Diné Bizaad Bitsisiléí Bóhoo'aah:

A Basis for learning Navajo

by

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ABSTRACT

This guide is meant to provide a brief introduction to the Navajo language, Diné Bizaad. It is understood that most of the present Diné youth speak English as their only language, as the population of Diné Bizaad speakers increase in age. This guide assumes an English-speaking background and attempts to make basic connections between English and the Diné language. In order for these connections to be clear, the guide uses basic English grammar principles to relate to Diné Bizaad grammar. Each chapter introduces a grammatical concept in English to enhance the understanding of new concepts that may exist in Diné Bizaad. Influenced by ideas in Comprehensible Input and Holistic Learning methodologies, this guide intends to encourage learners to situate themselves in Diné Bizaad basics as well as develop a sense of direction upon completion. A simplified look at the structure of Diné Bizaad words and basic sentences should allow for learners to recognize patterns in the language as they encounter them in the future.

Thesis Supervisor: Norvin Richards
Title: Professor of Linguistics

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Ahéhee' nitsxaago.

Contents

1. Letters and Sounds

Vocabulary

Diphthong

Digraph

Diacritic

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Nasal

Glottal

Voice

Place

1.1 Letters

A letter is a symbol that represents one or more sounds within a specific language. When we think about the alphabet in English, we know there are 26 letters: 5 regular vowels and 21 consonants. Consonants can be put together to represent other sounds: like *ch* in *chin*. These consonant combinations are called **digraphs**. Vowels can also be combined: as *ou* in *couch*. These vowel combinations are called **diphthongs**.

Navajo has 4 vowel letters and 20 consonants. The consonant letters in Navajo are most similar to the consonant letters in English. There are a few differences. One example is that Navajo has the extra letter ł which does not exist in English. Another example is the way Navajo combines letters like **hw**: which somewhat represents the English *wh* but with a stronger breath outward.

The vowel letters in Navajo are most similar to the vowel letters in Spanish. "Why not English?" someone might ask. The reason can be seen with the letter *a*. In English, *a* can be pronounced differently: as in *at*, *ate*, and *all*. In Spanish, *a* usually represents one sound. The *a* in Spanish *gato* ('cat') is most like the *a* in the English word, *all*. This is the same for Navajo. The *a* in *ch'ah* ('hat') is the same as the *a* in *all* and *gato*. The Spanish and Navajo vowel system aims to make each vowel letter represent 1 sound each, rather than 3+ as in English. Keep in mind that there are exceptions, but those will be covered later.

*A1. Comparing **a***

	English	Diné Bizaad
✓	F**a**ther	W**aa**' ('spinach')
X	B**a**t	
X	L**a**te	

The box above, *A1.*, shows that letter *a* in Diné Bizaad is more similar to the *a* in *father*, than it is to the *a* in the other words in the English column. Next, we will look at the letters in Diné Bizaad along with the sounds they represent.

The sounds and words have been recorded. You can access the recordings in a couple ways.

1) **Scan** the provided QR code with your phone's camera and press the link that will take you to the indicated recording.
2) **Type** the following address in your web address bar (and find the audio on the site):

   www.soundcloud.com/kin-lichii

A2. Diné Bizaad Letters

	Example	Meaning	Like-sounds in English
A	**'Á**t'é	It is	W**a**d
B	**B**id	Stomach	**B**ib
Ch	**Ch**izh	Firewood	**Ch**at
Ch'	**Ch'**ah	Hat	
D	**D**íí	This, These	**D**og
Dl	**Dl**oh	Laughter	
Dz	**Dz**ił	Mountain	Be**ds**
E	**'É**é'	Clothes	**E**d
G	**G**ah	Rabbit	**G**o
Gh	**Gh**ąąjį'	October	
H/x	**H**ooghan	Home	**H**en
	Yiish**x**ash	Bite	
Hw	**Hw**eesh'į́	I see him/her/it	**Wh**ile
I	**'Í**lį́	Expensive	**I**t
J	**J**ádí	Antelope	**J**am
K	**K**in	House	**K**ing
K'	**K'**é	Family	
Kw	**Kw**ii	Right here	**Qu**een
'	**'**E'e'aah	West	Uh – oh
L	**L**á	Clearly, apparently	**L**ot
Ł	**Ł**ichíí'	Red	
M	**M**ósí	Cat	**M**om
N	**N**íłch'i	Air	**N**one
O	**'O**olkił	Time	**O**we
S	**S**in	Song	**S**ong
Sh	**Sh**į́	Summer	**Sh**ow
T	**T**in	Ice	**T**o
T'	**T'**iis	Cottonwood Tree	
Tł	**Tł**ah	Lotion	
Tł'	**Tł'**ízí	Goat	
Ts	**Ts**in	Tree, log	Ca**ts**
Ts'	**Ts'**in	Bone	
W	**W**aa'	Spinach	**W**in
Y	**Y**as	Snow (*regional*)	**Y**es
X	Łits**x**o	Orange (*very yellow*)	Ba**ch**
Z	**Z**as	Snow (*regional*)	**Z**ap
Zh	**Zh**éí	King (*in cards*)	Vi**s**ion, Bei**g**e

Letters

Letters and Examples

7

1.2 Consonant Sounds

The previous chart shows the **letters** Diné Bizaad uses for the **sounds** that occur in the language. As you might notice, there are some sounds that do not occur in English. To understand how to make these sounds, we can talk a little bit about **voicing** and **tongue** placement.

When a sound is **voiced**, you should be able to feel <u>vibration</u> happening in your throat. In terms of tongue placement, think about where the tip of your tongue is in certain sounds as well as the back of your tongue. For example, pronounce the English word "*eel*" and you should notice your tongue starts from **almost** touching the top of the front of your mouth to **actually** touching that part. To practice pronouncing some Diné Bizaad letters, try touching your neck with your finger and pronounce the following pairs of sounds.

A3. Voicing

Voiceless (No vibration)	Voiced (Vibration)
S	Z
Ch	J
Sh	Zh

Audio:
Voiced vs.
Unvoiced

1.3 The *Hard* Consonants

Some consonants might be considered difficult to pronounce for learners. They are referred to here as "hard" consonants, referring to their <u>difficulty</u> for English speakers. Below is a description of these letters and sounds.

Dl is pronounced with the tip of the tongue just behind the hard palate: the hard part of the roof of the mouth, located behind the teeth. This sound is voiced, so you can expect vibration when you touch your throat with your fingers. It's important to understand that the sound is produced at the front of the mouth and not at the back, so a word like yidlą́ ('he/she/it drinks') would be **mispronounced** as yiglą́ (no meaning).

Gh is pronounced with the back of the tongue blocking some of the airflow in the back of the mouth. This sound is voiced. One tip is to try to hold a *g* sound and slowly move the back of the tongue down so you can let air pass through.

Hw is a sound that is similar to the English *wh* as in *while*. However, the *h* is pronounced first, which makes the following *w* sound strong and airy at the same time.

Ł is pronounced with the tongue in a similar position as when you pronounce the voiced *l* sound. The **l** in **leaf** is a good sound to try to isolate and emulate. The difference is that the Navajo *ł* is voiceless. The tip of the tongue should also be pressed more firmly to the top of the mouth while air blows through the tongue's sides.

Tł is more explosive than *ł* alone. The front tongue should be closer to the teeth while still being able to blow air through the sides of the tongue. Air should burst out of the mouth when this sound is made. This sound is voiceless. Keep in mind, that the sound is towards the front and not back, so try to avoid saying *kł* (*k i*s a back sound).

A4. The "Hard Consonants"

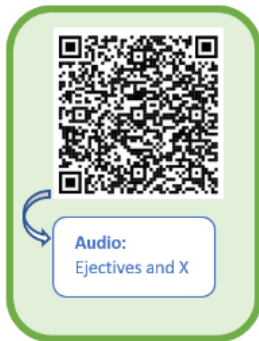| Sound	Description
Dl	D + L = DL (NOT "gl")
Gh	G + H = GH *[raise your back tongue, voiced, continue airflow]*
Hw	H + W = HW (try to emphasize "WHile")
Ł	Tongue = **same place as "L"** *[unvoiced, only air, push tip of tongue to top]*
Tł	T + Ł = Tł (NOT "cl" or "kl")

Audio:
Hard
Consonants

A5. Hard Consonants - Examples

Sound	D.B.	En. Transl.
Dl	Dloh	*Laughter*
Gh	Ghąąji'	*Camel*
Hw	Hweesh'į	*I see it, her, him*
Ł	Łichíí'	*Red*
Tł	Tłah	*Lotion*

If you have any Diné Bizaad-speaking friends or family, it would be a good idea to ask how they would pronounce these words.

A6. Glottal Stop and X

' (Glottal stop)	X	Rough English translation
(Stop the sound!)	*(Almost like unvoiced "y" and "h")*	
Ch'	Txį'	"Let's go!"
K'	Tsxįįłgo	"Quickly!"
T'	Chxǫǫh	"Rose (Very fragrant)"
Tł'	Sxih	"Cool"
Ts'		

Audio:
Ejectives and X

' - the **glottal stop** is used to show that a speaker must stop the sound! The stop happens in your throat, as you close your vocal folds. In English, the expression "uh-oh" contains a stop right between *uh* and *oh*. To practice, the cardinal directions below can be practiced. Each of these words have three syllables. Try saying "one, two, three," and then "ha'a'aah." The Diné Bizaad word should have three separate *parts* to it. In other words, it has three **syllables**.

A7. Cardinal Directions

D.B	En.
Ha'a'aah	East
Shádi'ááh	South
'E'e'aah	West
Náhookǫs	North

Audio:
Directions

Cultural Note:

In Diné culture, the number four is important and is readily connected to the four cardinal directions. Diné homes, **hooghan** (in English: *hogans*), always face east to welcome the rising sun. In traditional philosophy, the life cycle proceeds in the order east > south > west > north. This clockwise directionality even relates to the etiquette of the appropriate direction one should walk in a hogan.

A8. Directions Depiction
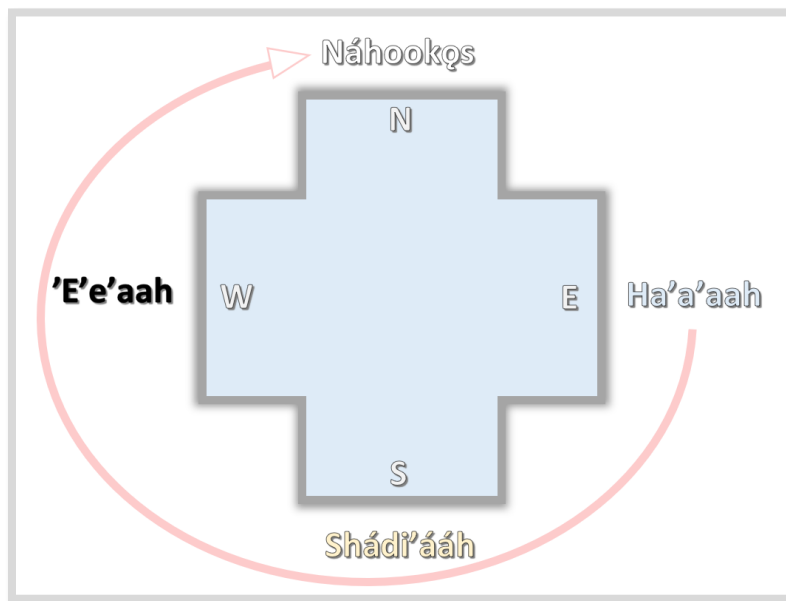
X – This letter usually occurs between a vowel and a consonant. The consonant sounds **stronger,** and the meaning can be similar to *so* or *very* in English: as in "it's *so* cold!" or "he's *very* nice." The sound is voiceless and is made by causing **friction** with air in your mouth. The position of your tongue largely depends on the vowel that comes after it.

For example, before *i* and *e*, the x position is at the <u>front</u> of your mouth: like a **voiceless y**. Practice by holding a y sound and making it voiceless.

*A9. **xe** and **xi***

D.B	En.	D.B.	En.
Tį'	Let's go	Txį'	Let's go!
Bitse'	Strong	Bitsxe'	**Very** strong

xi and xe

After *o* and *a*, the x's tongue position is further <u>back</u>: similar to a **voiceless gh**. Practice by holding a gh sound and making it voiceless.

*A10. **xa** and **xo***

D.B	En.	D.B.	En.
Łitso	Yellow	Łitsxo	Orange (**deep** yellow)
Nicha	You are crying	Nichxa	You are crying **so much**. (intensely)

xa and xo

Note:

Sometimes an *h* sound is pronounced after an *sh* or *ch* sound. To avoid writing *shh* or *chh*, an *x* is used to represent the *h* sound. For example

1) Yish**x**ash   *'I bite it'*
2) Yish**h**ash

1 is preferred in writing. The *x* does not provide extra meaning nor is there extra *strength* in the consonant before it. It is only there to represent *h*.

