1. Introduction

“To acquire information is very important to the human species. Apparently, most if not all languages have developed some particular means dedicated to eliciting information, henceforth called interrogative constructions or simply interrogatives, (Haspelmath, et.al 2001)”.

The goal of this paper is to describe interrogative constructions or to put it in another way, the way questions are asked in San Juan Quiahihe Chatino (SJQ).

1.1 Organization of the paper

In section (2) I present my source of information. Section (3) contains the basic language background. Section (4) pertains to interrogatives.

2. Source of information

Examples in this paper partly come from my own intuition as a native speaker of SJQ Chatino. The rest of the examples I drew from a kitchen conversation event that I recorded in Cieneguilla, and from two ritual SJQ speeches. In Table 1 I provide the list of the speakers that contributed the information for this paper.

### Table 1. Speakers that gave information for the sentences use here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>gender</th>
<th>Origen</th>
<th>year of recording</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiburcia Cruz Baltazar</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Cieneguilla</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luisa Baltazar Garcia</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Cieneguilla</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Cruz</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Cieneguilla</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilaria Cruz</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>Cieneguilla</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricardo Cruz</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>SJQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cenobio Cruz</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>SJQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 This paper was writing for Nora England’s LIN 392 Reading and writing grammars class, spring semester 2008.
3. Basic language background

In this section I will outline some basic linguistic data about SJQ chatino to help the reader understand the information that I am presenting here.

3.1 Phonology

SJQ Chatino has 12 contrastive tones. One feature of tone in SJQ is that at a sentential level the tones are affected by tone Sandhi. For information on tone Sandhi see E. Cruz

3.2 Morphology

The root of the words in SJQ chatino are monosyllabic and each tone carries a tones: for example kna1 ta20 which literaly mean arch snake (this is the word that is used to name a rainbow) (E, Cruz and et.al, 2007). All words are compounds with the exception of a few affixes (E, Cruz and et.al, 2007).

3.3 Basic word order

The word order in Chatino is VSO. In (1) I provide illustrations SJQ Chatino word order.

(1) V S DO

a. nt7an42 Xwa3 kwa3 7in24 T’u14 kwa02
C/SEE JUAN DEM TO PEDRO DEM
‘Juan saw Peter’ (E, Cruz and et.al, 2007)

V S DO

b. nt7an42 Xwa3 kwa3 ska4 kna1
C/SEE JUAN DEM ONE SNAKE
‘Juan saw a snake’ (E, Cruz and et.al, 2007)

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3 Abbreviations: 1PLINCL=first person plural inclusive; IP=interrogative particle; COMP=complementizer; Rel=relativizer; CL=human classifier; INPOSS= inalienable possessive construction; 1SGPLINCL=first singular plural inclusive.
Marcos sold corn to those people’ (E, Cruz and et.al, 2007)

4. Interrogatives in SJQ Chatino

When eliciting a question there are two main goals that the speaker might want to achieve, one is to get a short positive or negative answer, and other is to seek specific information about something. Positive or negative answer type questions are known in the linguistic theory as polar yes/no questions. Chatino does not have a word to say yes or no. Often times SJQ speakers nod their head up and down and while at the same time making a humming sound *hmm, hmm* as a sign of affirmation, and when they want to negate, they usually nod their head side ways while they make the sound: *7un3-7un24*. In addition to the gestures previously described, SJQ Chatino has a special way to respond to questions by replying with the verbs, I will treat this topic further in section (4.2).

4.1 Positive or negative affirmation type questions

There are several ways in which positive or negative affirmation type questions are indicated. One is by marking the end of the sentence with a vowel *a*. The other is placing the question between one of several aspectual particles which appear at beginning of the sentence and with an *a* interrogation particle at the end of the sentence. The aspectual particles that appear at the beginning of the sentence (include *wa2* ‘already’, *ti2* ‘still’).

4.1.1 The form with the *a* particle at the end of the sentence

The *a* interrogative particle receives the corresponding tone sandhi of the preceding phrase. In (2 a, b, c, d) I provide illustration of these forms.

(2)  
V/S O
a. Ngya32 S7we3 nka3 *a24*?
C.go3.2SG Juquila yesterday IP
‘Did you go to Juquila yesterday?’ [Hilaria]

b. yku24 chin720 tykwa2 7in42 ja1-no1 ya32 kta4
C.eat.3 EMPH aunt to you when C.go base.2SG hunt
ke42 ktsen1 *a*?
head larva IP
‘Did the aunts bite you when you went to pick up their larva? [Hilaria]

c. ka2 x7ya20 wan24 chin720 7in24
P.be able P.call CL.2PL EMPH to
ndya4 ne74 skan4 kyan24 ne72 7an1 re2 a1?
all CL guardian P.go^4=base belly house here IP
‘Could you call all the guards to adjourn in the city hall?’ [Hilaria]

4.1.2 Positive/negative question surrounded by two particles

In (3a, b, and c) I provide examples of interrogatives sentence that begin with aspectual particle *wa2* ‘already’ and *ti3* ‘still’, or a quantifier and end with the *a* interrogation particle.

