there'
- (89) ti7yu-ti-Ø raka7n
naked-3 then
'naked then'
- (90) ska-ti kjin kwnya7n ka7n
only skin deer that
'and it was only the deerskin'
- (91) n-s7wi yni-Ø raka7n
N-be neck-3 then
'that was on his neck then (i.e., that he was wearing)'
- (92) Xwa
John
'John,'
- (93) nty-kwi7 ne7 7o-Ø raka7n
N-talk person with-3 then
'she said to him then'
- (94) ta kwi7 ka re a
or same be.2sg here QU
'are you really here,'
- (95) nty-kwi7 ne7 7o-Ø
N-talk person with-3
'she said to him'

- (96) la nw-7ni da ste7
 where C.do QU.2sg clothing.2sg
 “what did you do with your clothes”
- (97) jwin ne7 7in-Ø
 said person to-3
 ‘she said to him’
- (98) la nw7ni da na 7in in
 where C.do QU.2sg thing of.2sg DSC
 “what did you do with your things,”
- (99) jwin ne7 7in-Ø
 said person to-3
 ‘she said to him’
- (100) nte s7en
 here place
 “this is the place”
- (101) y-jwi7 n 7in an
 C.sell 1sg to it
 “where I sold them”
- (102) jwi na-yku n
 C.be.found food 1sg
 “to get food (lit. my food was found)”
- (103) nte s7en
 here place
 “this is the place”
- (104) y-jwi7 n 7in an
 C-sell 1sg to it
 “where I sold them”
- (105) y-jwi7 n sna n
 C-sell 1sg sandal 1sg
 “I sold my sandals,”

- (106) y-jwi7 n pantalun 7yan
 C.sell 1sg pants of.1sg
 “I sold my pants”
- (107) y-jwi7 n xka7n n
 C.sell 1sg shirt 1sg
 “I sold my shirt”
- (108) lo ka7n-cha7 n-kya na n kjin kwnya7n
 and so C-go N.look.for 1sg skin deer
 7yan xya7
 of.1sg again
 “and that’s why I went back to look for my deerskin again,”
- (109) jwin-Ø raka7n
 said-3 then
 ‘he said then’
- (110) 7a nte n-tiya ste7
 DSC here N-be clothing.2sg
 “ah, here are your clothes,”
- (111) jwin ne7 kw7an ka7n 7in-Ø
 said person woman that to-3
 ‘the woman said to him’
- (112) cha7 kya an ni
 so.that P.go 1pl.incl now
 “and now let’s go”
- (113) jwin ne7 7in-Ø raka7n
 said person to-3 then
 ‘she said to him’
- (114) nte wa jyan kw7an 7yan a7n
 here already come woman of.1sg 1sg
 “here comes my woman,”

- (115) nty-kwi7-Ø 7o jy7an-Ø raka7n
 N-talk-3 with mother-3 then
 'he said to his mother'
- (116) nte wa jyan kw7an 7yan
 here already come woman of.1sg
 "here comes my woman"
- (117) ni-ka ka kw7an 7in ne7 xa7
 how be woman of.2sg person fancy
 "how can your woman be such a fancy person"
- (118) nty-kwi7 jy7an-Ø 7o-Ø raka7n
 N-talk mother-3 with-3 then
 'said his mother to him'
- (119) ni-ka ka kw7an 7in re ne7 xa7 re
 how be woman of.2sg this person fancy this
 "how can this fancy person be your woman?"
- (120) kw7an 7yan ka
 woman of.1sg be
 "she is my woman,"
- (121) nty-kwi7-Ø
 N-talk-3
 'he said'
- (122) jyan kw7an 7yan
 come woman of.1sg
 "my woman is coming"
- (123) nty-kwi7-Ø raka7n
 N-talk-3 then
 'he said then'
- (124) 7an-da-i
 uhhuh
 "well, good,"

- (125) jwin jy7an-Ø 7in-Ø raka7n
 said mother-3 to-3 then
 ‘his mother said to him then’
- (126) ta nte n-kila Xwa a
 or here C-arrive John QU
 ‘so John came here?’
- (127) nty-kwi7 ne7 kw7an ka7n
 N-talk person woman that
 ‘the woman said’
- (128) nw-tiya ne7
 C-arrive person
 ‘when she arrived at the house’
- (129) nte na7
 here 1sg
 ‘I am here’
- (130) ka n jy7an Xwa
 be 1sg mother John
 ‘who am the mother of John’
- (131) 7an-da-i
 uhhuh
 ‘uhuh,’
- (132) jwin-Ø raka7n
 said-3 then
 ‘she (John’s wife) said then’
- (133) nw-snyi ne7 ya7-Ø raka7n
 C-seize person hand-3 then
 ‘then she greeted her (lit. took her hand)’
- (134) cha7 ka jy7an-la ne7 7in-Ø
 because be mother.in.law person to-3
 ‘because she was her mother in law (lit. because she mother-in-

lawed her)'

- (135) ka7n n-kya 7o nu-ka-ti ne7 7in Xwa raka7n
 then C-go appl. DSC person to John then
 'then she took John then'
- (136) kya an ni
 P.go 1pl.incl now
 'let's go now'
- (137) jwin ne7 7in-Ø raka7n
 said person to-3 then
 'she said to him'
- (138) kya an
 P.go 1pl.incl
 'let's go,'
- (139) jwin-Ø raka7n
 said-3 then
 'he said'
- (140) ka7n-nu nu n-kila ne7 7o-Ø s7en
 then REL C-arrive person with-3 place
 'she arrived with him at the place'
- (141) n-t7in ne7 raka7n
 N-live person then
 'where she lived'
- (142) nu ka
 REL be
 '?'
- (143) nu nw-tyi o 7in-Ø ni
 REL C-finish 1pl.incl to-3 now
 'now that is all, it is over'