A11. Basic Vowels

Vowels	Example	Translation	Like sounds in English
A	G**a**h	*'Rabbit'*	W**a**d, f**a**ther
E	Din**é**	*'People, Navajo'*	B**e**d, **E**d
I	B**i**d	*'Stomach'*	**I**t, b**i**b
O	M**ó**sí	*'Cat'*	**O**we, g**o**

The Navajo vowels are shown in A11. Although the sounds look simple here, we will see that they can be modified with **diacritics**, **lengthening**, and **nasalization**. Before we get into those things, it is important to understand that *o* in Navajo is different than in English. English *o* is usually made up of two sounds: **o** and **u**. Examples can be heard in: low, Joe, and bro. In Navajo, the letter o represents a single sound: o. This difference in letter pronunciation means you should not pronounce Navajo /o/ as English /ou/.
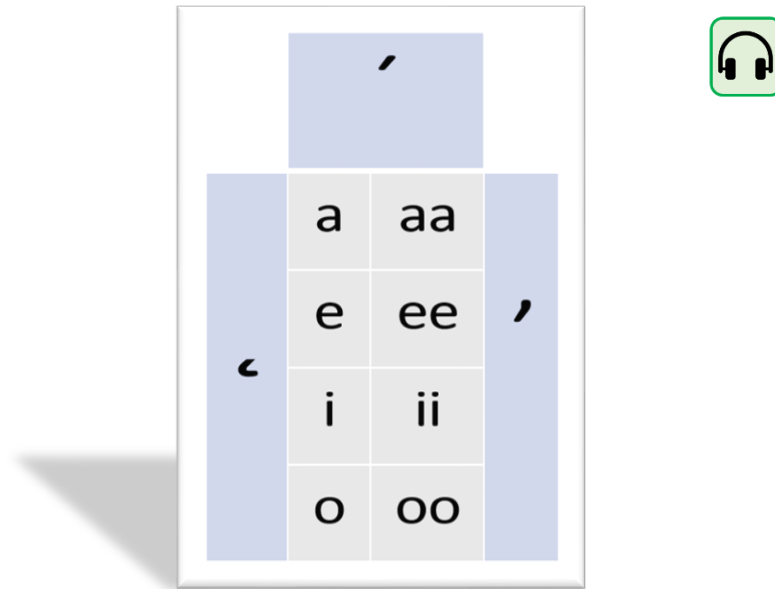
A12. Comparing o

English o - /ou/		Diné Bizaad o - /o/		
Word	*Pronunciation*	*Word*	*Pronunciation*	*Transl.*
Low	L **/ou/**	Tó	T **/o/**	*Water*
Joe	J **/ou/**	Shoh	Sh **/o/** h	*"by the way"*
Bro	Br **/ou/**	Yoo'	Y **/o:/** '	*Necklace*

long vowel

1.5 Diacritics

A13. Vowels and Diacritics

A **diacritic** is a sign that signals how to further change the pronunciation of a letter. English tends to not use diacritics except for in certain borrowed words/names like *José*, *café* and *fiancé*. In these words, the **accent mark** over the *e* is used to indicate that the *e* is not silent. Although Diné Bizaad has a diacritic that appears to be similar to the English accent shown in *café*, the pronunciation signals are different. Diné Bizaad uses 2 different diacritics: **high tone** mark and **nasal** mark. We will look at how Diné Bizaad uses these diacritics below.

A **diphthong** is combination of two vowels. *Ao*, *ai*, and *ei* are examples of diphthongs.

1.6 High Tone

Navajo high tone is indicated with the high tone mark over the vowel. Low tone is indicated with no mark. You can identify your own low tone by saying a sentence in your most natural and comfortable "monotone" voice. High tone can be practiced by identifying the tone of your voice when you are surprised. Try to go back and forth between a robot voice (monotone) and surprised voice. This practice will be exaggerated but overtime, your pronunciation of the two tones will become more natural with listening and speaking experience.

1.7 Nasal Vowels

Your nasal passage is through your nose, whereas the oral passage is through your mouth. Nasal pronunciation of vowels means that you allow air to travel through your nose. English vowels before nasal consonants like n or m are a way to get some idea of nasalized consonants. To practice, say the following corresponding English words while stopping just before you finish the n sound (before you let the tip of the tongue touch the top of the front of your mouth). You should be able to feel the sound go through your nose, in a sense.

     A14. Nasal Vowels

       Ą - B<u>ond</u>

       Ę - B<u>en</u>

       Į - B<u>in</u>

       Įį - S<u>een</u>

       Q - C<u>one</u>

The English utterance "**uh-huh**" is also normally nasalized (especially "-**huh**"). In order to redirect the air to your nasal passage, you must use the back of your tongue to reach the top of your mouth. When nasalizing your vowels, you are not completely blocking air through your mouth, so the rest of your tongue must be in a similar position to a normal (oral) vowel. Additionally, nasalizing a vowel does not mean closing your mouth.

Consonants

B	Ch	Ch'	D
Dl	Dz	G	Gh
H	Hw	J	K
K'	Kw	'	L
Ł	M	N	S
Sh	T	T'	Tł
Tł'	Ts	Ts'	W
X	Y	Z	Zh

Vowels

a	aa	e	ee	i	ii	o	oo
a'	aa'	e'	ee'	i'	ii'	o'	oo'
á	áá	é	éé	í	íí	ó	óó
ą	ąą	ę	ęę	į	įį	ǫ	ǫǫ
ą́	ą́ą́	ę́	ę́ę́	į́	į́į́	ǫ́	ǫ́ǫ́
áa	ą́ą	ée	ę́ę	íi	į́į	óo	ǫ́ǫ
aá	ąą́	eé	ęę́	ií	įį́	oó	ǫǫ́

Audio:
Consonant Sounds

Audio:
Vowel Sounds

16
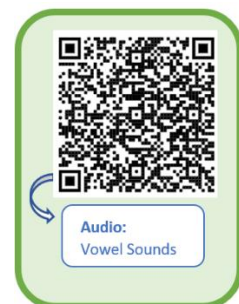
2. Nouns

Vocabulary

Enclitic

Possession

Pronoun

Subject

Object

Prefix

Suffix
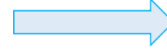
Chapter 2

2.1 Reviewing the Noun

B1. Noun Examples

Nouns		
Person	**Place**	**Thing**
John	Boston	Computer
Mom	Home	Feather
Painter	Mars	Thought

Nouns are commonly described as pointing out a **person**, **place** or **thing**. Things that you can touch in the world are simple examples of nouns: *cat*, *water*, *elbow*. Concepts and ideas, like *science* and *ridicule*, are other examples of nouns. Understanding what a noun is helps to understand its position in a sentence. Word order will be discussed once we encounter verbs.

For now, let's look at a small group of nouns to work with. Keep in mind, a beginner is not expected to memorize every single word at this time. This list is meant to provide an overview of what Navajo nouns look like. **Skim** the list. Look out for words that end in *-í*, *-ii*, *-ní* and *-nii* as we will talk about them later.

A	Naaldloshii (animals)	
1	Łį́į́'	Horse
2	Dibé	Sheep
3	Łééchąą'í	Dog
4	Mósí	Cat
5	Tsídii	Bird
6	Ch'ał	Frog
7	'Ayání	Bison
8	Łóó'	Fish
9	Mą'ii	Coyote
10	Tł'iish (or: Na'ashǫ'ii)	Snake

B	Niilyáhígíí (nature)	
1	Tó	Water
2	Kǫ'	Fire
3	Yá	Sky
4	Nííłch'i	Air
5	Nahasdzáán	(Planet) Earth
6	Sǫ'	Star
7	Jóhonaa'éí	Sun
8	'Oljéé'	Moon
9	Tin	Ice
10	Tsé	Rock

C	'Ádahoolyéhígíí (locations)	
1	Tségháhoodzání	Window Rock
2	Tsé Bit'a'í, Naat'áaniinééz	Shiprock
3	Tó Dinéeshzhee'	Kayenta
4	Tó Naneesdizí	Tuba City
5	Ch'ínílį́	Chinle
6	Tóta'	Farmington
7	Na'ní'á Hótsaa	Page
8	Na'nízhoozhí	Gallup
9	T'iistsoh Sikaad	Alamo
10	Tóhajiileehé	Canyoncito
11	Tł'ohchiní	Ramah

Group A

Audio

Group B

Group C

18

D	K'é (family)	
1	Shimá	Mother
2	Shimásání	Maternal grandmother
3	Shicheii	Maternal grandfather
4	Shizhé'é	Father
5	Shinálí asdzáán	Paternal grandmother
6	Shinálí hastiin	Paternal grandfather
7	Shiyázhí	Child
7	Shiyáázh	Son (mother speaking)
7	Shiye'	Son (father speaking)
8	Shich'é'é	Daughter (Mother speaking)
8	Sitsi' (or: Shitsi')	Daughter (Father speaking)
9	Shádí	Older sister
10	Shideezhí	Younger sister
11	Shínaaí	Older brother
12	Sitsilí (or: Shitsilí)	Younger brother

E	Ch'iiyáán (food)	
1	'Atsį'	Meat
2	Dibé bitsį'	Mutton
3	Béégashii bitsį'	Beef
4	Łóó' (bitsį')	Fish
5	Bisóodi bitsį'	Pork
6	Naa'ahóóhai bitsį'	Chicken

E	Ch'iiyáán (food)	
7	'Aneest'ą	Fruit
8	Dzidzétsoh	Peach
9	Bilasáana	Apple
10	Hashk'aan	Banana
11	Ch'ééh jiyáán	Watermelon
12	Chiiłchin	Red sumac berry

E	Ch'iiyáán (food)	
13	Nánise'	Vegetable
14	Naadą́ą́'	Corn
15	Nímasii	Potato
16	Tł'ohchin	Onion
17	Ch'il łigaii	Lettuce
18	Chąąsht'ezhiitsoh	Carrot

E	Ch'iiyáán (food - extra)	
19	'Abe'	Milk
20	Géeso	Cheese
21	Bááh	Bread

Group D

Group E

F	Ch'iiyáán'Ályaaígíí (dishes)	
1	'Atoo'	Mutton stew
2	K'íneeshbízhii	Dumpling stew
3	Dibé bitsį'	Roasted mutton
4	Dah díníilghaazh	Frybread
5	Ntsidigo'í	Kneel-down bread
6	'Ach'íí'	Grilled fat and intestines
7	Háambágii	Hamburger sandwich
8	Náneeskaadítéél	Pizza
9	Nímasiits'ósí	French fries
10	Bisóodi bitsį' yik'ánígíí	Sausage

G	Hooghangi Bee Hahoodít'éhígíí (household things)	
1	Tsásk'eh	Bed
2	Bikáá' dah 'asdáhí	Chair
3	Bikáá' 'adání	Table
4	Ni'góó sikaadí	Floor (and carpet)
5	Diyogí	Rug
6	Tsésǫ'	Window
7	Łeets'aa' bii' tánágisí	Dish sink
8	Bé'ézhóó'	Hairbrush
9	Łeets'aa'	Dishes
10	Ts'aa'	Basket
11	Káá' 'anidaahí, Bikáá' dah 'anidaahí	Toilet

H	Díishjįįdi Choǫ'ínígíí (modern things)	
1	Béésh bee hane'é	Phone
1a	" Bił níjoobáłí "	Cell phone (informal)
2	Béésh ntsékeesí yázhí	Tablet
	Saabiihi' nílts'ísí	
3	Chidí	Car
4	Na'alkidgo daane'é	Video game
5	Nílch'į naalkidí	Television
6	Na'alkid	Movie
7	Dilní náníltąshí	Piano
8	Béésh ntsékeesíłts'ósí	Laptop
	Saabiihi'níłí naat'áhí	
9	Béésh ntsékeesí	Computer
10	Naaltsoos	Book
11	Bee na'anishí	Tools

Group F

Group G

Group H

I	'Ázdilzééh Bee Na'a'néhí (sports)	
1	Jooł'iihnálniihí	Basketball
2	Jooł yitalí	Football
3	Jooł yikalí	Baseball
4	Jooł nabí'nílts'iní	Volleyball
5	Ná'iiltih	Running
6	Na'alkǫ́ǫ́'	Swimming
7	Dzi'ízí bee 'á'dílzééh	Cycling
8	Jooł 'ałch'į' 'abínídzílghałí	Tennis
9	Jooł bee ni'dilkalí	Golf
10	Na'ahínítaah	Wrestling

J	Bee 'Ák'ihojiltxa' (misc. interests)	
1	Na'ach'ąąhí	Painter
2	'Atł'óhí	Weaver
3	'Ásaa' 'ííł'íní	Potter
4	Hataałí	Singer
5	Naalzheehí	Hunter
6	Sin 'ííł'íní	Music Maker
7	Kin 'ííł'íní	Building construction
8	Ch'iyáán 'ííł'íní	Cook
9	Saabiihi'níłí yinaalnishí	Computer language coder
10	'Ádílzéhí	Exerciser

Group I

Group J

We can look at two nouns in English: *tree* and *singer*. *Tree* is a noun that brings to mind a natural thing in the world which grows from the ground. *Singer* contains –er, which is a suffix that turns **verbs** into **nouns**. In Dine Bizaad, there is a similar process with the suffix -í. This roughly translates to "one who sings."

B2. From Verb to Noun

En.	Sing	-er	Singer	
	Verb	**Noun suffix**		
D.B.	Hataał	-í	Hataałí	

Dine Bizaad has many words that change from verbs to nouns by using **suffixes:** like *-ígíí*, *í, -ii*, etc. These tend to convey a meaning, "that which is..." or "he/she/it/one who does..." Remember, similarly *singer* has a meaning of: "one who sings." If a noun does not have a suffix, we can consider them **noun bases**. For example, the Navajo word *t'iis* refers to a cottonwood tree without the use of a suffix. Let's look at some of these animal nouns.

B3. Noticing -í and -ii Nouns

A	Naaldloshii (animals)	
1	Łı́ı́'	Horse
2	Dibé	Sheep
3	Łééchąą'í	Dog
4	Mósí	Cat
5	Tsídii	Bird
6	Ch'ał	Frog
7	Ayání	Bison
8	Łóó'	Fish
9	Mą'ii	Coyote
10	Tł'iish (or: Na'ashǫ́'ii)	Snake

All of the Diné Bizaad words in group A bring to mind the animal that is also shown in the corresponding English column. *Łééchąą'í, mósí, tsídii, ayání, mą'ii*, and *na'ashǫ́'ii* all show the suffix *-í* or *-ii*. These suffixes tell us that the base word provides some extra information about the noun. For example, the word '*ayání*, means bison. This comes from the action word: '*ayą́* (eat) and the suffix: *-í* (one that...). The

result is "one who eats."[1] In comparison, a noun like *łóó'*, simply refers to the animal which we know lives in the water and has gills and fins. There might be more to the origin of the word, but it is difficult to say what that origin is just by looking at it.

Navajo contains a large number of words that behave more similarly to *'ayání* than to *łóó'*. This means that many Dine Bizaad <u>nouns</u> depend on <u>verbs</u> to help describe their action and/or function. The way Diné Bizaad turns a noun into an action is by adding *-í* or *-ii* to the end of the verb. These suffixes can also look like *-ní* or *-nii*. Below, we will see some examples.

B4. Parts of a Noun

Table and Number	D.B.	En. (literal)	En. word(s)
A1	Bił níjoobáłí	**The one** with which a person spins (in search of cellular signal)	Cell Phone
C1	Tségháhoodzání	**The one** rock with a hole through it.	Window Rock, AZ
G3	Bikáá' adání	**The one** on which a person eats.	Table

Notice that *Window Rock* is translated as *a place with a hole in a rock*. Understand that sometimes translations are not literal[2].

2.4 Prefix and Noun

<u>Possession</u> usually refers to **belonging** or **relation**. For example: *your car* indicates something that belongs to you and *your mother* indicates a relationship. Possession in English can be indicated with the words: my, your, his, her, its (among others). In Dine Bizaad, prefixes are used to show possession. These are: *shi-*, *ni-*, and *bi-*.

B5. Shi-, Ni-, Bi-

Possessive prefix	
D.B.	**Eng.**
Shi-	My …
Ni-	Your …
Bi-	His/Her/Its …

---

[1] Although all animals must eat, a bison is given the name *ayání* because it is a notable quality of the animal. In this case, eating is something you can expect a bison to be doing upon catching sight.
[2] *Window* is translated as *tsésǫ'* in Group G of the list of nouns at the beginning.

*B6. **Shi- + Noun***

D	K'é (family)	
1	**Shimá**	**Mother**
2	**Shimásání**	**Maternal grandmother**
3	**Shicheii**	**Maternal grandfather**
4	**Shizhé'é**	**Father**
5	**Shinálí asdzáán**	**Paternal grandmother**
6	**Shinálí hastiin**	**Paternal grandfather**

7	**Shiyázhí**	**Child**
	Shiyáázh	**Son** (mother speaking)
	Shiye'	**Son** (father speaking)
8	**Shich'é'é**	**Daughter** (Mother speaking)
	Sitsi' (or: Shitsi')	**Daughter** (Father speaking)
9	**Shádí**	**Older sister**
10	**Shideezhí**	**Younger sister**
11	**Shínaaí**	**Older brother**
12	**Sitsilí** (or: Shitsilí)	**Younger brother**

The family words use a possessive prefix. Shi- is similar to my... If you want to say *your mother*, you will switch shi- for ni-: *nima*. If you want to say *his*, *her*, *its mother*, you will say *bima*. The bi- prefix cannot refer to gender. If it is necessary to indicate someone's gender, a more specific word would be used before the prefixed word: such as *at'ééd bima* (the girl's mother) or *ashkii bizhé'é* (the boy's father). Additionally, kinship is very important in Diné culture and Diné Bizaad. Often when two people meet and develop a relationship (friendship or otherwise), an established kinship word is used to greet and refer to each other with. Traditionally, friends are often referred to as: shádí, shideezhí, shínaaí, sitsilí. Notice how *brother* and *sister* differ depending on the ages of the speaker and listener. Also notice how *daughter* and *son* also differ depending on the gender (male or female) of the person speaking.

*B7. **s**- and **sh**- Harmony*

Harmony			
Possessive Prefix	Stem	D.B. Word	*En.*
~~**Sh**~~i-	**ts**i'	**S**itsi'	*My daughter* (father speaking)

*ts will make **sh** turn into **s**!*

You might have noticed that some words use *si-* instead of *shi-*. B7. Shows the basic process. For now, just understand that sounds which sound like **s** in the word stem can change the possessive *shi-* sound into a *si-*. This creates a sort of **harmony** between the stem and the possessive prefix. It may seem very specific, but this kind of process tends to happen often in Diné Bizaad.

D.B.	En.
'Amá	*A mother*
'Atsilí	*A younger brother*

D.B.	En.
Shimá	*My mother*
Si<u>ts</u>ilí	*My younger brother*

B8. shows a way to say *a mother* and *a younger brother* without specifying who the relation is to. Notice that the stem of the word *sitsilí* is *-tsil*. This stem harmonizes with the *shi-* prefix and makes it *si-*.

2.5 Plural Nouns

Where singular means one in number, **plural** means **more than one**. In regular English nouns, the suffix –s is added to the word: as in, *eyes*, *pigs*, and *worlds*. In Navajo, it is not very common to indicate a plural noun by adding to the noun. In other words, pluralization usually is not indicated on the noun word, but on the verb word instead. However, some nouns exist that can be pluralized. These commonly pluralized nouns tend to relate to family, kinship, and the body. An example is shown below with –ké.

*B9. Special Plural -**ké***

En.	D.B
Girl	'At'ééd
Girl**s**	'At'éé**ké**
Boy	'Ashkii
Boy**s**	'Ashii**ké**

Note:

-**ké** is a special plural marker! Try to only use them for these two words. You **cannot** use it for a word like **mósí** (*cat*) or **kin** (*house*). Again, Diné Bizaad normally expresses plurality in <u>the verb</u>.

2.6 <u>Independent</u> Pronouns

English pronouns are words that can replace a noun in a sentence. They refer to the speaker, the listener, someone that was talked about earlier or someone/something the speaker and listener both know. English uses subject pronouns and object pronouns. The English pronouns are: *I, me, you, he, him, she, her, it, they, them, we,* and *us*. In English the subject pronouns usually occur before the main verb, while object pronouns occur after the main verb. Notice the words before and after the verb, *LOVE(s),* below.

B10. Subject and Object Pronouns

	Subject pronouns	Verb	Object Pronouns
Singular	I		Me
	You		You
	He / she / it	LOVE(S)	Him / her / it
Plural	We		Us
	You		You
	They		Them

Diné Bizaad pronouns are *shí, ní*, and *bí*. However, it is possible to say a sentence without using these pronouns in Diné Bizaad. These words are most commonly used when a speaker wants to **emphasize** the person of the sentence.

B11. Comparing Pronouns

	English		**Diné Bizaad**
Singular	I	Me	**Shí**
	You	You	**Ní**
	He/she/it	Him/her/it	**Bí**
Note	*To refer to **bí** in English, I will use **her**, **she** from this point.*		

2.7 <u>Possessive</u> Pronouns

English possessives can be indicated with possessive <u>adjectives</u> and possessive <u>pronouns</u>. "***my***..." is an example of a possessive adjective, whereas "... ***mine***" is an example of a possessive pronoun. Remember that *my* is generally said **before** a noun while *mine* is not. See the table below and notice the Diné Bizaad counterparts.

B12. Shi- and Shí

	En.	*D.B*	*En.*	*D.B*
Possessives	Adjective	Possessive Pronoun Prefix	(Independent) Possessive Pronoun	
	My...	Shi-	... Mine	... Shí
	Your...	Ni-	... Yours	... Ní
	His, her, its...	Bi-	... His, hers	... Bí
Examples	***My*** *horse*	***Shi****łį́į́'*	*The horse is* ***mine.***	*Łį́į́' 'éí* ***shí****.*

The Diné Bizaad possessive prefixes (in green) are able to attach to a noun to show that it is possessed. However, the Diné Bizaad possessive pronouns are words that can occur alone, without attaching to a noun. Also, the pronouns have a **high tone** while the prefixes may or may not have a high tone. Finally, the pronouns tend to occur at the end of a sentence (or clause).

B13. Bí Example

1a.	Jáan	**bi**łį́į́'	'éí	**bí**.
1b.	John	his horse	(particle)	is his.
1c.	John**'s** horse is **his**.			

3. Verbs

Vocabulary

Action

Subject

Object

Tense

Mode

Form

Prefix

Grammatical Person

Syllable
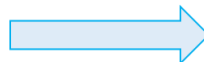
3.1 Subject and Object

The word order in English is Subject-Verb-Object. This means that English nouns typically occur before and after a verb. A simple example with a noun-verb-noun pattern is ***dogs love bones***. In simple sentences, the subject goes **before** the verb and the object goes **after** the verb. The subject is usually the **doer** of the action, while the object is the **receiver** or **experiencer** of the action.

C1. SVO

English		
Subject	**Verb**	Object
The horse	**is eating**	the apple
The horse is eating the apple		

C2. SOV

Diné Bizaad		
Subject	Object	**Verb**
Łį́į́'	bilasáana	**yiyą́**
Łį́į́' bilasáana yiyą́		

In Navajo, the word order is Subject-Object-Verb. The tables above show a comparison of the sentence, "the horse is eating the apple." In C2., the <u>subject</u> is *łį́į́'*, *horse*, and the <u>object</u> is *bilasáana*, *apple*. *Yiyą́*

means *eating it*. Another simple example of a noun-noun-verb pattern is: *mósí łóó' yiyą́*. This means: *the cat is eating the fish. Mósí* is *cat* and *łóó'* is *fish*.

3.2 Reviewing the Verb

A verb is a word that <u>indicates an action</u>. English examples are: *eat*, *run*, *play*, and *sit*. The verb is the most complex part of understanding and speaking Navajo, so it is important to understand a few things about the English verb before observing the Navajo one. We need to know what some of the **forms** of a verb are and **what they do** in English. Afterwards, we might understand how Navajo forms can relate to what exists in English.

3.3 Grammatical Person

Grammatical **person** refers to the who or what is involved in the action from the point of view of the speaker. In English, first person refers to *I*, second person refers to *you*, and third person refers to *he/she/it*. The figure below shows a simple context for what *grammatical person* refers to. 1 is equal to first person, 2 is second person, and 3 is third person. The speaker and listener are shown inside the dotted line circle. Look at how the verb changes depending on the person.

C3. Person (English)
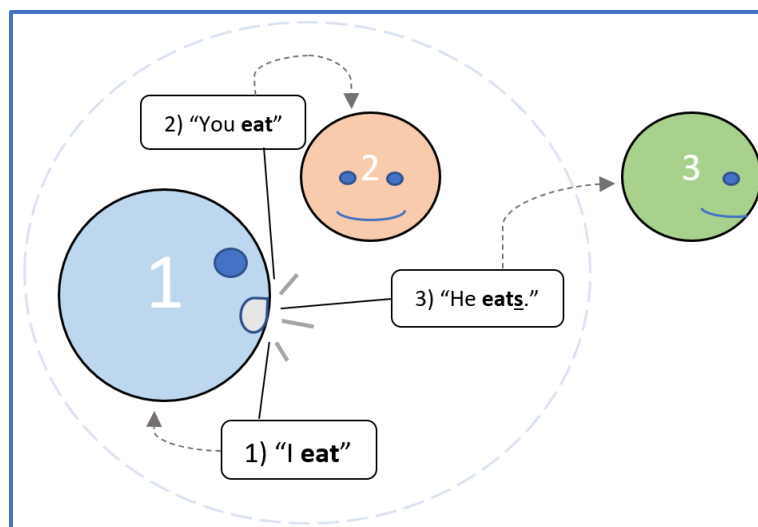
In English, the third person verb form differs from the others, since the suffix *–s* is added to the verb *eat*. Remember: <u>person</u> **does not** tell how many people (or things) there are.

*C4. **Simple Present** vs **Present Continuous**.*

Person	**Simple Present**	**Present Continuous**
1st person	I **eat.**	I **am eating.**
2nd person	You **eat.**	You **are eating.**
3rd person	John **eats.**	John **is eating.**

The **Simple Present** uses only the basic form of the verb. For example, *eat* is the simple present form, while *eating* and *eaten* are not. English requires the –s suffix for the 3rd person, John. The simple present is used when someone wants to talk about an action that is done *routinely*. Typically, this verb form will have some word that indicates frequency: like every day, usually, sometimes, etc. Look at *C4.* above to get a sense of the difference between the two. Think about <u>when</u> you would say each phrase.

One important thing to note is that the <u>simple present</u> form **does not** indicate an action that is being done "right now" or at the moment of speaking. If someone calls you on the phone and asks, "Hey! What are you doing?" you probably wouldn't respond, "I *eat* at my friend's house." Instead, you might use the Present Continuous: "I *am eating* at my friend's house."

> **Note:**
>
> Though we mainly want to focus on Present Continuous, some examples of using the simple present are:
>
> 1) I <u>usually</u> **eat** in the evening.
> 2) John <u>never</u> **eats** fish.
>
> **Usually** and **never** are examples of words that relate to the <u>frequency</u> that a person does something. It is common to use these kinds of **adverbs** when using a simple present verb.

The **Present Continuous** first uses a form of **BE**: *am*, *are*, *is*, and *be*. Secondly, it uses a verb with the suffix, *-ing*. To simplify, the form is: BE + (verb)-ing. This form of the verb is used to indicate an action being done at the moment that it is said (right now). A good way to connect this form to the real world is by thinking of a phone conversation. The person you are talking to normally cannot see you, so you will use *BE+ (verb)-ing* to talk about what is happening at the moment.

C5. Present Continuous Form

BE	+	VERB	-ing
am are is		eat sleep contemplate (etc.)	-ing

Your friend might ask "what are you up to?" and you could respond "Nothing, **I'm** just **eating**." Sentences like "I am eating" and "John is dancing" are how we talk about actions that are **ongoing**, or continuous. This means that the action is not complete yet.

C6. Using the Present Continuous.

	Hi! What are you up to?	
Question		
Answer	✓ Oh nothing, I'm eating.	X Oh nothing, I eat.

3.5 Introducing the Diné Bizaad Imperfective Mode

To put it simply, the **Imperfective Mode** is a form of a Diné Bizaad verb that indicates an <u>ongoing action</u>. Often, this is used to talk about things happening in the moment, similarly to the <u>present progressive</u> in English[3]. Below, we will take a look at a chart that provides three forms of one imperfective verb for *eating*.

C7. Yishą́ - Imperfective

	Imperfective	Pres. Cont.	
Person	**Diné Bizaad**	*English*	
1st	yishą́	*I am eating*	
2nd	niyą́	*You are eating*	
3rd	yiyą́	*She is eating*	

---

[3] We will refrain from talking about the simple present for now since the English simple present can be used to express facts, and it is also used to express habits. Expressing habits and facts each require different forms in Diné Bizaad and the explanation is outside the limits of this guide.

C8. Person (Diné Bizaad)
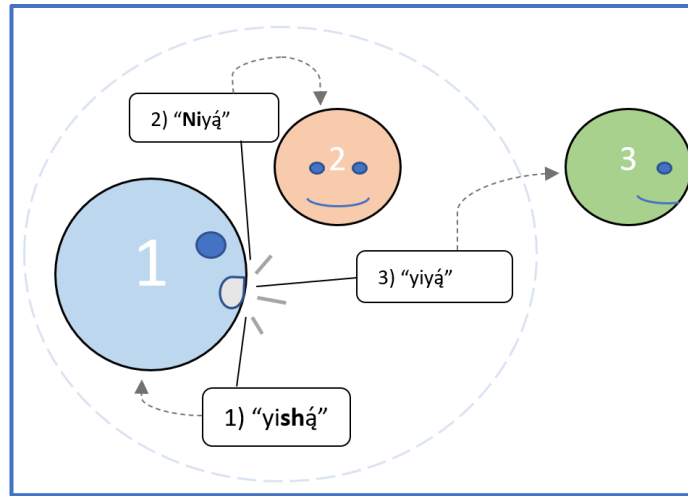
The table and figure above give some straightforward information on which verb forms are used with which grammatical person. Although it is tempting to compare a single Diné Bizaad word to an English word, remember that the Diné word, *yishą́*, can mean at least three English words, *I am eating*. There are some complicated pieces of a Diné Bizaad word that you will encounter as you learn, but three common characteristics can be talked about with the words we have seen so far. These characteristics are the **verb stem**, the **person marker**, and the **yi- prefix**

Note:

The following is based on linguistic analyses of the Diné language. Diné Bizaad classes do not typically teach these concepts. However, it could be helpful for learners who want to familiarize themselves with certain processes in the language as to not be too overwhelmed in the future when encountering similar phenomena.

3.6 Syllable

Before we start, it is important to understand what a **syllable** is. We will be counting syllables to understand a simple rule. Consider the names *Kate* and *Samantha*. *Kate* has one syllable and *Samantha* has three. Often, a syllable can be counted by the vowels that can be **pronounced** in a word. Importantly, we are focused on the pronounced vowels, which is not always the same number as written vowels.

For example, Kate has two written vowels, but when pronounced, the word has *one* vowel. Therefore, Kate would be considered to have **one syllable**, not two. A good way of hearing syllables is by clapping to the "beat" of a word. Samantha for example, can be separated and clapped as sa-man-tha. Think of the number of syllables there are in your name.

C9. Yishcha – I Am Crying

Filler yi-	Person marker	Verb stem
yi-	**sh-**	**-cha**
yishcha		

Yishcha is an imperfective word which may translate as "I am crying." The last part of the word, **-cha**, gives the meaning of *crying*. Below we will look at a process of how the first, second, and third person forms of the verb are realized. To start with, Diné Bizaad seems to dislike when a verb is only one syllable. Below, we see that the stem has only one syllable.

*C10. -**cha** – CRY*

Verb stem	Syllables
-cha	1

Next, a person marker will be added to the right of the verb stem. Remember, these markers refer to who the verb is directed towards. The pronoun *bi-* **does not** appear in this position of the verb.

C11. Shi-, Ni-, Ø-

Person marker		Verb stem	Result	Syllables
(1st)	sh-	-cha	shcha	1
(2nd)	ni-	-cha	nicha	2 ✓
(3rd)	Ø-	-cha	cha	1

Notice the fact that only *nicha* has more than one syllable. The other two forms need something to provide an **extra syllable**: a filler. To –*shcha* and -*cha*, we will add a filler prefix: yi-.

*C12. **Yi-** + 1 = 2*

Filler yi-	Person marker	Verb stem	Result	Syllables
yi-	sh-	-cha	yishcha	2
	ni-	-cha	nicha	2
yi-	Ø-	-cha	yicha	2

Now we have satisfied the syllable requirement with the correct forms of the first person, second person, and third person forms of the imperfective verb stem –cha.

Let's look at another verb.

3.8 An irregular Imperfective Verb

C13. Yishą́ – I Am Eating

Filler yi-	Person Marker	Verb Stem
yi-	**sh-**	**-ą́**
yishą́		

Diné Bizaad verbs contain most of its meaning in the stem. In the word above, the stem yą́ conveys the act of eating. Remember that this is the imperfective form, so the action is understood to be ongoing. The first-person form of the verb doesn't have -yą́, but instead has -ą́. This is because of the interaction of sh- and –y. In this case, when these two sounds meet, *y* disappears.

C14. -yą́ vs. -ą́

Verb Stem	Verb Word	En.
-yą́	Yishą́	*I am eating*
	Ni**yą́**	*You are eating*
	Yi**yą́**	*She is eating*

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C15. Subject Person Markers

Person Marker	Verb Stem	Verb Word	En.
1 - sh 2 - ni 3 - Ø	-yą́	Yi**sh**ą́	*I am eating*
		Niyą́	*You are eating*
		Yiyą́	*She is eating*

The person marker often appears just before the verb stem. These markers indicate who is doing the action. Because these markers are often included in the verb, Diné Bizaad speakers typically exclude the independent pronouns.

For example, instead of saying "**shí bááh yishą́**," which sounds redundant.

*C16. Independent **shí***

	Subject	Object	Verb
D.B. -	**shí**	bááh	yi**sh**ą́.
En. -	*I*	*bread*	*I am eating.*

A person might say instead "**bááh yishą́**."

*C17. Without **shí***

	Object	Verb (*with **subject** given inside*)
D.B. -	Bááh	yi**sh**ą́.
En. -	*Bread*	*I am eating*

The third person (she) is indicated by **no marker**. The Ø symbol represents emptiness. In other words: if the spot is empty of any person marker (first or second), then it must be the third-person.

C18. Yi- Prefix

Filler yi-	Person Marker	Verb Stem	Verb Word	En.
(yi-)	sh ni Ø	-yą́	**Yi**shą́	*I am eating*
			Niyą́	*You are eating*
			Yiyą́	*She is eating*

Yi- has various uses in Diné Bizaad. In this situation, it is to <u>fill</u> a spot so the word would not be one syllable. Only niyą́ has two syllables without yi-. Yi- is added to the other words that only have one syllable each. The result is that each verb word now has two syllables.

4. Adjectives and Adverbs

Vocabulary

Demonstrative

Numeral

Characteristic

Appearance
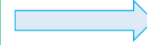
4.1 English Adjectives

In English, adjectives tend to go <u>before a noun</u> or <u>after a verb</u>, and they generally describe the **characteristics** of the noun. The following sentences use the noun, *cat*, with an adjective before it.

> *D1. Adjective Examples*
>
>> 1) I have **five** cats.   (numeral)
>>
>> 2) I have a **big** cat.   (characteristic)
>>
>> 3) I like **this** cat.   (demonstrative)
>>
>> *4) I see **my** cat.   (possessive)*

Remember that possessives in Diné Bizaad are normally attached to the noun, like <u>*shimá*</u> (my mother). So here, we can give attention to some descriptive words that can said as separate words in a sentence: **numeral**, **characteristic** and **demonstrative** adjectives.

Remember that adjectives describe the noun in some way. So, when someone says; "I have five cats" the cats are being described as there being five. Below, numbers one through ten are given.

D2. Diné Bizaad Numbers

#	Diné Bizaad
1	T'áá łá'í
2	Naaki
3	Táá'
4	Dį́į́'
5	'Ashdla'
6	Hastą́ą́'
7	Tsots'id
8	Tseebíí
9	Náhást'éí
10	Neeznáá

D3. "Zero"

En.	D.B.
0 (zero)	Názbąs
None	'Ádin

Numbers often represent quantity, or how much/many of something there is/are. Zero is an interesting number since, in conversation, people don't tend to say "I have zero dogs." Instead, one might say "I don't have any dogs," or "I have no dogs." In mathematics however, *zero* becomes more utilized.

In Diné Bizaad, people use *ádin* to refer to quantity instead of the number *názbąs,* which is most often used in mathematics or when reciting telephone numbers. A great way to practice these numbers is to learn your phone number in Diné Bizaad!

Practice saying the following example in Diné Bizaad:

(101) 101 - 1010

Now think of your own phone number and practice saying it with the numbers provided above:

(_ _ _) _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

To become familiar with quantities in a sentence, we can use the word: *yishą́, I am eating*.

D4. *Number* + Noun

_# bilasáana yishą́.

I am eating __ apples.

4.3 Demonstratives

English examples of demonstratives are: *this, that, these, those*. **This** usually refers to something **close** to the speaker. **That** points out something that is **further** from the speaker.

Below is a chart with demonstratives in Diné Bizaad. Understand that the number of items is not important with these words. In other words, the demonstratives **do not** indicate plurality or singularity.

D5. Díí, 'Eii, 'Éí

D.B.	En.	
Sing. / Pl.	Sing.	Pl.
Díí	This	These
'Eii	That	Those
'Éí	That	Those
	(out of sight or abstract)	

D6. Distance

D.B	
díí	
'eii	
'éí	

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We can look at an example with *'eii* below. As we can expect, *D7.* Refers to a cat that is some distance away from the speaker.

D7. 'eii Example

D.B. Sentence	'Eii mósí shił nizhóní!			
D.B. words	'Eii	mósí	shił	nizhóní
Word Info.	dem.	cat	with me	is beautiful
En. Literal	*"**That** cat is beautiful with me"*			
Transl.	*'I love **that** cat'*			

D8. 'This One!', 'That One!'

D.B	En.	D.B.	En.
díí	this	díidí	this **in particular**.
'eii	that	'eiidí	that in particular.
'éí	that (abstract, out of sight)	'éídí	that in particular (abstract, out of sight).

-**dí** is a suffix that can refer to something that was mentioned before in a conversation. The difference between *díí* and *díidí* is that *díí* points out a **general** **thing or things** that is/are close to you, while *díidí* points out a **known** **thing or things** that is/are close to you. Again, díí and díidí can be either singular or plural. The following situation is an example of when -dí is used:

John's mom saw a worm in an apple earlier that morning and is telling John about it.
She notices that he has **the particular** apple in his hand and shouts to warn him:
" 'Eii**dí**!" (that's the one!).

D9. 'Eiidí – That One!
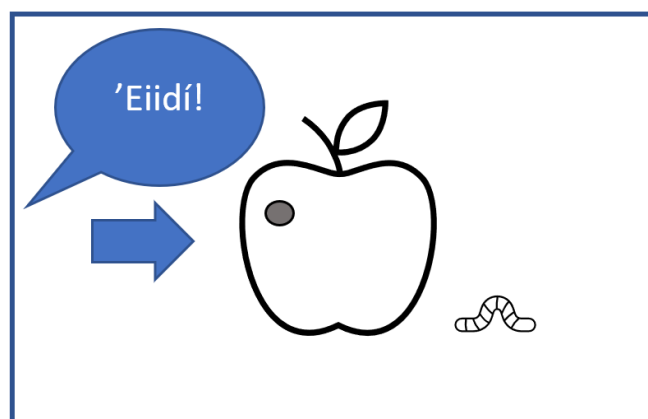
The context like the one described above involves that the speaker and hearer both know about <u>what</u> the speaker is talking about. -*dí* is commonly added to things and locations in order to refer to what was being talked about earlier in the discussion.

4.4 Characteristics

In English, adjectives like *beautiful* describe the **appearance** of a noun. In the sentence below, *horse* is the noun that is being described by the adjective, *beautiful*.

1) The horse is **beautiful**.

Below, we will see a Navajo example of the same sentence.

D10. Nizhóní

1a.	Łı̨́ı̨́’ nizhóní.
1b. *Translation*	The horse is beautiful.

Basically, these kinds of adjectives in English tend to behave more like verbs in Diné Bizaad. A common mistake for Diné Bizaad learners is to look at a sentence like *1b.* and try to find a verb that equals the English word *is*. However, the Diné Bizaad **neuter verb,** *nizhóní***,** already has *is* <u>infused</u> in its meaning. In other words, the meaning of **nizhóni** is not limited to "beautiful" but involves a sense of "**is beautiful**" in its meaning.

D11. More Adjectives

D.B.	En.
’Ałts’íísí	Small
’Ałts’óózí	Slim
’Ánííłtso	Big
Dich’iizhí	Rough
Niłhin	Dirty
Nineez	Tall
Nizhóní	Beautiful
Yilzhóólí	Soft

Nidaashch'ą́ą'ii

- ▪ Łitso
- ▪ Łitsxo
- ▪ Yágo Dootł'izh
- ▪ Dootł'izh
- ▪ Yéego Dootł'izh
- ▪ Tsédídéehgo Dootł'izh
- ▪ Tátł'idgo Dootł'izh
- ▪ Ch'ilgo Dootł'izh
- ▪ Dibéłchí'í
- ▪ Lichíí'
- ▪ Dinilchíí'
- ▪ Łizhin
- ▪ Łibá
- ▫ Łigai
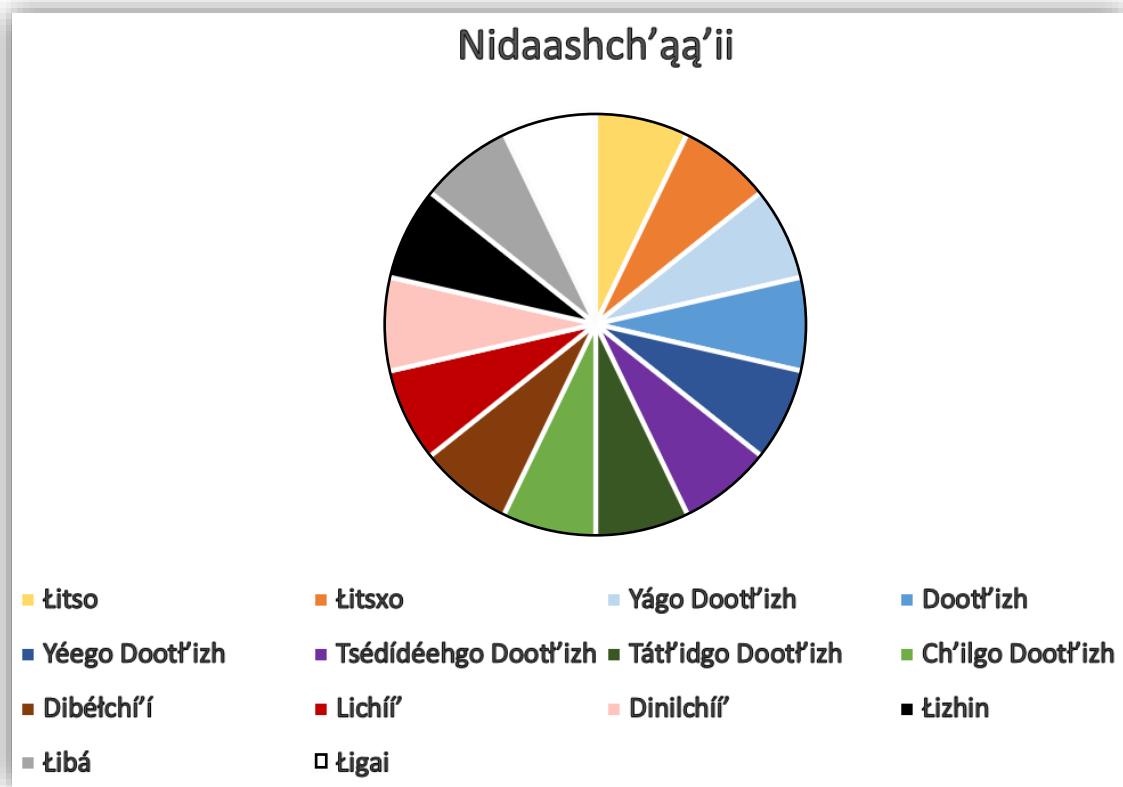
A8. Directions Depiction
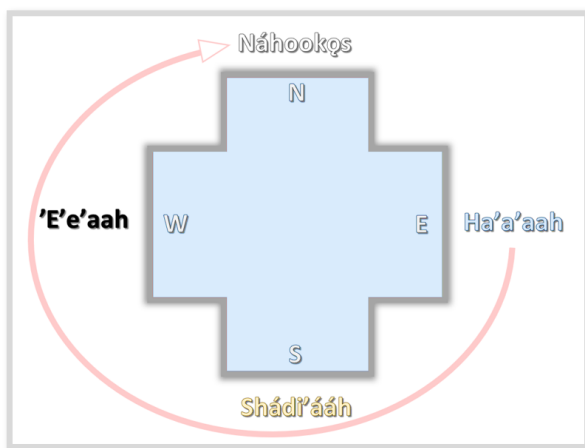
Cultural note:

We have seen the four directions before to practice the glottal stop sound. These directions are also associated with traditional colors. **Dootl'izh**, **łitso**, **łizhin**, and **łigai** are each connected to a direction. Notice that these important colors, along with **lichíí'** and **łibá**, have their own words, while the other ones are modified to specify a different color.

D13. Color Meanings

	Dibéłchí'í	"Red Sheep Color" When a white sheep gets red, desert sand on its wool, it can appear a brownish color.
	Dootł'izh	"Turquoise" The turquoise stone can appear different colors, from light blue to green. Traditionally, this word was used to cover blue, green, and even purple.
	Yágo Dootł'izh	"Dootł'izh like the sky" Dootł'izh covers blue, purple, and green, but to specify, this word uses the *sky* as a reference: *yá*.
	Yéego Dootł'izh	"Very Dootł'izh" This word refers to a deep color of blue. *Yéego* can mean *intensely*.
	Ch'ilgo Dootł'izh	"Dootł'izh like plants" To specify, the word for *plants* is used: *ch'il*.
	Tátł'idgo Dootł'izh	"Dootł'izh like algae" This word refers to the algae that grows on ponds. Often the color can be a deep green.
	Tsédídéehgo Dootł'izh	"Dootł'izh like the Four O'Clock flower" This color refers to a purple flower that grows in the southwest desert.

The table above shows that *dootł'izh* can be modified, or adjusted, by a word that comes before it using the suffix *–go*. Essentially, *-go* conveys the meaning "like" in English, as in *is similar to*.

4.5 Adverbs

To put it basically, adverbs modify actions (or verbs).[4] With the word *eating*, someone might wonder **how** the *eating* is happening: or <u>the way</u> a person is *eating*. It could be happening *slowly*, *happily*, *quickly*, etc. Often, an adjective can be transformed into an adverb by adding *–ly* at the end of the word. Remember, that adjectives normally describe nouns, while **adverbs** normally describe **verbs**. Below, notice that *carefully* is describing the action, *eating*.

> *D14. Adverb Example*
>
>> 1a. John is eating his food.
>>
>> 1b. John is **carefully** eating his food.
>>
>> 1c. John is eating his food **carefully.**
>>
>> 1d. **Carefully**, John is eating his food.
>>
>> 1e. John is eating ~~carefully~~ his food.

In English, adverbs can go in different places: before a verb, at the end of a sentence, and at the beginning of a sentence. However, *1e.* shows that the adverb does not typically happen between a verb and the object. In Diné Bizaad, because the verb normally sits at (and signals) the end of a clause, an adverb cannot occur after the verb. The following examples show a translation of "the cat is running quickly."

> *D15. Correct Adverb Position*
>
>> a.   Mósí **tsxį́į́łgo** yilwoł.
>>
>> *Transl. 'The cat is **quickly** running '*

> *D16. Incorrect Adverb Position*
>
>> b. Mósí yilwoł ~~tsxį́į́łgo~~.

Remember that in Diné Bizaad, the word order is Subject-Object-Verb (SOV). There is importance on the main verb being at the end of the sentence.

---

[4] Actually, adverbs do more than describe actions and have different forms, but we will focus on adverbs of manner with *–ly*.

5. Postpositions

Vocabulary

Preposition

Postposition

Particle

Enclitic

Chapter 5

5.1 English Prepositions

English uses **prepositions** to indicate relations between words. Some examples of simple prepositions in English include: *in*, *out*, *by*, *for*, *to*, *at*, and more. Examples in sentences are shown below.

> *E1. In and On*
>
> > The cat is sleeping **in** the box.
> >
> > The laptop is sitting **on** the table.

The sentences above give information about **where** the subject is doing an action. In the first sentence, sleeping is being done in the box; NOT in the cat. These prepositions can be referred to as prepositions of **position**. Notice the word order:

> *E2. Preposition Before Object*
>
> SUBJECT – VERB – **PREPOSITION** – OBJECT

5.2 Diné Bizaad Postpositions

In comparison, Diné Bizaad has what are called **postpositions**. Keep in mind, *pre* means *before* and *post* means *after*. The reason for the term is that postpositions tend to come after the object in a simple sentence. Also remember that a normal Diné Bizaad sentence has the order: SUBJECT – OBJECT - VERB. With a postposition, we can expect the order (in simple sentences):

> *E3. Postposition After Object*
>
> SUBJECT – OBJECT – **POSTPOSITION** – VERB.

The postpositions we will discuss are focused on **location**, or **position**. Below, there is a sentence with a word that means *on*. Notice where the verb is located and that the postposition is right before it.

E4. Yikáá' - On

D.B.	Mósí tsits'aa' **yikáá'** 'ałhosh.
En. Transl.	*'The cat is sleeping **on** the box.'*

Looking at the words more closely, we can notice that the words follow the Diné Bizaad word order mentioned previously.

E5. Postposition Position

Word info	Subject	Object	Postposition		Verb
D.B.	Mósí	tsits'aa'	**yi-**	**káá'**	'ałhosh
En.	*cat*	*box*	*it*	*on*	*is sleeping*

Refers to tsits'aa'

E5. above shows that there is more to the meaning of the postposition than "on." *Yikáá'* actually translates more accurately to *"on it"* where *it* is referring to *tsits'aa'*, box. To restate, the postposition refers to being *on* the <u>object</u>, not the <u>subject</u>.

5.3 Enclitics

While position postpositions can be expressed with words like *yikáá'*, some postpositions are attached to words as suffixes, or enclitics. Below, we will look at a question word in English and see how that is interpreted in Diné Bizaad.

E6. Háá- + Post.

Q. Part.-	Post.	D.B. Word	En. Transl.
Háá-	-di	Háa**di**	Where **at**?
	-góó	Háá**góó**	Where **to**?
	-jí	Háá**jí**	Where? *(in what direction?)*

The box above shows that the English *where* can be described in a few common ways using a postposition enclitic attached to the question suffix, *háá-*. Keep in mind, *háá-* is not used alone when speaking and needs a suffix (enclitic) to create a meaningful word.

The **question particle** has a long high tone vowel that it keeps when enclitics with high tones are part of the word, as in *háájí* and *háágóó*. However, an enclitic with a low tone influences háá- and makes the high tone a falling tone. We can see this falling tone in *háadi*.

Below, there is a question with *háadi* and a possible response to show how postpositions can be used in a conversation context.

E7. Question + at

Diné Bizaad	Háa**di** nimósí?			
	háá	**-di**	ni-	mósí
En. Lit.	Q.	**at**	your	cat
Note	↰ *v́v́ + -di = v́v*			
Transl.	'Where is your cat?'			

E8. On…

D.B. Sentence	Shimósí tsásk'eh **yikáá'** 'ałhosh.			
Word Info.	Subject	Object	**Post.**	Verb
D.B.	Shimósí	tsásk'eh	**yikáá'**	'ałhosh
En. Lit.	my cat	bed	**on it**	it is sleeping
Transl.	'My cat is sleeping on the bed.'			

This answer should seem familiar. We saw this sentence earlier, the only difference is *tsits'aa'*, *box*, was switched for *tsásk'eh*, *bed*.

E9. is a simple illustration to show some other Postpositions that refer to a space around an object.

E9. Around the Object
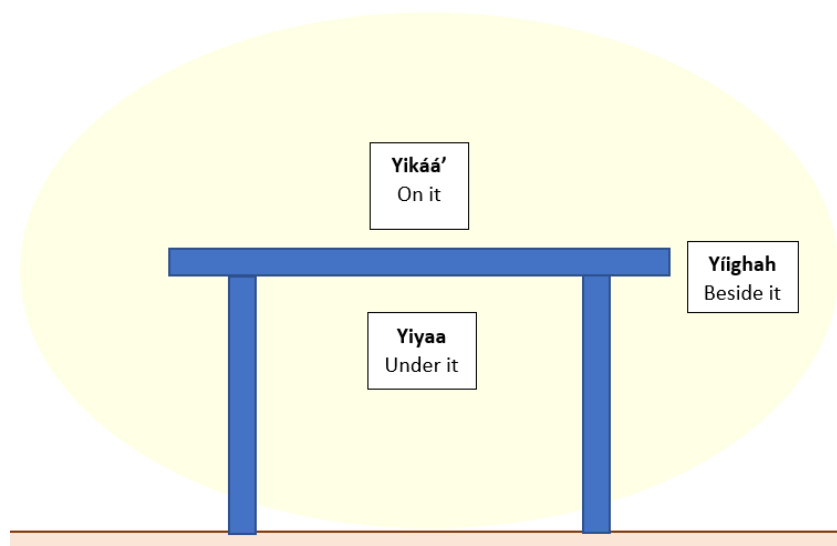
5.4 Postpositions in Nouns

One thing to note so far is that the nouns we have seen that use postpositions tend to use **bi-** prefixes, rather than **yi-**. For example, the word for noun *table* is <u>bikáá'adání</u> not <u>yikáá'adání</u>. Meanwhile, *E8.* above shows that yikáá' is used in normal sentences when the postposition is not essential for building meaning for a noun. For now, just understand that if a word is a noun, a **bi-** prefix[5] will be used. Below we will reanalyze some words seen before.

E10. Bikáá'adání - Table
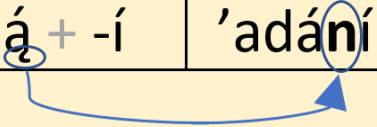
	Post.	**Verb**	**Enclitic**	**Word**
D.B.	bikáá'	'adą́	-í	Bikáá'adání
Lit. En.	*on it*	*one eats*	*that which*	*That **on** which one eats*

*Note: Nasal vowel + -í = **ní***

The enclitic, *-í* turns the verb and postposition into a noun. The reason that the letter **n** is added is because the final vowel in the verb stem *'adą́* is a nasal vowel. When **-í** is added after a nasal vowel (like *ą́*), an **n** is also added to separate the vowels and the <u>verb stem vowel</u> no longer has a nasal feature. Adding a sound (or letter) is known as **epenthesis**.

---

[5] Although these prefixes have the same form as possessor prefixes, *shi-*, *ni-*, *bi-*, these do not technically indicate possession.

n epenthesis	
'adą + -í	'adą**n**í

Sometimes postpositions can relate to one another. The word for *chair*, uses two postpositions to describe an **up** and **on** meaning. The verb stem in *'as<u>dá</u>* does not end in a nasal vowel so an **n** is not added; an **h** is added instead.

E12. Chair

	Post.	**Post.**	**Verb**	**Enclitic**	**Word**
D.B.	bikáá'	dah	'asdá	-í	Bikáá' dah'asdáhí
Lit. En.	*on it*	*up*	*one sits*	*that which*	*That **upon** which one sits.*

*Note: Vowel + -í = -**h**í*

Next are examples of more postpositions. The short list is of commonly used postposition stems that have color-coded examples to help you relate the parts of the Diné Bizaad phrases with their English counterparts. Understand that the intention is not for you to memorize the literal meaning of every piece whenever you say a word, or phrase. Feel free to connect the word *Tóta'* to *Farmington, New Mexico* if you would like, but an understanding of the make-up of *Tóta'* may help you understand other nouns in Diné Bizaad a little better.

Postposition Examples			
D.B. Postpo.	En. Prepo.	D.B. Example	Transl.
-aa	To, for	B**aa** ní'aah	You give the solid object **to** her.
-ii'	Inside	Béésh b**ii'** ko̧'í	The fire-**in**-it metal. *(Woodstove)*
-ił	With	… Sh**ił** yá'át'ééh.	… good **with** me *(I like…)*
-káá'	On	Tsíí'**káá'** bááh	Bread **on** embers. *(grilled tortillas/drybread)*
-ta'	Between	Tó**ta'**	**Between** waters *(rivers)*. *(Farmington, NM)*
-tah	Among	1 - Diné**tah** 2 – Kin**tah**	1 - **Among** Diné *(Navajo lands)* 2 - **Among** houses *(town/city)*
-yaa	Under	T'iis**yaa** tó	Water **under** cottonwood (tree) *(Surname: "cottonwood spring")*

Shił yá'át'ééh is a commonly used phrase to tell that you like something. It uses the postposition -ił and we can refer to *me* with the prefix *sh-*. Objects and animals are good things to practice with. *Yá'át'ééh* means *good* and is used alone to say "hello."

E14. Like - Things

Practice*:*

_____(animal)_____ 'éí shił yá'át'ééh!

'I like _____.'

Cultural note:

Coyotes and snakes are sensitive topics in Diné culture with some taboos being associated with them. Keep this in mind when interacting with those who have a deeper connection to the culture.

A	Naaldloshii (animals)	
1	Łį́į́'	Horse
2	Dibé	Sheep
3	Łééchąą'í	Dog
4	Mósí	Cat
5	Tsídii	Bird
6	Ch'ał	Frog
7	'Ayání	Bison
8	Łóó'	Fish
9	Mą'ii	Coyote
10	Tł'iish (or: Na'ashǫ́'ii)	Snake

Shił łikan is another commonly used phrase. It lets someone know that you like the taste of something. *łikan* means *delicious* (and can also mean *sweet*).

E15. Like - Food

Practice:

____(food)_____ 'éí shił łikan.

'I like _____'

E	Ch'iyáán (food)	
1	'Atsį'	Meat
2	Dibé bitsį'	Mutton
3	Béégashii bitsį'	Beef
4	Łóó' (bitsį')	Fish
5	Bisóodi bitsį'	Pork
6	Naa'ahóóhai bitsį'	Chicken

E	Ch'iiyáán (food)	
13	Nánise'	Vegetable
14	Naadą́ą́'	Corn
15	Nímasii	Potato
16	Tł'ohchin	Onion
17	Ch'il łigaii	Lettuce
18	Chąąsht'ezhiitsoh	Carrot

E	Ch'iiyáán (food)	
7	'Aneest'ą'	Fruit
8	Dzidzétsoh	Peach
9	Bilasáana	Apple
10	Hashk'aan	Banana
11	Ch'ééh jiyáán	Watermelon
12	Chiiłchin	Red sumac berry

E	Ch'iiyáán (food - extra)	
19	'Abe'	Milk
20	Géeso	Cheese
21	Bááh	Bread

5.5 The Navajo Postposition Lexicon

A website exists that has recorded a number of postpositions by text and audio. It allows for a learner to search by postposition and see the contexts in which they occur. To access this online resource, we will look at three ways.

1) Use this **web address** and search:
   http://talkingdictionary.swarthmore.edu/navajo_postposition/

2) Use **Google** and search:
   Navajo preposition lexicon talking dictionaries

3) Use **your phone's camera** to scan the QR code (and touch the link):

To: Navajo Postposition Lexicon

How to use:

See the **following diagram** to understand the basics of searching for a postposition. You will press on the arrow to reveal a dropdown menu of all the available postpositions. These postpositions are **uninflected**, which means they <u>do not </u>have a *sh-, n-, b-,* etc. before them. However, there are sentence examples provided and an audio clip to help become familiar with the pronunciation in context.

How to Use

6. More Verbs

Chapter 6

6.1 Verb Review

Important things to remember at this point are the **verb stem** and the **verb prefixes**. Words like *yishcha* and *yishą́* consist of the following structure.

F1. Stem and Prefixes

Word	"Filler"	Subject	Verb Stem
Yishcha *CRY*	yi-	sh-	-CHA
Yishą́ *EAT*	yi-	sh-	-YĄ́
	Prefix ↖	Prefix ↖	Verb Stem ↖

6.2 Transitive and Intransitive

Transitive verbs typically involve **two nouns**, a subject and a direct object. Think of *eat* and *cry*.

*F2. **Transitive** Examples*

1. **I** eat **it**. ✓
2. **I** cry **it**. X

Here we can see that *eat* can be transitive while *cry* **cannot** be transitive.

Intransitive means <u>not</u> transitive. These consist of verbs that only involve **one noun** to make a sentence.

*F3. **Intransitive** Examples*

1. **I** eat. ✓
2. **I** cry. ✓

Here we see *eat* and *cry* can both be intransitive. Below is an example of what an intransitive verb looks like in Diné Bizaad. The verb that is used is *yitin*, which means *freeze*.

F4. Yitin – Intransitive

Tó yitin. 🎧

Noun	Verb
Tó	**yitin.**
water	It is freezing

'Water is freezing.'

6.3 An SOV Language

Diné Bizaad is an SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) language. This means that when a simple sentence has a subject and an object, the subject must go first.

F5. Yiłtin - Transitive 🎧

Shideezhí dibé bitsįʼ yiłtin.

Subject	Object	Verb
Shideezhí	**dibé bitsįʼ**	**yiłtin.**
My sister	*mutton*	*she is freezing it*

'My sister is freezing mutton'

The verb often has the information of *who* (or *what*) the subject is: such as *sh-*, *ni-*, or *Ø-*. Although *ł-* has a function[6], we will not go into too much detail here. Below is a table showing the Diné Bizaad forms of transitive FREEZE in the imperfective mode.

F6. -tin – FREEZE

> ## Imperfective - tin
>
> | *Person* | D.B. | En. |
> |---|---|---|
> | 1 | Yi**sh**tin | *I freeze it* |
> | 2 | **Nił**tin | *You freeze it* |
> | 3 | Yiłtin | *She freezes it* |
> | | (yi + Ø + ł + tin) | |

6.4 An (S)OV Language

Often the <u>subject</u> of the sentence can be left out because the verb tells *who* (or *what*) is doing the action. In other words, the verb indicates the <u>subject</u>, so speakers often do not feel the need to see it outside the verb. However, you may use the subject if you want to **emphasize** the subject or if the doer of the action is **not clear**. Below, we can see that the word **shí** is left out of the sentence, but the subject **shí** is still understood.

F7. No Subject

> ## Diné Bizaad bee yáshti'.
>
> | *Subject* | | | *Object* | | | |
> |---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
> | Noun | Noun | Poss. Pronoun | Noun | Pronoun Prefix | Post. | Verb |
> | (shí) | **Diné** | **Bi-** | **-zaad** | **b-** | **-ee** | **yáshti'** |
> | *I* | *Navajo* | *Its (Navajo)* | *Language (language)* | *It* | *"with"* | *I am speaking* |
>
> *'I am speaking Navajo.'*

---

[6] The *ł* **classifier** in this situation makes the verb a transitive. The subject is the **doer** of the *freezing*. Without *ł-*, the subject will be the **receiver** of the *freezing*. sh- + ł- = sh-.

Yáshti' tells the listener who the subject is, **sh-** (which is "I"). It would normally seem redundant (as if you are repeating yourself) to say *shí* and *yáshti'* in the same sentence. However, remember that we can use *shí* for clarification in certain situations.

For example, if someone in a group asks[7]:

> F8. *Háishą - Who*
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Question: | "Háishą' Diné Bizaad yee yáłti'?" |
> | *Transl.* | *'Who is speaking (with[8]) Navajo?'* |

maybe you can **clarify** with:

> F9. *Shí Answer*
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Answer: | "**Shí** Diné Bizaad bee yáshti'." |
> | *Transl.* | *'**I** am speaking (with) Navajo.'* |

Let's look at another sentence using *yáshti'*. If you are speaking to someone, you will have to use a postposition to indicate who you are **speaking to**. The postposition *bich'į'* means toward *her*, *him*, *it*.

F10. *-ch'į' – Toward*

	Object Pronoun Prefix	Postposition Stem	D.B	En.
1st person *'me'*	Shi-		Shich'į'	Toward me
2nd person *'you'*	Ni-	-ch'į'	Nich'į'	Toward you
3rd person *'her'*	Bi-		Bich'į'	Toward *her*

Now let's look at the next sentence that translates to: "I am speaking to John's brother." Pay attention to the <u>subject</u>. It is in parentheses because **saying it** is optional. In this sentence, we can consider the object to be everything in green. Additionally, notice that the postposition is referring to <u>the sister</u>, **not John**.

---

[7] Questions in Diné Bizaad are often marked with **-shą'**. This enclitic attaches to one important noun in the sentence. The speaker decides what noun is most important for the listener to consider.

[8] **-ee** postposition typically translates to "by means of." This sentence can also be interpreted as "I am speaking by means of the Navajo language."

Jáan bádí bich'į' yáshti'.

Subject		Object				
Noun	Noun	Possessive	Noun	Pronoun	Postposition	Verb
(shí)	**Jáan**	**b-**	**-ádí**	**bi-**	**-ch'į'**	**yáshti'**
I	John	his	older sister	her	to	I am speaking

'*I am speaking to John's older sister.*'

6.5 Order in the Verb

Before we view another type of sentence, let's look at the possibilities of some verbs in Diné Bizaad. We have seen some of the structure inside a Diné Bizaad verb. In a verb, the **subject marker** usually goes right before the verb stem syllable. Below the verb stem is *-ní*.

F12. Tell/Say

Person	Object	Adverbial	Subject	Verb Stem
1	Shi-		Sh-	
		di-		-ní
2	Ni-		Ni-	
3	Bi-		Ø-	

In many verbs, there is also the option to place an **object marker** <u>towards the beginning </u>of the verb. While a sentence in Diné Bizaad usually has the word order S-O-V, we need to also think about the order inside the verb. As we can see, the morpheme order to express subject, object, and verb has the order:

Object-Subject-Verb.

Notice the differences between the subject and object markers. The object markers all have an "i" after the consonant. The object also has *bi-* while the third person subject is silent. Remember that third-person object pronouns in English are: *him, her, it*. The third-person subject pronouns in English are: *he, she, it*. *F13*. is a table that shows an example of a word that consists of an obvious subject marker and object marker inside of it.

```
                            Nidishní
    _____

    ni-            di-            sh-            -ní
    2              ADV            1              SAY.TELL

    2nd person     Adverbial      1st person     Verb Stem

    (you)          (used with words    (I)
                   dealing with
                   speech or hearing)

                       "I am telling you"
```

Below is a table to show more interaction between the <u>subject</u> markers and <u>object</u> markers.

F14. -ní – Tell

~~Shidishní~~	Shidiní
I tell me (myself)	You tell me
Shi-di-**sh**-ní	**Shi**-di-**ni**-ní
Nidishní	~~Nidiní~~
I tell you	you tell you (yourself)
Ni-di-**sh**-ní	**Ni**-di-**ni**-ní
Bidishní	Bidiní
I tell her	You tell her
Bi-di-**sh**-ní	**Bi**-di-**ni**-ní

Note:

Often, the **pronunciation** of "ni" can be reduced to "n." This might be one way to observe the 2nd person subject forms with **ni-** + **-NÍ**.

shidi**ni**ní > shidi**n**ní > shidi**ní**

The crossed-out words show words that are not typically used.

We have seen sentences that have a <u>subject</u>, <u>object</u> and a <u>verb</u>.

We have also seen sentences that **do not** have a <u>subject</u> but **do** have an <u>object</u> and a <u>verb</u>.

It is now time to consider sentences that have no subject or object but do have verbs. Because it is possible to indicate an object and a subject inside of a verb, speakers typically leave out the <u>independent</u> subject and object pronouns in conversations. Look at the following dialogue between a mother a daughter.

    F15. Request

        Mother: Nínaaí 'ííyą **bidiní**.

               Transl. **Tell** *your older brother to eat.*

    F16. Response

        Daughter: T'áá 'íídą́ą́' 'ííyą **bidííniid.**

               Transl. *I already* **told him** *to eat.*

Notice that the daughter does not say the <u>subject</u> or <u>object</u> outside of the verb to respond. The main verb provides all the information needed for the doer and receiver of the action. Remember, the subject would be *shí, I,* and the object would be *shínaaí, my older brother*. The verb indicates who the <u>subject</u> and the <u>object</u> are. It would sound redundant to respond with the following:

    F17. Awkward Response

        Daughter: **Shí** t'áá íídą́ą́' **bí** 'ííyą bidííniid.

             Transl. I already told him to eat.

For a closer look at the information given in the verb, look at the tables *F18*. and *F19*. below.

F18.

Nínaaí ʼííyą́ bidiní.

Object	Verb	Verb			
Nínaaí	**ʼííyą́**	**bidiní**			
your older brother	*he eats*	bi-	di-	(ni-)	ní-
		him	*ADV*	*you*	*TELL (Imperfective)*

F19.

Tʼáá ʼíídą́ą́ʼ ʼííyą́ bidííniiid.

Adverb	Verb	Verb			
Tʼáá ʼíídą́ą́ʼ	**ʼííyą́**	**bidííniid**			
already	*eat*	bi-	di-	V́V́-	niid
		him	*ADV*	*I*	*TELL (perfective)*

di- + V́V́ = díí-

> **Note:**
>
> **di- + V́V́- = díí-**
>
> **v** refers to any vowel that comes **before** it. The **i** in **di-** is made into a long vowel and high tones are added.
>
> This is a rule that affects perfective verb forms. This guide focuses more on imperfective forms so just understand that this is something for perfective forms. Also, remember that perfective is used for completed action. The response is indicating that the action of *telling* is complete. Thus, the speaker used this form instead of the imperfective.

6.7 The Broad Scope

For more perspective on the verb in Diné Bizaad, it would be beneficial to step back and take a glance at the other forms that exist. This is only meant to prepare you for what you might encounter in the future.

The verbs that we have been focusing on are in the **imperfective mode**. A mode is a form of a verb stem that gives an idea about how an action is being done. To get a sense of the possibilities of forms, we can briefly look at the types of modes the verb in *F20.* can be in. The following table is meant to show the mode forms for a verb like *yáshti'*. Be aware, there are 7 recognized *modes* in Diné Bizaad, but many verbs do not have all. In this guide, we will mainly focus on the **imperfective**. However, briefly introducing the different forms might give you something to expect from the language as you continue learning Diné Bizaad. Analyze the table, but **do not** feel the need to memorize every detail.

F20. Mode Glance

Mode	Description	Forms: TALK	When to Use	D.B. Example	*En.*
Imperfective	An ongoing action	**Yáshti'**	When you **are** talk**ing**.	**K'ad yáshti'.**	*I am talking now.*
Perfective	A completed action	**Yááłti'**	When you finish**ed** talking.	**T'áá 'íídą́ą́' yááłti'.**	*I already talked.*
Future	An expected action for the future.	**Yádeeshtih**	When you **will** talk in the future.	**Yiską́ągo yádeeshtih.**	*Tomorrow, I will talk.*
Iterative	A repeated action	**Yánáshtih**	When you talk **again**.	**Shimá bich'į' yánáshtih.**	*I talk to my mom often.*
Optative	A hopeful action.	**Yáoshti'**	When you **hope** to talk.	**Shimá yiską́ągo bich'į' yáoshti' lanaa nisin.**	*I hope to talk to my mom tomorrow.*

The two modes that are <u>not</u> shown are the **Progressive** and the **Usitative**. The progressive is rare and some verbs prefer this form instead of an imperfective one. The Usitative tends to appear like the Iterative, but without a ná- prefix. If *yáshti'* had a usitative form it might be: *yáshtih* (*yá~~ná~~shtih*). The usitative may be interpreted as an action that is a **habit** in one's life.

We can look at the verb stem of a word that has all the mode forms. One interesting thing is that the verb stem is the same for two pairs: the usitative/iterative and future/progressive. The diagram below attempts to show that the stems on the same level appear with the same form.

F21. -né – PLAY

Verb Stems:
PLAY

	Optative
	-ne'
Usitative	*Iterative*
-neeh	-neeh
Future	*Progressive*
-neeł	-neeł
	Perfective
	-ne'
Imperfective	
-né	
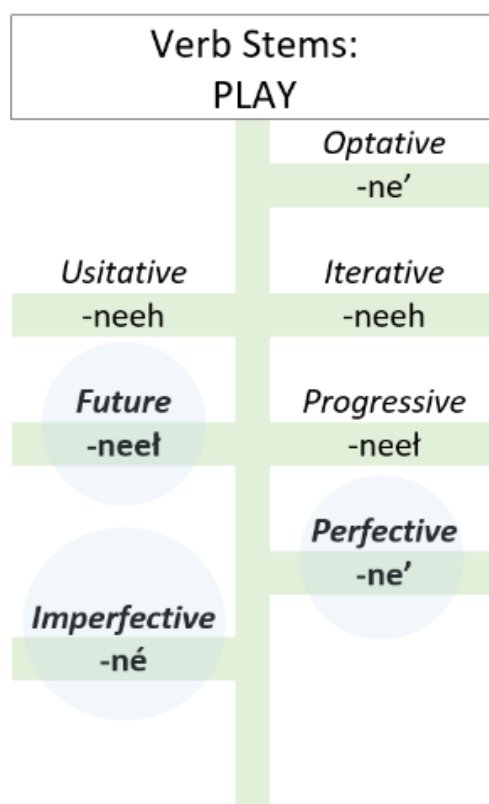
As you take classes that teach Diné Bizaad, you are more likely to encounter the imperfective form first and then the perfective and future forms. Understanding the first-person imperfective form of verbs is useful if you decide to use the Young and Morgan Dictionary. The entries are listed by the first-person imperfective mode forms of the verbs, with paradigms given as well to show possible forms in other modes. This guide will provide a small verb dictionary in the next section. *C Imp* stands for continuative imperfective; *N Imp* stands for neuter imperfective; *R imp* stands for repetitive imperfective; and *D Imp* stands for durative imperfective. There are some aspectual differences between these groups, but it is only important for now to understand that they are imperfectives. You will also notice that many verbs consist of certain prefixes to convey their meaning. Remember, the **verb stem** is always the syllable at the end of the verb. To convey a certain meaning, certain prefixes will always be required to appear with the verb. Regardless, the **sh-** (and **s-**) prefix will appear before the **verb stem**. "*One*" is used to refer to her and him. "*It*" is used to refer to objects or animals.

Mini Dictionary – Verbs

D.B.	Mode	En.
'Ááhdishniih	Imp	Mean (to say)
'Ábidishní	N Imp	Tell
'Ák'e'eshchí	Imp	Write
'Áshłééh	Imp	Create, Make, Build
'Ashnééh	Imp	Do
Badi'nish'aah	Imp	Allow (for it\her)
Bénáshniih	C Imp	Remember
Bihodish'aah	Imp	(make a) Plan
Bíhoosh'aah, Bóhoosh'aah	Imp	Learn (it)
Bíisóóh	Imp	Add (it to it) (mathematics)
Bik'i'diishtįįh	Imp	Understand (it/*one* finally)
Biká'ádíshní	Imp	Call (*one* from a distance, shout out)
Binisé	C Imp	Raise (her: a child)
Choosh'įįh	Imp	Use

En.	Mode	D.B.
Add	Imp	Bíisóóh, bíi'aah
Allow (for her/it)	Imp	Badi'nish'aah
Ask (one)	Imp	Nabídíshkid
Ask (a question)	Imp	Na'ídíshkid
Be	N Imp	Nishłį́
Become	Imp	Yishłeeh
Build (make, create)	Imp	'Áshłééh
Buy (spend)	C Imp	Nahashniih
Call (someone from a distance)	Imp	Biká'adishní
Convince	Imp	Honishłįįh
Create (make, build)	Imp	'Áshłééh
Count (them)	R Imp	Yinishta'
Depend (on one to arrive)	C Imp	Na'ííníshłí
Do	Imp	'Ashnééh

Daastsaah	*Imp*	Die (in bad health, but not certain death)
Diists'a'	*N Imp*	Hear
Dists'ǫǫd	*Imp*	Pull
Haasdziih	*Imp*	Speak (publicly)
Hada'ashka'	*C Imp*	Serve (food to *them*)
Hádíních'įįh	*Imp*	**Search** (and find)
Hashne'	*C Imp*	Tell
(Biyah) **Honiishłįįh**	*Imp*	Convince (her)
Honishné	*Imp*	Win (against her)
'Ííníshtą'	*Imp*	Be Included
K'idishłé	*Imp*	Plant (it)
K'ínísgéés	*Imp*	Twist (in two)
Na'ííníshłí	*C Imp*	Depend (on one to arrive)
Na'ídíshkid	*Imp*	Ask (a question)
Naashné	*C Imp*	Play
Naashnish	*C Imp*	Work
Naashtłíísh	*Imp*	Fall
Neíníshłí	*C Imp*	Expect (*one*)
Nabídíshkid	*Imp*	Ask (*one*)
Náhásháah	*Imp*	Turn (around)

Die (in critical health)	*Imp*	Daastsaah
Expect	*C Imp*	Neíníshłį́
Fall	*Imp*	Naashtłíísh
Fall	*Prog*	Yishtłish
Go (along)	*Prog*	Yisháał
Hear	*N Imp*	Diists'a'
Include	*Imp*	'Íínishtą'
Kill (it/*one*)	*Imp*	Sisxé
Lead (an animal by rope)	*Prog*	Yisłóós
Learn (it)	*Imp*	Bíhoosh'aah, Bóhoosh'aah
Look (at it/one)	*D Imp*	Nísh'į́
Make (build, create)	*Imp*	'Áshłééh
Mean (to say)	*Imp*	'Ááhdishniih
Move (things)	*Prog*	Yishnééł
Pay (a payment)	*Imp*	Ni'iishłé
(make a) **Plan**	*Imp*	Bihodish'aah
Plan	*C Imp*	Nahash'á
Plant (it)	*Imp*	K'idishłé
Play	*C Imp*	Naashné
Pull	*Imp*	Dists'ǫǫd

Nahash'á	*C Imp*	Plan, govern
Nahashniih	*C Imp*	Buy, Spend
Ni'iishłé	*Imp*	Pay (a scheduled payment)
Nídiishyeed	*Imp*	(start to) Run
Nísh'į́	*D Imp*	Look (at it / *one*)
Nishłį́	*N Imp*	Be
Ninishtłááad	*Imp*	Stop (by foot)
(bił) Ni'nishtłááad	*Imp*	Stop (for it/*one*)
Nisin	*N Imp*	Want, think
Sédá	*SPN*	Sit
Sézį́	*SPN*	Stand
Sisxé	*Imp*	Kill (it/*one*)
Wooshbįįh	*Imp*	Win (earn)
Yáshti'	*D Imp*	Talk
Yiishdaah	*Imp*	Stay (behind)
Yíníshta'	*R Imp*	Read (it), count (it)
Yish'į́	*Prog*	See (it/*one*)
Yishááł	*Prog*	Walk, Go
Yishłeeh	*Imp*	Become (it)
Yishnééł	*Prog*	Move (things)
Yishtłish	*Prog*	Fall

Raise (a child)	*Imp*	Binisé
Read (it)	*R Imp*	Yíníshta'
Remain (behind)	*Imp*	Yiishdaah
Remember	*C Imp*	Bénáshniih
(start to) Run	*Imp*	Nídiishyeed
See	*Prog*	Yish'į́
Search (and find)	*Imp*	Hadinish'įįh
Serve (food to them)	*C Imp*	Hada'ashka'
Sit	*SPN*	Sédá
Speak (publicly)	*Imp*	Haasdziih
Spend (buy)	*C Imp*	Nahashniih
Stand	*SPN*	Sézį́
Stay	*Imp*	Yiishdaah
Stop	*Imp*	Ninishtłááad
Stop (for it/ one)	*Imp*	(bił) Ni'nishtłááad
Suggest (a plan)	*Imp*	Bihodish'aah
Talk	*D Imp*	Yáshti'
Tell	*C Imp*	Hashne'
Tell	*N Imp*	'Ábidishní
Twist apart (in two)	*Imp*	K'ínísgéés
Turn (around)	*Imp*	Náháshááh

Yisłóós	*Prog*	Lead (animal by rope)
Yishwoł	*Prog*	Run

Understand (finally)	*Imp*	Bik'idiishtįįh
Use	*Imp*	Choosh'įįh
Walk	*Prog*	Yishááł
Want, think	*N Imp*	Nisin, nissin
Watch	*D Imp*	Nísh'į́
Win (earn)	*Imp*	Wooshbįįh
Win (against someone)	*Imp*	Honishné
Work	*C Imp*	Naashnish
Write	*Imp*	'Ák'e'eshchí

7. Resources

7.1 For Diné Bizaad Learning

<u>Dictionaries</u>

Robert Young and William Morgan's *The Navajo Language: a grammar and colloquial Dictionary* (1987) is an extremely helpful resource for learning Diné Bizaad vocabulary and understanding word structure. It contains information compiled from various linguists over the course of its development. Entries are ordered alphabetically with verbs in the first-person imperfective mode with some exceptions. Although it is the best resource for looking up words, it may not be easy to acquire. Some free alternatives will also be explored later.
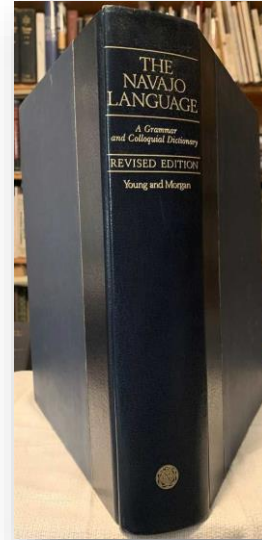
Glosbe is an online dictionary that is free to use. It is a great resource but understand that some entries are not accurate and some words are not available on the website. A valuable aspect of this dictionary is that it provides context for a word that is searched. Often, if a word does not have a definition entry, its context in a sentence would still be given.

https://glosbe.com/en/nv/eat

An earlier version of Young and Morgan's dictionary is public domain and available online for anyone to view. The *Navaho Language* (1972) allows for viewers to physically search through digitized pages to find words in English or Navajo.

https://archive.org/details/TheNavahoLanguage/page/n463/mode/2up

Search by **Diné Bizaad**	Search by **English**

Learning Textbooks

The most popular textbooks used for teaching Diné Bizaad are *Diné Bizaad Bínahoo'aah: Rediscovering the Navajo Langauge* (Speas and Yazzie) and *Diné Bizaad: Speak, Read, and Write Navajo* (Goosen)*.* Purchasing these materials, a learner is provided with a main learning textbook, a supplemental workbook, and textbook audio tracks (at least with Goosen's textbook).

Diné Bizaad Bínahoo'aah: Rediscovering the Navajo Langauge (Speas and Yazzie)
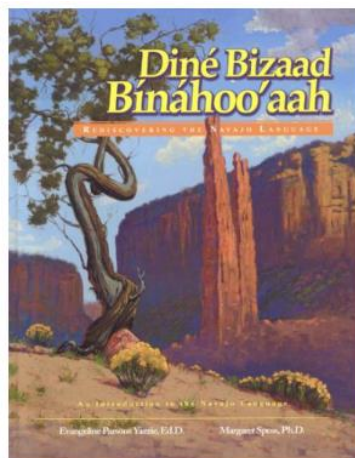
Diné Bizaad: Speak, Read, and Write Navajo (Goosen)*.*
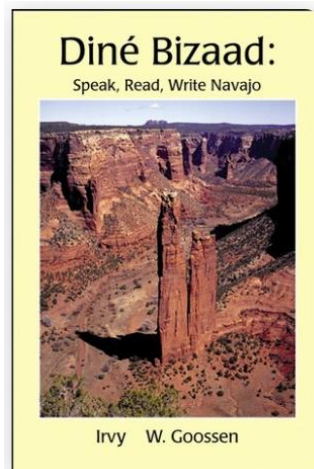
Contextual and Situational learning

Here are some resources for those interested in learning Diné Bizaad in a more contextual sense.

The Navajo Language Academy provides resources for phrases that are used in Interactions and Situations. In these documents, you will find phrases and conversation examples that may help put the language in a more practical context, with less focus on the structure of words.

http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/tfernal1/nla/halearch/halearch.htm

Youtube provides valuable resources by users focused on teaching and learning the language. One Channel called **daybreakwarrior** was recognized in 2018 with a *Navajo Innovation in Practice* award by the Diné Studies Conference, Inc. for the videos the user has produced in regards to Diné Bizaad language learning. The user dedicates videos that range from learning a word to interpreting discourse. Diné cultural aspects are also discussed.

https://www.youtube.com/user/daybreakwarrior

Wikiiibííidiiya is the spelling of Wikipedia in the Diné Bizaad writing system. This website is useful for those who would like to find Diné Bizaad descriptions on a recently learned noun word. Some words may be too technical so this resource is most useful for those who would like to develop their reading abilities.

https://nv.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%8Diyis%C3%AD%C3%AD_Naaltsoos

Another resource provides learners with a step by step understanding of how verbs are built in Diné Bizaad. A deep look at rules on the morphology and phonology of the verb is explored in The Navajo Verb by Leonard Faltz. This book leads the reader step by step through the complicated Diné Bizaad verb system for those interested in the form of morphemes in the Diné language.
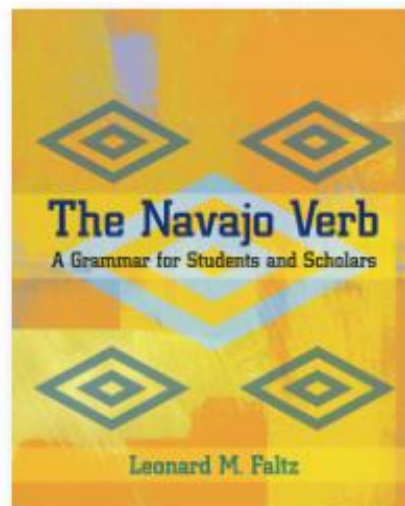
7.2 For Diné Bizaad Linguistics

This section is meant to provide a brief overview of some popular topics concerning Diné Bizaad (referred to as Navajo in linguistics literature).

The Diné language is known for its morphological complexity; a characteristic shared by other languages in the Na-Dene family. Morphemes in Diné Bizaad seem to follow a linear structure in terms of ordering. To account for the rigid ordering, the Navajo Verb Template was developed by Young and Morgan (1980, 1987) to reference when analyzing a fully morphologically-derived word. It is not necessary that all slot positions be filled and McDonough (2015) has noted that the template is not a sufficient tool for understanding the generative forming of words in the language.

McDonough (1999, 2003) has provided in-depth analyses on Diné Bizaad phonetics and phonology, including a field work study on the phonetics of the language and an analysis on the tone structure of Diné Bizaad.

A phenomenon known as the *d-effect* is a notable characteristic of Diné Bizaad and related languages. Basically, in a position just before the verb root (or "stem") an underlying "d" (/t/) sound in so-called "d-classifier" words will affect specific consonant sounds that come after it when the derivation is complete. This has been studied on an Athabaskan scale in works by Howren's (1971) formalization of the effect, Wilhelm's *(2000)* analysis of coalescence in Slave, and Lyster's (2021) account of the effect in Ahtna using Optimality Theory.

A case of consonant harmony exists in this language, with sibilant harmony having been studied by Berkson (2010) concerning optionality in long-distance positions. Oberly (2008) offers an Optimality Theory-based account.

Concerning Diné Bizaad syntax, the Pro-Drop and Null-Pronoun hypotheses involve analyzing languages that are capable of deriving a sentential phrase with no phonologically expressed subject or object pronoun occurring outside of the verb. Paul Platero (1982) provides some insight on unpronounced noun phrases. Rice (1984) argues that, in certain languages, pronouns outside of the verb are not in syntactic argument positions.

A direct and inverse overt pronoun relationship is known as the yi-/bi- alternation. Basically, the bi-prefix on an adposition or verb seems to mark the nearest argument as the agent of the verb. This topic is explored in MaryAnn Willie's (2000) *The Inverse Voice and Possessive yi-/bi- in Navajo*.

Rice (2000) provides an analysis of morpheme order in the Athabaskan Verb, of which Diné Bizaad is a member. Semantic scope is argued to be involved in the ordering of morphemes in the Athabaskan verb.

The bipartite constituent model by McDonough (1999) is a proposal that explores an alternative to the position class, or slot-filler, template that has traditionally been used for Diné Bizaad morphology analysis.

Hale (2000) provides an analysis of a "mixed system" regarding the ordering of morphemes in a Diné Bizaad verb. The proposal offers a phono-syntactic explanation for the realization of morphemes in a particular order within the verb. It assumes Jelinek's Pronominal Argument Hypothesis (1984) in order to situate an object argument as complement to the verbal projection. It is proposed that phonetics guides nuclear elements to fill a phonological skeleton situated just before the verb stem. The skeleton

structure is described as CVCCVC[Verb Stem] and also involves an epenthetic /I/ to add morphemes that only consist of consonants to fulfill the process. If morphemes exist in the adjunct domain, they are added after those in the conjunct domain. The Head-Initial Parameter and selectional relations of elements within the verb determine the order of morphemes in the conjunct domain. Meanwhlie, semantic scope, as described by Rice (2000) describes the ordering in the Hale adjunct domain.

Fernald, Perkins, and Smith (2007) offer insight on temporal interpretation in Diné Bizaad by use of adverb-like particles and adverbial elements within the verb. As these temporal cues are optionally pronounced, obligatorily pronounced aspectual information helps a listener make appropriate inferences of intended time.

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