

## SPEAKING AND WRITING NAVAJO

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1. DATA: A Navajo story “'atsáyáázh daąts'í nílí?” (‘Are you an eaglet?’)

Story told by: distinguished Navajo storyteller and writer Bernice Casaus (from the New Mexico part of the Navajo reservation)

Two versions:

- 1) spoken (recorded by Kibrik, transcribed and translated by Casaus and Kibrik)
- 2) written (written and glossed by Casaus)

2. LENGTH: The written version is significantly shorter: the number of clauses in it is 1.5 times less than in the spoken version.

(1) Spoken:

This story is about a small eagle.  
 Long time ago an eagle sat over her two eggs.  
 Slightly touching them  
 and moving around,  
 she sat on them.  
 She was repeatedly looking at them for a while,  
 and then she stopped.  
 After a while she looked at them again,  
 and then one slightly moved.  
 Maybe it just seemed to her,  
 for some time she looked again.  
 Then the egg moved again.  
 Then it sat without movement.  
 Then she sat upon them again.

Written:

Long ago an eagle's children were expected.  
 A. She sat on two eggs.  
 B. One morning the eggs that were under her,  
 moved,  
 C. she felt.  
 B'. Beforehand they moved once in a while.

Repetition (A: 3, B: 3, C: 5) and additional detail in the spoken version

3. LENGTH OF SENTENCES: Written sentences are shorter than spoken sentences: the mean number of clauses in the former is 1.9, in the latter 2.2.

### 4. LEXICAL STRUCTURE OF CLAUSES

Spoken and written clauses have almost the same mean number of words (3.5 and 3.3, respectively), but these words are qualitatively different: spoken clauses have fewer nouns and much more discourse particles

	<i>Nouns</i>	P a r t i c l e s									<i>Overall</i>
		<i>Demonstr.</i>	Quantif.	Indef.	<i>Connectives</i>	Adverb.	<i>Epistem.</i>	Exclam.	Idcophones	<i>Other</i>	
Spoken	<i>0.31</i>	<i>0.11</i>	0.16	0.04	<i>0.44</i>	0.32	<i>0.31</i>	0.01	0.02	<i>0.63</i>	<i>2.04</i>
Written	<i>0.46</i>	<i>0.04</i>	0.14	0.02	<i>0.28</i>	0.39	<i>0.11</i>	0	0	<i>0.45</i>	<i>1.43</i>
	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	*	*

Table 1. Word types: number of occurrences per clause  
 (asterisks mark interesting differences, italics mark statistically significant differences)

(2) Sp. 'éí shíí ch'ééh kónjiil'ijh  
 that probably in vain she.pushed.it  
 ‘She [the eagle] was pushing it [the egg] in vain’

Wr. 'áádóó 'atsáh-ąą 'ayęęzhii t'óó si'an-ęę ch'ééh yéédilch'i'  
 then eagle-that egg just it.sat-REL in vain she.touched.it  
 ‘Then the eagle was touching the egg that was just sitting, in vain’

## 5. MORPHOSYNTACTIC PHENOMENA

	Number of preverbal full NPs in clause, %		
	No full NPs	One full NP	Two full NPs
Spoken	62	35	3
Written	53	43	4

Table 2. Percentages of clause types (classified by number of full NPs)

For nouns (see Table 1), chi-square is significant,  $p < 0.05$ ; non-significant,  $p < 0.025$

For full NPs (Table 2), chi-square is non-significant,  $p < 0.1$

	Afterthought NPs	D e p e n d e n t c l a u s e s			<i>Adverbial clause after main clause</i>	Linear clause embedding
		Adverbial	Complement	<i>Relative</i>		
Spoken	0.014	0.21	0.02	<i>0.02</i>	<i>0.04</i>	0.014
Written	0	0.22	0.05	<i>0.07</i>	<i>0.01</i>	0.02
	*		*	*	*	

Table 3. Morphosyntactic phenomena: number of occurrences per clause (asterisks mark interesting differences, italics mark statistically significant differences)

- (3) Sp. *ńt'ée' ła'-ąą 'éi t'óo si'ą jín, 'ayęęzhii*  
 then one-Def that just it.sat they.say egg  
 'And the other one was just sitting, the egg'
- (4) Sp. hááhgóóshíí náadii'na' jín, déezhch'ah-go  
 mightily he.got.up they.say he.had.mouth.open-Sub  
 'Mightily he got up, with his mouth open'
- Wr. 'aadóo hááhgóóshíí nídiich'ah-go yaa-níidiidzá jini  
 from.there mightily he.opened.mouth-Sub about.it-he.began.going they.say  
 'Mightily, with his mouth open, she started moving around'

## 6. ADDITIONAL PECULIARITIES OF THE SPOKEN VERSION

Intonation units with no verbs:

- (5) Sp. 'atk'idáá' shíí 'atsá léi',  
 long.ago probably eagle some  
 'ayęęzhii naaki yik'i-sidá jín  
 egg two on.it-it.sat they.say  
 'Long ago there was an eagle, and it was sitting on two eggs'

Intonation units with no content words:

- (6) Sp. 'áayce' t'óoyce' 'at'éegi 'at'é,  
 and.then it.could.be Ptcl Ptcl  
 [t'áá dóo yee' t'óo yee' 'at'é-gi 'at'é  
 just and very just very Ptcl-at Ptcl]  
 ńzin-go shíí ...  
 she.thinks-Sub probably  
 'She thought that it had just seemed to her, and...'

## 7. SOME EXPLANATIONS