(3)

a. Wa2 nyan4 7o1 no4-7an1 kan742 tne72 ndwi20 7in42 a24?
already C.came=base bring CL-woman that debt hang to you IP ‘did that woman pay her debt to you (Lit. did that woman bring back the debt that was hanging to you?)’

b. wa2 nyo7o1 yja4 ng7i74 7in4 nten24 kwa1 a24?
already leave tortilla toasted to people DEM IP
‘did the people get their tortillas (a special type of tortilla that people get when they help in a party)’

c. ti2 ngwa2 ya2 wan4 s7en4 no4 ndwi74 wan4 cha73
still C.be. C.go=base CL.2SG where REL H.say CL.2SG COMP
tsa24 wan1 kan742 a24?
C.go=base CL.2SG then IP
‘Did you still go where you said you would?’ [Hilaria]

d. tyon2 chin720 y7we3 ktsa24 7in32 ska4 nten14 a?
how-many EMPH pieces P.distribute to each gente IP

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4 The verbs *go*, *arrive*, and *come* in SJQ have special properties which are different from other verbs in the language. Each one of the previously mentioned verbs have a least two forms whose meaning change according to the location where the subject is heading to. The form for going, coming and arriving in and out of the main town is encoded in these verbs. I am going to distinguish the motion of going to the main town as *base* following Kuiper and Merrifield (1975) and Speck and Pickett (1976). In (1 and 2) I give an illustration of this.

1. kya24
   P.go=base.3
   ‘s/he is heading to the main town’

2. Tsa24
   P.go=base.3
   ‘s/he will go to a location that is outside the main town’

The verbs *go*, *arrive* and *come* in SJQ have special properties which are different from other verbs in the language. Each one of the previously mentioned verbs have a least two forms whose meaning change according to the location where the subject is heading to. The form used for carrying out a motion event with the previously mentioned verbs in and out of the main town is encoded in the verbs and I will call this form *base* following Kuiper and Merrifield (1975) and Speck and Pickett (1976). Below I give an illustration of this.

1. kya24
   P.go=base.3
   ‘s/he is heading to the main town’

2. Tsa24
   P.go=base.3
   ‘s/he will go to a location that is outside the main town’
‘how many pieces should I give each person?’

4.2 Answering yes/no questions

“Some languages appear not to have a general word for yes or no instead the person repeats the verb, in either its positive, or negative form” (Adgers, 2004, 237). The previous statement has been described as one of the characteristics of Scottish Gaelic and the same is true for SJQ Chatino. In (4) below I will repeat the questions in 2(a-c) providing answers for them.

(4) Question

V/S O
a. Ngya32 S7we3 nka3 a24?
C. go.2SG Juquila yesterday IP
‘Did you go to Juquila yesterday?’ [Hilaria]

positive answer

b. nky7an32
C. go.1SG
‘yes, i went’

negative answer

c. ja4 nky7an32
NEG C. go=base.1SG
‘No, I did not go’

(5)

a. wa nt7o1 yja4 ng7i74 7in4 nten24 kwa1 a24?
already C. leave tortilla toasted to people DEM IP
‘did the people get their tortillas yet (a special type of tortilla that people get when they help in a party)’

Positive answer

b. wa2 nt7o1 ran3
already C. leave it
‘yes they are ready’

negative answer

c. ti2 ji20 ty7o1 ran3
already NEG C. leave it
‘Not yet’

(6)

a. ti2 ngwa2 ya2 wan4 s7en4 no4 ndwi74 wan4 cha73
still C.be. C.go!base CL.2SG where REL H.say CL.2SG COMP
tsa24 wan1 kan742 a24?
C.go!base CL.2SG then IP
‘Did you still go where you said you would?’ [Hilaria]

Positive answer

b. ti2 ngwa2 ran3
still C.be. it
‘yes, it was possible’

negative answer

c. ja4 ngwa2 7a1 ran
NEG C.be EMPH it
‘No it was not possible’

4.3 Questions asked in the form of negation

In SJQ like in many other languages questions are asked using a negative form. Another way to elicit short answer type questions is by using the negative particle ja4 ‘NEG’, ti3-jii20 ‘not yet’.

