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Smoke and Mist  
Mesoamerican Studies in  
Memory of  
Thelma D. Sullivan

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Part ii

*Poctli, ayauitl: tenyotl, mauizyotl.*

*Inin tlatolli: itechpa mitoaya in aca tlatoani,  
ayamo uecauh omic, ayamo poliui in ipocyo,  
in iayauhyo: quitoznequi: imauizo, itenyo . . .*

*Florentine Codex, Book VI, Chap. 43*

*Smoke and mist: fame and glory.*

*This was said about a king not long dead  
whose smoke and mist, meaning his  
fame and glory, had not yet vanished . . .*

Translated by Thelma D. Sullivan,  
1963

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## HONORIFIC MORPHOLOGY IN NORTH PUEBLA AZTEC

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Classical Aztec and many dialects of modern Aztec exhibit modified morphology in verb forms which address or refer to an honorable person. Classical Aztec honorifics are described in the standard grammars, among them the *Compendio de la gramática náhuatl* (Sullivan 1976: 226-32) and the *Arte de la lengua mexicana* (Carochí y Paredes 1979: 91-7). The honorifics of the modern Aztec dialect spoken in Tetelcingo, Morelos, was described by Pittman (1948). Honorific usage around the Malinche volcano in the state of Tlaxcala was described by Hill and Hill (1978). Robinson (1970) described some of the features of honorific usage in the Sierra de Puebla. Lastra de Suárez (1980) compares the Tetzoco dialect spoken today with that reported in Olmos (1972; written in 1547). The purpose of this paper is to report on the honorific usage in the north of Puebla in the town of Tlaxpanaloya, municipio of Naupan. The paper will also comment on the semantics involved in the utilization of morphemes with other primary meanings to convey the speaker's respect for the honorable person.

### HONORIFICS BETWEEN COMPADRES

The honorific morphemes on verbs used on ceremonial occasions between compadres are the same as those reported for Classical Aztec.

Transitive verbs of which the honorable person is the subject use reflexive subject prefixes and an applicative suffix on the verb stem. (Under certain conditions the causative suffix is used.)

- (1) ti-c-mo-machiti-ti-quiu 'you H will come to know it'

The diminutive honorific suffix -tzinoa may be added, as in (2).

- (2) nan-qui-mo-machi-tih-tzino-s-que 'you (pl.) H will know it'

Transitive verbs in which the honored person is object also use the reflexive applicative construction, as in (3).

- (3) mech-mo-pactequi-li-s-que 'they will call you (pl.) H'

When the honored person is referred to in third person, the reflexive applicative construction is also used, as in (4).

- (4) qui-mo-maqui-li-s 'he H will give it'

Transitive verbs use the reflexive pronoun prefixes and a causative suffix on the verb. (Under certain conditions the applicative suffix is used instead.)

- (5) ti-mo-nemi-ltia 'you H are walking'

Reflexive verbs for honorific subjects obligatorily take the diminutive suffix -tzinoa, as in (6).

(6) xi-mo-sehui-tzino 'rest, honorable person'

Possessed nouns use the regular prefix for second person and the diminutive suffix -tzin, as in (7).

(7) nanmo-caltenco-tzin 'at your (pl.) H gate'

The indefinite pronominal prefix te- is used to mark a third person honorific possessor, as in (8).

(8) te-caltenco-tzin 'at his H gate'

The durative indicator -tica is often appended to an honorific stem, especially in ceremonial greeting.

(9) namech-mo-ti-lih-tica 'I am seeing you (pl) H'

The directional prefix hual- is also frequently used on honorific verbs on ceremonial occasions.

(10) xi-hual-mo-calaqui 'come in, honorable person'

(11) ti-hual-m-ica-tzina 'you H come'

The directional prefix on- is less frequently used in North Puebla Aztec. No example was found in the corpus studied.

#### HONORIFICS FOR RESPECTED ELDERS

The honorific morphemes outside the ceremonial context are different from those reported for Tlaxcala (Hill and Hill 1978) and for the Sierra de Puebla (Robinson 1966), but similar to those reported for Tetelcingo, Morelos (Pittman 1948). This system is in third person basically, but it is also used in direct address. It is used for respected elders, most especially a father and in particular if he is deceased.

Transitive verbs use a mo- prefix without an applicative suffix and without a qui- prefix for the third person object.

(12) mo-nequi 'he R wants her'

If the object of the verb is first person (or second) a different strategy is used: either the suffix -lo (impersonal subject in Classical Aztec) or the plural suffix -que is used, as in (13) and (14) respectively.

(13) tech-nonotza-lo-c 'he R told us'

(14) o-tech-iluih-teu-que 'he R told us'

When the respected person is the object of the verb, the object is marked with the prefix te-, which in Classical Aztec marked a non-specific object.

(15) o-te-maca-c 'it gave him R desire'

Intransitive verbs use the suffix -lo to mark the respected subject in all cases.

(16) tlahuana-lo 'he R became drunk'

(17) ihuan o-tlacua-lo-c 'he H ate with him'

Some verbs take the suffix -hua instead of -lo.

(18) huilo-hua-tica 'he R comes walking'

Stative verbs seem to prefer the -hua suffix.

(19) yi-mico-hua-toc 'he R has been dead (for six years)'

(20) huinti-hua 'he R is drunk'

Reflexive verbs take the reflexive prefix and the -lo (or -hua) suffix.

(21) o-mo-tlali-lo-c 'he R sat down'

The strategy of using the plural suffix -que also identifies an honorific subject. It is used to refer to deity or royalty also.

(22) entonces oquihto in rey, o-qui-tlahtlanih-que in telpocatl  
'then the king said, he R asked the boy'

The third person forms are used in direct address to respected persons:

(23) ma mo-ta, Señor Rey 'you R look, mister king'

(24) tlenic nech-notzah-que 'why did you R call me?'

(25) niyau ni-te-nonotza ocse cuento  
'I am going to tell you R another story'

(26) mo-nehnehuilua nin Julio 'you R remember this Julio'

#### HONORIFIC USAGE IN OTHER DIALECTS

The Tetzcocho dialect of Aztec follows the Classical Aztec pattern, except that Classical -tzino has been replaced by -conoa (Lastra 1980a: 28,29).

(27) ti-mo-temachti-lia 'you H teach people'

(28) ti-mo-cualana-ltia 'you H get angry'

(29) tlenon ti-mo-toca-conoa 'what are you H called?'

The Tlaxcala dialects of Aztec, described in Hill and Hill (1978), follow the Classical Aztec pattern in the system used between compadres.

- (30) qui-mo-pia-lia(-tzinoa) 'you H have it'
- (31) qui-mo-pano-ltia 'it happens to you H'
- (32) ma-nech-mo-lhui-li 'tell me, most honored sir'
- (33) qui-mo-pia-lia 'he H has it'
- (34) qui-mo-pano-ltia 'it happens to him H'

The system used between compadres is the most elaborate. There are two other degrees of honor distinguished in the Tlaxcala dialects: the first respect level and the honor or reverence level. Both of these levels make use of the directional on-, which contributes the notion of distance. The honor or reverence level adds on- to the reflexive applicative or causative morphology used in the compadrazgo system.

- (35) ti-c-on-mo-pia-lia 'you RR have it'
- (36) mitz-on-mo-pano-ltia 'it happens to you RR'
- (37) xi-nech-on-mo-lhui-li 'tell me, honorable sir'

The first person respect level makes use of on- with the ordinary morphology:

- (38) ti-c-on-pia 'you R have it'
- (39) mitz-om-panoa 'it happens to you R'
- (40) xi-nech-on-ili 'tell me, sir'
- (41) c-om-pia 'he R has it'
- (42) c-om-panoa 'it happens to him R'

The third person respect forms are also used in direct address.

The Sierra de Puebla Aztec dialect (Robinson 1970: 30,31;61,62) makes use of the reflexive applicative or reflexive causative with the diminutive -tzinoa. The directional on- marks respect and may combine with -tzinoa or occur alone. The durative -tica occurs instead of -tzinoa in some greeting forms.

- (43) xi-mo-sehui-tzinou 'sit down, please'
- (44) mo-miqui-liy-tzinou 'he H died'
- (45) mo-hual-huiqui-liy-tzino-s 'he H will return'

- (46) quenin nan-on-tiotaquiliy-tiy-tzinou-quen  
'good afternoon, sirs'
- (47) ni-c-on-ixmati 'I know him R'
- (48) xi-c-on-chihua 'do it, sir'
- (49) tech-on-tajpalohuaj 'they R greet us'
- (50) a. xi-on-paqui 'may you R have good health'  
b. ti-on-pac-ticaj 'you R are well'

The Tetelcingo Aztec dialect (Pittman 1948) follow the Classical Aztec pattern for direct address, but the third person reference to a respected person uses -lo or -hua (and their allomorphs). The Classical pattern of relexive causative or applicative is used in third person to refer to deity.

The honorific forms are used by wives talking to or about their husbands. The Tetelcingo dictionary (Brewer and Brewer 1962) lists the second person honorific and the third person honorific as well as the ordinary third person form for each verb.

- (51) a. siyabi 'he rests'  
b. ti-mo-siyabi-tia 'you H rest'  
c. siyabi-hua 'he H rests'
- (52) a. quij-tzoma 'she sews it'  
b. ti-moj-tzomi-lia 'you H sew it'  
c. quij-tzoma-lo 'she H sews it'
- (53) a. mo-tequi 'he cuts himself'  
b. tim-mo-tec-tzinoa 'you H cut yourself'  
c. ne-tequi-hua 'he H cuts himself'

Note that the reflexive prefix for the honorific is ne- instead of mo-.

- (54) a. mo-tlali 'he sits down'  
b. ti-mo-tlalij-tzinoa 'you H sit down'  
c. ne-tlali-lo 'he H sits down'
- (55) a. qui-nequi 'he wants it'  
b. qui-nequi-hua 'he H wants it'  
c. qui-mo-nequi-tia 'he HH wants it' (deity)

The prefix te- marks a third person honorific object.

- (56) a. qui-tlejco-c 'he raised him up' (no honorifics)  
b. te-mo-tlejco-huilli-lo-c  
'he (God) raised him (the President) up'
- (57) ti-te-mo-lhui-lia 'we are telling him (God)'

The plural suffix -ca can be used to add a further degree of honor.

- (58) a. xi-pano 'pass on (you sg.)'  
 b. xi-mo-pano-lti 'pass on (you H sg.)'  
 c. xi-mo-pano-lti-tzino 'pass on (you HH sg.)'  
 d. xi-mo-pano-lti-tzino-ca 'pass on (you HHH sg.)'

Tetelcingo has a different honorific morphology for tenses other than the present and imperfect. The plural suffix is promoted to a plural of majesty. The plural of an honorific form has a reduplicated stem.

- (59) a. qui-tlali-s-qui 'they will put it down'  
 or 'he H will put it down'  
 b. qui-tlaj-tlali-s-qui 'they H will put it down'
- (60) a. qui-tlali-j-qui 'they put it down'  
 or 'he H put it down'  
 b. qui-tlajtlali-j-qui 'they H put it down'

In third person references to deity, the reflexive causative or applicative constructions are used except that the reflexive morpheme for deity is mo- instead of the ne- used for lesser respect.

- (61) a. qui-nequi 'he wants it'  
 b. qui-nequi-hua 'he H wants it'  
 c. qui-mo-nequi-tia 'he (God) wants it'

The suffix -tzi is appended to nouns possessed by an honorable person. The possessive prefix for a second person possessor is mo-; that for a third person honorific is te- instead of the non-honorific i-.

- (62) a. mo-ma 'your hand'  
 b. mo-ma-tzi 'your H hand'  
 c. i-ma 'his hand'  
 d. te-ma 'his H hand'  
 e. te-ma-tzi 'his HH hand'

#### SEMANTICS OF METAPHOR

Pittman (1948: 237) notes, "Outside of -ci:n -ci:no there are almost no morphemes which have H as their 'primary' function. The H indication is usually made by morphemes which, in other arrangements, serve as reflexive, indirect object, causative, or plural indicators." And even the -tzin and -tzinca can be shown to have a metaphorical usage.

Robinson (1970: 130) says, "The honorific markers denote small size, respect and/or endearment." He is speaking of the -tzin suffix on nouns.

- (63) a. at 'water'  
 b. atzin 'water H'



- (64) a. tonal 'day'  
 b. tonaltzin 'sun'
- (65) a. itzcuinti 'dog'  
 b. itzcuintin 'puppy'
- (66) a. sihuat 'woman'  
 b. sihuatzin 'wife'

Hill and Hill (1978: 143) note: "The -tzin suffix on nouns is used not only as a DR <distance-respect> marker, but also to express diminutiveness (of a positive kind) and endearment or intimacy...The obvious surface resemblance between -tzin and the verbal suffix -tzinoa associates the two and brings -tzinoa, which is used only for reference, within the scope of ambiguity." Given that respect is shown for greater power, it seems to be somewhat of an inverted metaphor to use the diminutive marker for an honorific. Hill and Hill mention that whereas the association between small size and endearment is found in many languages, they had not found the further association with respect in other languages. Here I might note that the association exists in Otomi where the form tzi (zi in the Mezquital) is remarkably similar to the Aztec -tzin. Although in Otomi it is preposed to the noun or verb rather than postposed, it may be a case of borrowing.

Hill and Hill (1978: 142-3) comment on the use of the reflexive forms as follows: "The use of the reflexive forms for Respect +2 is interpreted by Whorf <1946> as a metaphor for greater potency of involvement of the addressee or referent in actions which s/he performs or which affect her/him. He interprets these as reflexive causatives, i.e., 'you cause yourself to do X', and translates them as 'you deign to do X' or 'you please to do X'. Reflexiveness thus interpreted seems a natural metaphor for power or potency. The analysis is not straightforward, however, since we can observe that the reflexive prefix mo- may also be in constituency with an object pronoun, e.g. mitzommomaquiliah 'they give it to you honored self'...Thus the metaphor of power of the object suggested by Whorf, that the honored object can 'take it or leave it' as it were, is not easily accessible from surface morphology in such constructions."

In an article on transitivity in the Guerrero Aztec verb, I commented on the reflexive causative and the reflexive applicative in these words (Bartholomew 1980: 203): "In Classical Aztec there was an interesting use of reflexive causatives and reflexive benefactives to express honor and reverence for a socially superior person. An intransitive verb adds a causative suffix and a reflexive prefix, as if to say that the honored person causes himself to act...A transitive verb adds a benefactive suffix and a reflexive prefix, implying that his honor does something for his own benefit." The use of the reflexive applicative when the honored person is the object of the verb, although not directly explained in the above terms, derives from the semantic metaphor of control for one's own benefit, which has now become grammaticalized.

The use of the directional on- in the honorific system involves the metaphor of distance, in this case social distance. Carochi y

Paredes (1979: 81,82) describe the directional as often not having the lexical meaning of physical distance: "Esta partícula on por lo común no muda la significación del verbo; sino que las más veces sirve de adorno, gravedad, y elegancia al periodo...Otras veces denota alguna distancia de aquel lugar, a donde se va a exercitar la acción del verbo...En lugar de, nicmahuiztilia, lo honró, se dice noconmahuiztilia."

Hill and Hill refer to Caroch's comments and then go on to say (1978: 142): "This association with elevated style may prove, in the light of the information from the Malinche usage, to be best interpreted as a social-distance usage, or as an expression of regard for the addressee in the case of people well-known to each other."

The use of the suffix -lo or -hua to mark respect forms in both North Puebla Aztec and Tetelcingo Aztec shows a shift from The Classical Aztec use as a nonspecific subject. In a parallel way, the use of the prefix te- to mark the honorific object shows a semantic extension of the nonspecific object marker in Classical Aztec. The use of mo- reflexive marker without a causative or applicative suffix to mark the subject of a transitive verb in North Puebla Aztec respect usage may be understood as an extension of the non-distinct argument of the reflexive construction to the indefinite reference desirable in honorific usage. The choice of this device may have been further influenced by the use of the reflexive causative and the reflexive applicative in the compadrazgo system. Ronald Langacker (1976) observed the semantic similarity between passive, impersonal, reflexive and unspecified argument constructions in the development of Uto-Aztecan. He notes in passing the use of the reflexive se to mark an impersonal passive in Spanish as evidence that such ideas tend to be associated in languages. Because it is more polite to be less direct and less specific, it is not unnatural that the earlier unspecified subject and unspecified object should be pre-empted to signal respect.

Although the respect forms in North Puebla and in Tetelcingo are similar, they differ in the marking for honorific subject of the transitive verb. The fact that the two areas are not at all contiguous may indicate that there has been an independent genesis of the honorific extension of -lo and te-. (Tlaxcala and the Sierra de Puebla chose a different strategy and grammaticalized the directional on- to mark respect.)

The use of the durative -tica in honorific verbs has to do with the inappropriateness in polite contexts of using abrupt speech. In North Puebla Aztec, the text which had the most forms using -tica was the one reporting conversation between compadres in the ceremony of asking for a wife. The durative adds a further degree of politeness, but in North Puebla Aztec it is not part of the grammatical core of the honorific morphology. For Sierra de Puebla Aztec Robinson (1970; 28) mentions that -ticaj is used primarily on greetings as opposed to -tzinoa on other forms. Lastra (1980a: 28) mentions that -tica in Tetzoco appears to indicate that the action is carried out gradually and seems to have some honorific usage as in the Sierra de Puebla.

Plural is used in both English and Spanish to indicate an unspecified subject: English they say, Spanish te llaman 'they are calling you' (even when the pragmatic subject is singular). It is only one step further to use the plural unspecified subject as the subject of the honorific verb. In Tetelcingo the use of plural for the honorific subject is in complementary distribution with the use of the impersonal suffix -lo/-hua; it is used in future and past as opposed to present and imperfect. In this regard it is interesting to note that Robinson (1970: 62) claims that the honorific aspect markers -ticaj and -tzinou have little reference to time and although a few forms have been found with the future tense suffix, the meaning is incompletive rather than future tense. It might be the case that honorific verbs had restricted distribution with respect to tense and that this motivated a different mechanism for honorific verbs in future and past tense in Tetelcingo. In North Puebla Aztec, the plural appears to be used for honorific verbs referring to deity or royalty. Again, the use of plural in the honorific system may have been independently motivated.

The use of the third person honorific verbs in direct address is found in Tlaxcala, North Puebla and Tetelcingo and probably in other dialects also. The metaphor of using third person forms to address someone of respect is not unique, as Hill and Hill (1978: 142) points out; "Maximal social distance is achieved through the 3rd person metaphor of *compadrazgo* usage (Level IV), where the speaker, in a sense, pretends not to be speaking to his addressee at all. This usage is well known from the V-pronouns of European languages such as German, Portuguese, and Spanish, which are 3rd person in origin."

#### SOURCES FOR THE ANALYSIS OF HONORIFIC MORPHOLOGY IN NPA

In the body of text material collected by Earl Brockway there are two texts which especially exemplify the usage of honorifics between *compadres*: "Asking for a Wife" and "How They Deceived Matamoro". In the second of these, Tonchin gets Matamoro to become his *compadre* and then proceeds to gyp him out of his money and his wife.

Another two texts illustrate the use of respect honorifics to refer to a deceased father: "The Phantom Wailer" (in which the author's father is nearly led over a cliff by the *Llorona*) and "How They Fooled This Woman" (in which the author's father fooled the woman by telling her that café con leche was made with human milk).

Honorifics referring to deity and royalty showed up in two texts: "The Flood Story" (in which God confronts man for making a fire and contaminating the sky) and "The Three Sons" (in which the youngest son marries the king's daughter and interacts with the king).

Many of the texts did not involve the use of honorifics at all, but the above mentioned ones formed the corpus for the analysis presented in this paper.

## CONCLUSIONS

The reflexive causative and the reflexive benefactive constructions reported for Classical Aztec honorifics appear in the modern dialects with little change for ceremonial interaction between compadres. The lesser degree of third person usage in Tetelcingo or of honorifics outside the ceremonial context in Tlaxcala, Sierra de Puebla and North Puebla make use of semantic extensions of morphemes that contribute the idea of indefiniteness, distance or gradualness. It is in these lesser degrees of honorifics that the dialects differ from each other in the strategies they have used and the morphemes they have pre-empted to mark respect. Perhaps there is a parallel to sound change where a sound is modified to a phonetically similar sound; here morphological change made use of a semantically similar morpheme.

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