(7)

Question

a. ja4 k7o1 sya20 sa4 wa20 si24 ti24 ka4jwe24 a1?
NEG P.drink.2SG even little EMPH coffee IP
‘won’t you drink even a little bit of coffee’ [Hilaria]

Answer
b. Ja4 k7on1 7e24
Neg P.drink EMPH
‘No, I won’t drink’ [Luisa]

(8)

a. ti3 jii20 kla24 sti32 7o2 a24?
still NEG arrive=base.3 father saint IP
‘ Hasn’t the priest arrived yet?’
b. ta4 ti ji20 tsa a?
EMPH still NEG P.go!2SG IP
‘Are you still here? [Hilaria]’

4.4 Content questions

The other set of interrogative words in SJQ chatino are the type of questions that seek specific information. They are marked by a question word at the beginning of the sentence. The majority of these question words are formed by compounding an adverb and the copular verb nga24.

(9)

Question
a. na024 tsa42?
where P.go!base.3
‘where is he going? [Luisa]’

Answer

b. Kya24 kchin1
P.go=base.3 Kchin1
‘he is going to the main town SJQ’ [Hilaria]

In (9) the complex tone in the word na024 indicates a contraction form for the words na3 nga24 ‘thing is’. Chatino is full of contractions and they are usually identified by very complex tones.

(10)
a. ton4 7o1 nga24 no32 ndyan32?
who with be Rel arrive!base.2SG
‘who did you come here with?

b. ton4 nga24 ne732 kta1 nga24 kwa3?
who be CL foreigner P.go !base DEM
‘who are the foreigners walking over there’ [Hilaria]

(11)
a. na3 nga jwi3 7in4 lo4 kya73
what be C.get to.2SG on market
‘What did you find at the market?’
b. le nga no32 7ya42 xa4 7wan24
where be REL C.came down light to you.2PL
‘where were you when dawn broke’

4.5 Rhetorical statements in the form of question

Chatino discourse is filled with statements that are made using the question form. These type of questions are not intended to seek an answer most of the time it is the same speaker who produces who makes the statement that provides the answers. The places where we find these expressions range from every day conversation all the way to ritual discourse. In (12) I provide examples of an everyday conversation in a kitchen.

Genre: Every day speech
Source of text: Tiburcia’s kichen
[20061231.cocinaTib.Hc1003.WAV]
[Context: Tiburcia and Maria were talking about some missing candles that they will use to go pray.]

(12)

a. sen32 jan742 nga4 y7wi32 ren, sen32 jan742
last night then C.go=base remember essense.1SG last night then
‘last night I remember, I remember last night’ [Maria]

b. ja4 t7na20 cha73 lo4 7o2 re20 7ya24 si1 ndwa24 jan742 ne2 kan720?
NEG lose thing on saint there down if sit.3 yonder now then
‘I bet they are [the candles] sitting on the table down below by the saints’ [Maria]

c. 7o1 ta4 na3 la1 tkwa20 7in24 ran3 kya24 kwa3 si0 nt7an42 kan720?
or EMPH thing leave sitting to it above DEM if C.see.1PLINCL
‘or maybe you left them up in the church’ [Tiburcia]

d. 7o1 ta4 7a4 yna71 jen4 ku73 jan742 ne2 jan720?
conn perhaps? C.lose bag cl.size DEM (yonder) now then
‘Perhaps the bag is missing now’

The rhetorical questions in (12 b, c, d) in the kitchen all begin with particles with NEG particles (12b), and with a connective 7o1+ ta emphatic particle. All of the previously mentioned statements end with the demonstrative kan742.

In (13) I present illustrations of rhetorical question statements I found in ritual text.

(13)
Rethorical question

a. kan742
then

b. [ja4] j'l'o20 ren721 nga14 no32 xt'a20 kan742, in20
NEG know essence be REL C.put that, ye!
‘We do not know who began this tradition’

Answer

c. kwi724 sten14 jyaan1
It is father.INPOSS.1SG.PLINCL mother. INPOSS.1SG.PLINCL
7ne42 jya73 sa4 ska32 cha73, in20
C.do arrange any other thing, ye!
‘It was our fathers and mothers who arranged everything’

(14)
Genre: ritual speech
Orator: Cenobio Cruz

a. ja42 ka2 ka1 tsan0
NEG P.able P.able P.go!base.1PLINCL
‘we wish we could have gone’

b. ja42 ka1 ka1 ty7an1 ykween71
NEG P.able P.able P.go around!base.1PLINCL ourselves
‘we wish we could have done it ourselves’

c. ykween7242
‘ourselves’

In (14) I present a parallelistic expression using the rhetorical question form.

(14)
7wan1 nya24 nga24 tye32 how does your chest feel
7wan nya nga tlo4 how does your face feel
nyi1 7o4 7nya as you lied to me

5. Conclusion
In this paper I presented several strategies by which questions are asked in SJQ Chatino. Questions seeking short answers are marked by an *a* particle at the end of the sentence. The language also places questions between initial particles and the *a* question particle at the end of the sentence. SJQ Chatino also has a way for eliciting questions by using the negative particle form. Content questions in SJQ are elicited with an initial particle that is formed by an emphatic particle+ a copular verb. In this paper I also presented examples of rhetorical questions which are very relevant in the language.

References:

