Some of Them Just Die Like Horses. Contact-Induced Changes in Peripheral Nahuatl of the Sixteenth-Century Petitions from Santiago de Guatemala

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine contact-induced changes, visible on lexical and lexico-syntactical levels, in the set of twenty sixteenth-century petitions in Nahuatl from the region of Santiago de Guatemala. They comprise such phenomena as the creation and usage of neologisms, extensions of meaning, the adoption of loans in the morphological system of Nahuatl and the usage of calques. The material is divided in three parts. The first one focuses on specific traits of the Nahuatl language in which the Guatemalan petitions were composed, taking into account an ongoing discussion among researchers concerning the identification of this language or languages. The second part focuses on the presentation of selected lexical and lexico-syntactic changes in Nahuatl due to the influence of the Spanish language, as compared with similar contact-induced phenomena from Central Mexico and attested within the same time span. In the last part of the paper the interdependence of language contact and culture contact is discussed within the perspective of a presumed conceptual equivalency and interchangeability of the Spanish and Nahuatl terms for deer and horse, which appears in one of the studied documents.

Keywords

Nahuatl – Guatemala – language contact – language change – cross-cultural transfer

1 Introduction

When Francisco de Briceño was the governor of the province of Guatemala (1565–1569) (Vallejo García-Hevia, 2004: 36), apparently the indigenous people were very content with how the authorities treated them. According to the authors of a 1572 petition, written on behalf of the indigenous cabildo members and noblemen from Santiago de Guatemala, Briceño loved everybody (AGI Guatemala, 54: f. 3r):

*yn isquich motoliniani mochi oquitlaçotlac manel vevētzin manelylamatzin
manel piltōtli cex^{ca} vey tetlaçotlaliztli oquimochivilico ypāpatzinco. tt^o. J.
yvā tomaviztlatocatzin de su māg¹*

He loved all the afflicted, everyone, were they elderly men or elderly women or children. He came to show them a lot of love on behalf of Our Lord Jesus Christ and [on behalf of] our honored ruler, His Majesty.

Unfortunately for the natives, the year of 1570 marked an important change in both the administration of the region and their lives, and new miseries summed up to the ones that had occurred to its inhabitants in the past. The Spanish conquest of Guatemala, initiated in 1524 by Pedro de Alvarado and continued by his brother Jorge, turned into a devastating raid with fire and sword (cf. Restall and Asselbergs, 2007: 6–20). By 1530 the military campaigns eased, but the then supposedly pacified territory became a theater of arduous rivalries among Spaniards willing to assume the role of governor. In 1543 the province of Guatemala, by orders of the royal *cédula*, got separated from the jurisdiction of Audiencia Court in México and formed part of a newly established *Audiencia de los Confines y de Guatemala* with the capital in Gracias a Dios (Panama) and later, since 1549, in Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala. This change on the administrative level, however, did not improve the situation, but gave occasion for the disputes between the president of the Audiencia court and the Audiencia judges (*oidores*), which, in turn, led to the abuses of ordinary people (cf. Vallejo García-Hevia, 2004: 27–35). When the king learned about their “intolerable excesses”, not only did he re-install the capital of Audiencia back in Panama, but also he sent licenciado Francisco de Briceño as an

1 The paleography of the document as well as the translation of the text into English are made by the author, unless indicated otherwise. In all the examples the original orthography is retained, including scribal abbreviations and erasures.

inspector (*visitador*) who punished injurious officials and assumed the post of the governor of the province (Juarros, 1818: 48–50).

From what can be inferred after reading the collection of 1572 petitions in Nahuatl, the governorship of Briceño brought a significant change to the treatment of natives.² In 1570, though, by the Royal Provision issued on April 28th, 1568, Francisco de Briceño was sent back to Spain, and also the Audiencia was re-installed in Santiago de Guatemala. Doctor Antonio González assumed the office of president-governor (Vallejo García-Hevia, 2004: 47). With it once again started the abuses committed against local people: both native commoners and the rulers of the indigenous cabildo. They consisted of excessive tribute demands (in money and in kind) to be covered by all those listed in the census of forced labor in the city (e.g. at the construction of the aqueduct), and of severe corporal punishments and economic penalties. The taking of census was the starting point for all the miseries. The one in charge of it was the licenciado Bernabé Valdés de Cárcamo, an Audiencia judge (*oidor*), who performed the task together with his notary Juan de Cháves and the interpreter Juan de Bobadilla. In order to increase the income, they registered everyone, including those who earlier had been exempted from paying (the so-called *reservados*, that is, orphans, unmarried, elderly and disabled people, cabildo members, church officials, descendents of the Tlaxcalan conquerors) or who were physically absent (runaways, passers-by and the dead).

These circumstances motivated the indigenous rulers from different settlements in the surroundings of Santiago de Guatemala to implore the king of Spain, Phillip II, to intervene and help them. Friars and the above-mentioned governor Briceño acted as intercessors.³ The letters in Nahuatl, written between 1571 and 1572,⁴ by at least eleven⁵ different *tlahcuilohqueh* or writers,

2 The documents studied in this paper do not mention the attitude of the Spaniards towards this governor.

3 As a matter of fact, according to the documents from *Archivo General de Indias* studied by Amos Megged (2013: 225), it was not the first time that Lic. Briceño was asked to mediate in Spain in favor of local inhabitants of Guatemalan highlands. In 1566 the Kakchiquel ruler of San Cristóbal Amatitlán supplicated him to intercede for him before higher authorities in what concerned the abusive treatment of his people by the Nahua governor Chiahuitl.

4 As has been noted by Laura Matthew (2000: 61), even though Nahuatl was treated by the Spaniards as one of the most important languages of communication with the indigenous people, it never gained the same status as Spanish. Probably for this reason the same set of petitions was later re-written in the language of the conquistadores and sent to the king of Spain in 1576 (cf. Lutz, 1996: xiii).

5 Karen Dakin mentions seven different *tlahcuilohqueh* (1996: 170).

were sent to Spain to Francisco de Briceño and delivered by him to Juan de Ovando, the president of the Royal Council of the Indies (*Consejo Real de las Indias*), as we can learn from his own letter which accompanies all the others.

This set, composed of 22 petitions and complaints (Spanish *memorias*),⁶ today kept in the General Archive of the Indies in Seville (*Archivo General de Indias*, AGI Guatemala 54), and first published by Karen Dakin and Christopher Lutz in 1996, is one of many examples of how the indigenous people adopted the European written genre to negotiate with the colonial authorities (cf. Horn and Lockhart, 2010; Olko, 2014). The documents in question were written down in a peripheral variant of Nahuatl from the sixteenth-century Guatemala, which differs slightly (particularly on the lexical level) from a Central Mexican variant that the Spaniards learnt after the fall of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital. However, just like all alphabetic texts in Nahuatl, independently from the region in which they were produced, the Guatemalan petitions are not free from the linguistic influence of Spanish. In the present study I will focus precisely on these contact-induced changes, that is, Spanish-influenced features of the texts in question, visible on lexical and lexico-syntactical levels. It will embrace such phenomena as the creation and usage of neologisms, extensions of meaning, the adoption of loans (nominal, verbal and other) in the morphological system of Nahuatl and the usage of calques (both literal translations and loan renditions⁷). The methodological framework for the classification of the contact phenomena included in this analysis is based on the research of Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart (1976) and the posterior work of Lockhart (1992), later discussed and partly updated by Justyna Olko (2015). It has to be stressed, however, that it is not my intention to show general patterns and dynamics of change in the variant of Nahuatl from southern provinces, as it would require a more thorough examination based on a much bigger and diversified (geographically, chronologically and thematically) corpus of texts. Nevertheless, the research on Nahuatl-Spanish language contact in the colonial period carried out up to date focused mainly on the documents from the Valley of Mexico and its surroundings, while little attention has been paid to how the process of mutual influences occurred in the peripheral regions. Hence, the material presented here may contribute to this subject with

6 The corpus is composed of the total of 22 documents: twenty in Nahuatl and two in Spanish.

7 While referring to different types of calques I follow the classification proposed by Manfred Görlach (2002: 9), according to which loan translation involves the 'perfect rendering of constituents', whereas in loan rendition there is a change of meaning, word order or grammatical structure.

providing some new data which may serve as a starting point for a more detailed and comprehensive analysis in the future. It might also be helpful for looking into regional trajectories in places where Nahuatl existed in multilingual settings, sometimes as a second language or the *lingua franca* (see below).

One of the problematic issues while working with the corpus of the 1572 *memorias* concerns the linguistic situation of the scribes who prepared them. Nine notaries signed the documents with their names,⁸ but nothing is known of their ethnic identity. They worked in a multilingual scenario, they knew Nahuatl and at least one of the Mayan languages,⁹ but it is impossible to determine which of these was their first language. Clearly, it was not Spanish, due to orthographic substitutions in the borrowings from Spanish, though a good knowledge of this language was required from those who assumed the office of notary. The petitions themselves, modeled on a Spanish written genre, to a certain degree might reflect a sort of scribal collective interlanguage (cf. Matras, 2009: 76) used in the area of Santiago de Guatemala in that period. Nevertheless, given the limited information on the scribes' ethnic identities and individual linguistic situation, in the following analysis I will not introduce the distinction between interference features proper to this professional group and features introduced into Nahuatl through contact with the Spanish language, which were broadly established in that region.¹⁰

The material presented in this brief study will be divided in three parts. The first one will be dedicated to the specific traits of the variant of Nahuatl in which the Guatemalan petitions were composed, taking into account an ongoing discussion among researchers concerning the identification of this language. The second part will focus on the presentation of selected lexical and lexico-syntactic changes in Nahuatl due to the influence of the Spanish language, as compared with similar contact-induced phenomena from Central Mexico and attested within the same time span. Since language contact always

8 Of these nine scribes Diego López de Ávila prepared four petitions, Juan Pérez three, Pedro Hernández two (including one in Spanish), and Juan de San Pablo, Juan de Gúzman, Diego Espinar and Francisco Rodríguez prepared one petition each. Additionally, one of the petitions was signed by two writers: Francisco López and Diego Velasco, though the handwriting belongs to a single person. Also the corpus includes six manuscripts with no scribe identified, each written in a different hand.

9 Juan Pérez on f. 19v explicitly states that he translated the text into the Mexican language, that is, Nahuatl (cf. Dakin, 2010: 177).

10 In this paper I adopt the concept of interference in bilingual (or multilingual) situation after Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 37–57) and Thomason (2001: 61), that is, as a contact-induced change.

implies culture contact, with these two aspects of the same process constantly overlapping, in the last part of the paper I will present this interdependence and cultural-language transfers within the perspective of a presumed conceptual equivalency and interchangeability of the Spanish and Nahuatl terms for deer and horse, which appears in one of the studied documents.

2 Nahuatl Language of the Memorias

One of the aspects which has been an object of discussion among scholars who worked on the 1571–72 Guatemalan petitions concerns the classification of the language in which these manuscripts were written.¹¹ There is no doubt that the first *memoria* was composed in what is commonly known as ‘Classical Nahuatl’, that is, colonial Nahuatl from Central Mexico or, more precisely, from Mexico-Tenochtitlan (see discussion in Canger, 1988: 49–52; Whittaker, 1988: 321; Madajczak and Pharaoh Hansen, 2016: 240, n. 10). As for the rest of the corpus, Karen Dakin states that the scribes, neither bilingual nor native speakers of Nahuatl, used what she calls *lingua franca* which, according to this author, with all probability functioned in the region even before the Spanish conquest and was used along with other variants of Nahuatl and other Southern Mesoamerican languages (Dakin, 1996: 170; 2009: 250; Dakin, 2010: 172). According to Dakin, *lingua franca* derived from Central Nahuatl but it contains certain regional differences (Dakin, 2010: 167). It displays some of the features characteristic of the Eastern variants as well as those typical for the Western variants of Nahuatl (based on the classification of the dialects by Una Canger and Karen Dakin, 1985).

In her discussion of *lingua franca*, Dakin relies on the definition of this phenomenon proposed by Yolanda Lastra, according to which it is used for communication among people who do not share a common native language (Lastra in Dakin, 2010: 162). On the other hand, Laura Matthew and Sergio Romero (2012: 766), who worked with the same set of petitions from Santiago de Guatemala and its surroundings, as well as with other Nahuatl documents from this region, prefer not to use the expression *lingua franca*. Instead, and following the argumentation of Michael Swanton (2008), they opt for the

11 I refer to the documents composed in indigenous Nahua language. It has to be noted, however, that the items 1 and 19 of the collection published by Dakin and Lutz, that is, an opening letter written by the licenciado Briceño and the petition authored by the cabildo members from the *barrio* of Santo Domingo, respectively, are in Spanish (cf. Lutz, 1996: xii, n. 3).

name ‘vehicular language’ while referring to the function of Nahuatl language in that area as a means of interethnic communication, a term also applied by Julia Madajczak and Magnus Pharaos Hansen in their study of a Guatemalan religious treatise in Nahuatl, *Teotamachilizti* (2016). Matthew and Romero (2012: 777) maintain that the 1571–72 documents were written in Classical Nahuatl, Pipil¹² and in what they call Central American Colonial Nahuatl, which contains the characteristics of both. The latter’s most prominent feature (and, as a matter of fact, the only one indicated by the authors of the paper) are the hypercorrections which consist of the use of the alveolar lateral affricate /tʎ/ where in the Central Mexican Nahuatl a /t/ should be placed, and, concurrently, the loss of /tʎ/ in favor of /t/, as in *tacatl* instead of *tlacatl* (f. 8r)¹³ and *notlaçotlaçinne* instead of *notlazotatzine* (f. 6r). In both cases this phenomenon usually (though not always) occurs before an /a/ (Matthew and Romero, 2012: 777; cf. Whorf, in Canger, 1988: 33). In his later work, Romero (2014) simply calls the language of the *memorias* a ‘Guatemalan Nahuatl.’ This observation coincides with my conclusion that the languages of these documents is Nahuatl and not Pipil. It has to be stressed, however, that the basis for the identification of the variant of Nahuatl spoken in the sixteenth-century Guatemala by Matthew and Romero is the orthography used by the notaries or authors of the written documents. Dakin (1996: 171), on the other hand, attributes the above-mentioned differences with regard to a “standard” or Central Mexican orthography to the errors of the scribes who were not the native speakers of Nahuatl but rather of one of the Mayan languages.¹⁴ Other errors of this sort indicated by her are the lack of the preterit plural suffix *-queh*, the retention of the absolute suffix in the possessed form: *tualtebetl* (f. 27r) instead of *toaltepeuh*, ‘our city,’ *youchtli atl* (f. 16r) instead of *iouh atl*, ‘road of water’ or ‘aqueduct’; *yçacat: caballo* (f. 37r) instead of *izacauh caballo*, ‘horse’s dry grass’, as well as the loss of some syllables, as in *noyan* (ff. 8r, 9r) for *nohuiyan*, ‘everywhere,’ *teoquit* (ff. 13r, 15r) for *teocuitlatl*, ‘gold,’ *toteco* (f. 13v) for *totecuiyo*, ‘our lord,’ *çat* (f. 21r) for *zacatl*, ‘dry grass,’ or *xitl* (f. 37v) for *xihuitl*, ‘year.’

12 Matthew and Romero (2012: 766–767) define Pipil as ‘a Nahuatl dialect that had been spoken along the southwestern coasts of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua since approximately 900 CE.’

13 All the examples used in this paper are from AGI, Guatemala 54 collection of petitions, unless otherwise stated.

14 In one of the documents (ff. 19r–19v), the notary Juan Pérez claims that he has translated it into Nahuatl, with all probability from another indigenous language, which, according to Dakin, could have been Kakchiquel (1996: 171; cf. Dakin, 2010: 177; Matthew, 2000: 47).

Different scholars have presented various arguments explaining or justifying the presence of Nahuatl in the Guatemalan region. Some authors have emphasized its presence there even before the Spanish conquest. Carlos Navarrete (1996) points to the contacts of the indigenous people from what today is Guatemala with the Aztec Empire (cf. Dakin, 1996: 168; Matthew and Romero, 2012: 765–766; Romero, 2014: 55–56). Karen Dakin (1996: 168–169) traces the cultural, political and, most importantly, the linguistic contact between Central Mexico and Southern Guatemala back to the period prior to the formation of the Triple Alliance and the rise of the Aztec Empire (cf. Matthew and Romero, 2012: 766).¹⁵ Robinson Herrera (2003: 156–157), on the other hand, stresses that the importance of Nahuatl was due to the arrival of Nahua allies who accompanied the Spaniards during the conquest of Guatemala and after this military campaign settled in the region along with the Spanish colonizers (cf. Matthew, 2012: 233; Matthew and Romero, 2012: 766). Eventually, one of the most significant reasons for Nahuatl to gain importance in the colonial period across the territory of Mesoamerica was its use by the Spaniards as a language of administration, evangelization and contact with the indigenous people of various ethnic groups (Matthew and Romero, 2012: 772–773; Schwaller 2012). As has been indicated by various scholars, such a choice of language was strengthened by the royal decree dispatched in 1570 by the king of Spain Philip II (cf. Mignolo, 1995: 56, Dakin, 1996: 170, Nesvig, 2012: 745). No wonder, therefore, that the interpreters of Nahuatl (*nahuatlato*s) were present, among others, during the inquisitorial processes in Yanhuitlan in the Mixteca Alta (Oaxaca) (in Sepúlveda y Herrera, 1999: 116, 258, 266). Laura Matthew, while referring to the language situation of the sixteenth-century Guatemala, mentions a commentary of one of the Spanish scribes, Pedro Valles de Quexo, who in 1586 stated that *lingua mexicana* was commonly spoken in Santiago de Guatemala (Matthew, 2000: 45; Matthew, 2012: 239). However, this situation changed in the seventeenth century in favor of the Spanish language (Matthew, 2000: 49).

15 These theories on the presence of the Nahuatl language in Guatemala before the Spanish conquest contrast with the result of research carried out by Lyle Campbell, according to whom the only Nahua language spoken in that region in the precontact period was Pipil (1985: 937–942). Madajczak and Pharao Hansen, in turn, indicate that the users of Nahua languages in the colonial Guatemala were ‘the Pipiles who had inhabited the Pacific coast of Guatemala in precontact times and spoke a Nahua variety of the eastern periphery, and a sizeable group of Nahuas from central Mexico who had participated in the Spanish conquest of the area and who spoke a Central dialect related to the prestige dialect of the Mexican capital’ (Madajczak and Pharao Hansen, 2016: 220).

To sum up, Nahuatl ‘was associated in colonial Guatemala with the high civilization of central Mexico, the power of the Aztec empire, and — positively or negatively — the arrival of the Spanish’ (Matthew, 2012: 231). While speaking of the 1572 Guatemalan petitions as a particular example of the linguistic situation in that region, Christopher Lutz (1996: xiii) also suggests that the preference of Nahuatl over one of the Mayan languages arose from Franciscans and Dominicans who might have thus tried to enhance the impact of the letters on Spanish authorities.

Even though Matthew and Romero suggest that some of the petitions from Santiago de Guatemala region were written in Pipil, an opinion from which Romero withdrew in his 2014 publication, they never give their arguments for such a classification, nor do they indicate which of the documents these would be. As a matter of fact, the Nahuatl of the *memorias* shows some of the features often interpreted as characteristic of Pipil. Among them, Dakin (1996) enumerates the following:

- a. the already mentioned substitution of /tl/ with /t/; which appears in the documents but, similarly to hypercorrections and standard central Nahuatl orthography, without consistency or regularity. This trait, present in modern Pipil of El Salvador, has also been attested in the colonial period in other regions. Gerónimo Thomas de Aquino Cortés y Zedeño in his *Arte, vocabulario y confessorio...* remarks that in the area of Guadalajara (Jalisco), where people spoke “falsified and adulterated Mexican language” (*Lengua Mexicana falseada, ô adulterada*, 1765: 2), as opposed to the ‘legitimate’ one, /tl/ was recued to /t/ and /ll/ to /l/, as in *tali*, ‘land,’ instead of *tlalli* (Cortés y Zedeño, 1765: 6).¹⁶
- b. the substitution of /o/ with /u/, also used inconsistently throughout the documents. Karttunen and Lockhart (1986: 2) explain that it occurs due to the lack of contrast between /u/ and /o/ in Nahuatl. It has to be stressed, however, that it is not reduced to the Guatemalan documents but is also common in the *Florentine Codex* and other Central Mexican Nahuatl sources. Furthermore, it is attested in the texts written in Spanish (from medieval *Siete partidas* by Alfonso X the Wise to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century documents). Also Madajczak and Pharaoh Hansen note that “[...] the fact that a dialect has /u/ and /t/ instead of /o/ and

16 It has to be stressed, though, that when Cortés y Zedeño speaks of ‘falsified’ language, he refers to its dialectal features.

- /tl/, does not by itself tell us anything about the historical origins of its speakers” (2016: 228).
- c. the loss of the suffix *-li* in the absolutive forms: *tamamal*, ‘load,’ *tonal*, ‘day,’ etc. Madajczak and Pharaos Hansen (2016: 229) point out that this feature is typical for Eastern variant from Isthmus (though not in the Huasteca) and in Salvadoran Pipil. Nevertheless, in the very same documents from Guatemala we can also see the forms *tamamalli* and *tonalli*. On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that such a reduction is already an influence of Spanish. When Nahuatl nouns were incorporated in the language of the conquerors, very often they were losing the absolutive ending. The frequent use of these reduced nominal forms by Spaniards might have led to omission of the absolutive suffix by the native users of Nahuatl. Interestingly enough, the same reduction can be seen in the contemporary context with regard to specific elements of the lexicon in the Tlaxcala Nahuatl, heavily influenced by Spanish (Justyna Olko, August 2016, personal communication). Also, as has been observed by Justyna Olko, [...]original native loanwords borrowed into Spanish later came back to Nahuatl as a result of intense interplay with the other side” (2015: 45), and the appearance of Nahuatl nouns without absolutive suffixes might be an example of this process of reborrowing.
 - d. the use of *ayac* as a negative particle rather than with the meaning of *nobody*. In the Guatemalan petitions this word may sometimes be translated in both ways, e.g. (1) *ayac ipatiuh* (f. 11v), which in English can be rendered as ‘there was no payment’ or ‘nobody [received] his/her payment’. In other cases such a twofold translation would be much more complicated, with clear implications of *ayac* being used as an equivalent of the negative particle *ahmo*. In the example (2) the otherwise transitive verbs *namaca*, ‘to sell’ appears with the reflexive prefix *mo-*, which turns it into an impersonal form, closely related to the passive voice. In (3) the subject is *cequi*, ‘some [people],’ and therefore *ayac* cannot be read as ‘nobody’. Finally, in (4) the Nahuatl expression for ‘unmarried’ [literally ‘not married’] is *ayac namique*, whereas in Central Mexican texts in this language the most frequently attested form is *amo namique* (*ahmo namiqueh* in plural and *ahmo namiqui* in singular) (see Molina 1992, 1: 110; Anunciación 1577: f. 251).

(1)	<i>ayac</i>	<i>Ø-i-patiuh</i>	(f. 11v)
	nobody / no (?)	3SG-3SG.POSS-price	
	‘Nobody [received] his payment’ or ‘[There was] no payment for him’		

- (2) *ayac* *Ø-mo-namaca-z* *quabi-tl* (f. 15v)
 no 3SG-3SG.REFL-sell-FUT wood-ABS.SG
 'Wood will not be sold.'
- (3) *çequi ascan ayac* *Ø-quiza* (f. 8v)
 some now no 3PL-come.out
 'Now some of them don't come out.'
- (4) *yvan solderos ayac* *Ø-namj-que çano o-qui-tlali- y-tequi-uh* (f. 11r)
que
 and unmarried nobody/no 3PL-to.marry- also ANTEC- POSS.3SG
 PL OBJ.3SG- -tribute-
 put-PL POSS
 'And also the unmarried, those who didn't get married, delivered their tribute.'

As Madajczak and Pharaoh Hansen acknowledge, *ayac* with the meaning of 'no' appears in eastern variants of Nahuatl; nevertheless, this does not imply that *ahmo* cannot be used in these variants in similar contexts (Madajczak and Pharaoh Hansen, 2016: 231; cf. Pharaoh Hansen 2014). The same can be observed in the 1572 petitions, where both *ahmo* and *ayac* are used interchangeably even within the same document, an indication that *ayac* with the meaning of 'no' did not suppress completely the use of the particle *ahmo*.

- e. the retention of the final vocal in the preterit of the class 2 verbs, e.g.: *omochihua* (f. 17r) instead of *omochiuh*, 'it was done.' In what concerns this feature, Una Canger (1978: 4–5) and John Sullivan (2003: 10), among others, have already pointed out that the vowel retention is one of the features of the peripheral Nahuatl, while the loss of the final vowel of verb roots is characteristic for Central variants, with, as Canger emphasizes, a general tendency to extend to the periphery (Canger, 1978: 4). However, in the eastern variants of Nahuatl and in Salvadorian Pipil in the preterit –c or –*qui* would be added to the verb root (just like in the first class verbs in Central Nahuatl, cf. Campbell, 1985: 927; Madajczak and Pharaoh Hansen, 2016: 231–232), which does not happen in the Guatemalan documents studied here.

As has been shown in the examples, the above-mentioned features, purportedly identified as typical for Pipil, are not used consistently by the authors of the 1572 petitions, and not all of them appear in each of the documents forming the corpus (see Table 1). Also, there are other features considered diagnostic for Pipil and which are completely absent from the documents of Santiago de

Guatemala. An example might be a graphical rendering of the glottal stop by 't',¹⁷ which is unattested in the petitions.¹⁸ What is more, the system of honorifics (see below) and the use of the proclitic 'o' before the verb in the preterit match Central Mexican Nahuatl rather than Pipil.

On the lexical level, in this set of documents there are apparently no borrowings from Pipil. Dakin (in Dakin and Lutz, 1996: 105, n. 5; 107, n. 24) suggests that the influence of both Pipil and the Gulf dialects is visible in the terms such as *covit* or *covitl* (ff. 17r, 28r, 37r, 37v) instead of the Central Mexican *cuahuatl*, 'tree,' 'wood,' *tlahuicalli* (f. 17r) as a peripheral Nahuatl equivalent of *namictli*, 'spouse,' 'husband,' and *tiçini* as opposed to Central *teçini*, 'a person who grinds' (f. 27v, 35r). As for the first example, *covitl*, I have not encountered any attestations of it in colonial Nahuatl text from Central Mexico; however, it is used in the modern variants from Puebla region (cf. Horcasitas and Cruz 1960). Also, in the documents studied here the form *covit* or *covitl* is used by some of the writers, whereas other notaries opt for *cuahuatl* (ff. 9r, 9v, 11r, 15v, 16r, 19r), or even use both forms within the same text. What concerns the term for 'husband,' it has to be noted that in the *memorias* the root *namic-* is also present, both with the nominal suffix *-eh* indicating possession and in verbal forms. Furthermore, *tlahuicalli* is attested in the sixteenth-century texts considered to be representative of Central Nahuatl. Fray Andrés de Olmos in the *vocabulario*, which forms part of his *Arte de la lengua mexicana y vocabulario* (1547: 229r), gives *notlauical* as *mi marido*, 'my husband.' It also appears in the *Florentine Codex*:

intlaca oc tiiectli, intla ie ticihoatl, cana xitlano: ca aic ivian tiez in tepaltzinco: ca muchipa tilnamjquliloz, muchipa monetolinjliz, motlaihijoviliz muchioaz: aic ivian, aic tlacaco ticchioaz, muchipa chicotlamatiz in motlavical, in monamjc: (Sahagún, 1969: 102)

- 17 As Julia Madajczak and Magnus Pharao Hansen indicate, the *saltillo*, often rendered graphically with the letter "h", "in some dialects, for example, the Nahuatl of colonial Mexico-Tenochtitlan, [...] was pronounced as a glottal stop [ʔ], but in most other varieties outside of the valley of Mexico it was and is pronounced as a glottal fricative [h]" (2016: 240). In the Guatemalan *Teotamachilizti* the glottal stop is indicated graphically with the letter 'c'; though, as Madajczak and Pharao Hansen observe, it is not clear "whether it stands for the pronunciation [k] or whether it actually refers to the sound of a glottal stop" (Madajczak and Pharao Hansen, 2016: 232).
- 18 In the majority of 1572 documents studied here the writers do not mark graphically the glottal stop at all. Only in one letter (ff. 8r-10r) is the glottal stop not omitted but rendered by the letter 'h,' as can be appreciated in some of the manuscripts from Central Mexico.

TABLE 1 Distribution of features common to Pipil in the 1572 petitions written by particular notaries.

	/tl/ – /t/ substitution	/o/ – /u/ substitution	loss of the suffix -li	<i>ayac</i> as negative particle	retention of the final vocal in preterit	retention of the absolu- tive suffix in the possessed form	syllable loss
Juan de San Pablo (ff. 3r-5r)							
Pedro Hernández (ff. 8r-10v)	+	+	+	+		+	+
Juan Pérez (ff. 11r-11v, 194–20v, 37r-38r)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Juan de Gúzman (ff. 13r-13v)	+	+	+			+	+
Francisco Rodríguez (ff. 15r-16v)		+	+	+		+	+
Diego López de Ávila (ff. 23, 24, 25, 26)	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Diego Espinar (ff. 27r-29r)	+	+	+		+	+	
Francisco López and Diego Velasco (ff. 34r-35v)	+	+	+			+	
Anonymous 1 (f. 6r)	+						
Anonymous 2 (ff. 17r-18v)	+		+	+	+		
Anonymous 3 (f. 21r)	+	+	+				+
Anonymous 4 ¹⁹ (f. 22r)	+	+					
Anonymous 5 (f. 33r)							
Anonymous 6 (ff. 36r-36v)	+	+					

19 It is the only writer that consistently substitutes Central Mexican /tl/ with /t/.

If still you have not been good, if already you are a woman [and] somewhere you have been asked for, never will you be at peace with another, for it will always be remembered of you; it will always cause your misery, your torment. Never will you achieve peace, never tranquility. *Your help-mate*, your husband, will always suspect. (trans. Anderson and Dibble)

As far as *ticini* is concerned, Canger and Dakin have pointed out that this, as well as some other terms (e.g. *centli* – *cintli*, ‘maize,’ *iztetl* – *iztitl*, ‘fingernail,’ etc.), registered as variants in Fray Alonso de Molina’s *Vocabulario*, exemplify a basic split in Nahuatl into western group, which inclines to the /e/ form, and the variants from the regions to the north, east and south of the Valley of Mexico, where a preference for /i/ form is noted (Canger and Dakin, 1985: 358; cf. Canger, 1988: 64). Dakin (2010: 168–169) points out that the centre was an area of encounter between Western and Eastern variants, which is why Molina in his dictionary has both forms.

To sum up, even though the variant of Nahuatl, in which this set of documents from Guatemala was composed, displays some characteristics that can be attributed to the influence of Pipil or, better to say, eastern and peripheral variants of Nahuatl, such as /tl/ – /t/ substitution, the use of *ayac* as a negative particle, and the retention of the final vocal in the preterit (though without marking of plural) in no way can they be defined as diagnostic for this language. They do not appear regularly and are not used consistently. As far as other above-mentioned traits are concerned, their presence is not exclusive for Pipil or eastern Nahuatl, but they appear in the documents from Mexico-Tenochtitlan and the regions located to the north of the Valley of Mexico.

3 Language-Contact Phenomena in the Petitions

The variant of Nahuatl in which the 1572 Guatemalan petitions were written differs to a certain extent from the Central Mexican or the so-called Classical Nahuatl due to its peripheral character and because of the influences from other indigenous languages. Nevertheless, as all texts in Nahuatl written in Latin alphabet, it is not free from innovations that resulted from the contact with Spanish. The type of these changes and their degree depended on various factors and their pace was particularly conditioned by the intensity of contact or the attitude of native speakers towards the colonial administration. However, while dealing with written texts, we have to remember that what they reflect, in the first place, is the language used by the individuals who produced the documents and, therefore cannot be treated as diagnostic for the entire

population. The contact-induced changes are visible on lexical, syntactic and — to a certain point — on a phonetic level, with the latter being noticeable only through the orthography. Guatemalan *memorias* constitute a corpus rich in Spanish-induced changes in Nahuatl lexical and syntactic structures. Even though, as will be demonstrated in the following part, most of them comply with the general patterns established for the sixteenth-century Central Mexico, some features are reduced to this body of texts.

3.1 *Loans and Extensions of Meaning*

According to the chronological scheme of the dynamics of change in Nahuatl due to the contact with the Spanish language proposed by James Lockhart (1992: 261–325), Stage 1 covers the period from the Spanish conquest to ca. 1550. Within this time span the contact-induced phenomena include coining new terminology mostly for describing cultural objects introduced by the invaders, as well as an extension of meaning of Nahuatl words. Stage 2, dated between 1550 and 1650, which is the period when the Guatemalan petitions were produced, is characterized by the incorporation of loans on a broader scale. However, as has been pointed out by Karttunen and Lockhart (1986: 16), in the sixteenth century the borrowing process was practically limited to nouns. The periodization of contact-induced changes carried out by these two authors was based on a vast body of mundane documents in Nahuatl from Central Mexico and the immediate surrounding areas (including Toluca Valley, Cuernavaca, Puebla and Tlaxcala). However, in their study they did not use the documents produced in a more peripheral regions to the north or to the south (reaching the territory of today's Guatemala).²⁰ Not surprisingly, some of the patterns are to be found also in the southern periphery of Santiago de Guatemala, as reflected in the petitions. The *memorias* contain many loanwords, almost exclusively nouns, and belonging to different thematic areas:

- officials and offices: *alcalde*, 'municipal judge,' *regidor*, 'alderman,' *alguacil*, 'constable,' *oidor*, 'Audiencia-court judge,' *caçiquez* (f. 35v), 'caciques,' *Juezex* (13r), 'judges,' but also *çerrero*, 'wax chandler,' *fustero*, 'saddle-maker,' *sastre*, 'tailor,' *sillero* (f. 10r), 'chair-maker';

20 The comparison of linguistic data both from Central Mexico and from peripheral areas provides evidence that the model proposed by Lockhart is not equally valid for all the regions (Olko 2015, Olko, Borges and Sullivan 2018). This was already noticed by John Sullivan in study of the early seventeenth-century documents from Jalostotilan (Jalisco): "if the west was more conservative than the center in terms of native language elements and their evolution across the centuries, it was entirely up to date in its reaction to Spanish, or even in some respects ahead" (2007: 13).

- people, ethnic groups: *españoles*, ‘Spaniards,’ *mestiços*, ‘mixed-race persons,’ *cristiano*, ‘Christian’ (as a synonym of ‘Spaniard’); in one case, due to the scribal error, the loan is a fusion of two words: *Enferfanos* (f. 15r), which clearly blends the Spanish nouns *enfermos* (‘the sick’) and *huérfanos* (‘orphans’), although, judging by the context, the intention was to write *huérfanos*;
- other loanwords which do not appear frequently in the documents from the second half of the sixteenth century, such as *tributo* (f. 26), ‘tribute,’ or *proçeso* (f. 34v), in reference to the trial documents.

As far as the monetary values are concerned, in the province of Santiago de Guatemala *tostón* (a coin with the value of one *real de a cuatro* or four reales; cf. Lutz, 1997: 21) seems to have been in more frequent use than a *tomín*, although both are mentioned in the text. In some contexts, the term *tostón* had its meaning extended and refers to money in general, in the same way as it happened with the word *tomín* in Central Mexico.

Another loanword of particular interest which appears in one of the documents is the term *puerco*, ‘pig’, which is already used not in a literal sense, in reference to an animal, but metaphorically, as an insult. The authors of the complaint recall that Valdés and his men afflicted the indigenous people, among others, by shouting at them *Ancuiloni puercos tlacamaçat* (f. 27v), ‘You [pl.] are sodomites, pigs, bestial people.’ This use of the loan *puerco* is highly uncommon at such an early stage, even though the Nahuatl term for pig, *pitzotl*,²¹ appears with the negative connotations as early as in mid-1550s, in Book XII of the *Florentine Codex*. In the Sahaguntine work it is said that the Spaniards craving for gold *qujpitzonequj in teucujtlatl*, ‘lust for gold like pigs’ (Sahagún, 1955: 31). As has been noted by Louise Burkhart, pig (expressed in Nahuatl by the terms *pitzotl* or *coyamettl*, ‘peccary’), was introduced by Spanish friars in Nahuatl devotional literature as a symbol of ‘gross carnality’ (Burkhart, 1989: 105). Also in the copy of the religious drama in Nahuatl titled *The Three Kings* dated ca. 1600, angry Herod humiliates his Jewish priests by calling them *pitzome*, ‘pigs’ (in Sell et al., 2004: 128, 130).

In the petitions we can also find many examples of loans which came in an unanalyzed form, as fixed expressions (cf. Karttunen and Lockhart, 1986: 28). One type of such an example are Spanish nouns borrowed together with articles: *laodencia* (f. 3r), as *la Audiencia*, that is, ‘the Audiencia court,’ and *el licenciado*

21 It has to be stressed, however, that pig (*Sus scrofa domestica*) was introduced in Mesoamerica by Spaniards after the conquest, and the usage of the Nahuatl term *pitzotl* in reference to this animal is also post-contact. On the problematic etymology of this word see discussion in Lockhart (1992: 562) and Figueroa-Saavedra (2008: 252–264).

(ff. 23, 24, 26) or *eleçiado* (ff. 34r, 34v, 35r), an abbreviated form for Spanish *el licenciado*, the title borne by the inspector Valdés de Cárcamo. Other cases, in which it occurs, include prepositional phrases, as expressed in dates, e.g. *ypā del mes, de abril, de mill Eñiētos y setēta E dos años* (f. 16r), ‘on [...] of the month of April of the year 1572.’ The similar process can be observed in the following examples, in which what were the prepositional phrases from the perspective of the source language, in Nahuatl turned into nouns in the quasi-absolutive form: *de su mag* (ff. 3r, 3v, 4r), meaning ‘His Majesty’ and not ‘of His Majesty’ (5), *Alacarçel* (ff. 8v, 9r, 9v) meaning ‘prison’ and not ‘to prison’ (6), *A la calle* (f. 9r) meaning ‘street’ and not ‘in the street’ (7) or *alaçitudad* (f. 19r) meaning ‘city’ and not ‘to the city,’ to name just a few. Thus, the latter three follow the pattern known from other colonial Nahuatl documents from different regions (*alafiorida*, ‘Florida,’ *alahuerta*, ‘vegetable garden,’ *alachina*, ‘China’). Moreover, in this corpus of documents sometimes entire fragments written in Spanish are inserted in the Nahuatl text, e.g. *viejo. y bieja. biudo. y biuda. y Soltero. y toloido, y sordo. y çiego, y muchachos solteros* (f. 15r), ‘elderly men and elderly women, widowers and widows, and the unmarried, and the crippled, and the deaf, and the blind, and unmarried youths,’ or *mochi vezinos alldes Regidores. principales. viejos. pobres, y solteros* (f. 16r), ‘all the residents, alcaldes, regidores, dignitaries, the elderly, the poor and the unmarried.’ However, I would not consider them as examples of code-switching, but rather some “formulae” from other similar documents in Spanish copied or known by heard by the notary.

- (5) *y-pāpa-tzinco* *tt°. J. yvā to-maviz-tlatoca-tzin* *de su mag* (f. 3r)
 POSS.3SG-on.behalf.of- our Jesus and POSS.1PL-honored-ruler- His
 REV lord REV Majesty
 ‘on behalf of Our Lord Jesus Christ and our honored ruler, His Majesty’

- (6) *ycuac ti-quiza Alacarçel* (f. 8v)
 when SBJ.1PL-come.out prison
 ‘When we get out of prison’

- (7) *Ø-tech-tequiuhtia ti-c-ochpana-z-que camino Real yvan A la calle* (f. 9r)
 SBJ.3PL-OBJ.1PL- SBJ.1PL-OBJ.3SG-sweep-FUT-PL road royal and street
 order
 ‘They assign us a duty of sweeping the Royal Road and the streets.’

Another noteworthy example of cultural translation between Nahuatl and Spanish concerns the calendaric terminology, in particular the Nahuatl equivalents of the word *mes*, ‘month.’ In order to indicate the long-term suffering caused to the indigenous people by the Spanish authorities, the writers very often resort to the expressions such as the one that follows, indicating that they were subject to mistreatment : *mochipa xivitl mochi metzti mochipa tonali* (f. 34v), ‘every year, every month, every day’. The word *metztli*, which renders the Spanish ‘mes’ here, also appears in most of the dates registered in these documents. However, in one letter we read: *Avi çeḡ ḡpoztleḡ tlaoli çeḡepoval çeḡe gemana* (f. 25), ‘some shell maize **every month**, every week.’ Literally it means not so much ‘every month’ as ‘every twenty days’ or ‘every count of twenty,’ which is a clear reference to pre-Hispanic calendar *xiuhpohualli* which consisted of 18 periods of twenty days or *veintenas* (plus additional ‘unfortunate’ 5 days). These periods were equated by Spaniards with European months (cf. Sahagún, 2001: 112). In this fragment the Spanish notion of month, *mes*, is equated with the unit from the preconquest count system, and the author chose the Nahuatl term, though the election of *pohualli* over *mes* hardly ever occurs in the official documents. Another example of using a Nahuatl term instead of a much more common Spanish loanword (which, in fact, is not absent from the petitions) can be seen in the following fragment: *yn oc cētetl tonetoliniliz yn ipā domingo yva vey ylvitl* (f. 3v), ‘Another affliction of ours is that they prohibited us [to celebrate] on Sundays and on **great feast days**.’ These ‘great feast days’ or ‘holidays’ seem to be nothing more than the rendering of the Spanish *pascua*, though not in today’s meaning of ‘Easter,’ but as it was used in the sixteenth century, that is, in reference to other major celebrations such as Nativity, Epiphany or Pentecost.

Even though in the Guatemalan documents the predominance of nominal borrowings is noticeable, we can also note the borrowing of Spanish verbs in the infinitive. These borrowings are attested exclusively in the light verb constructions with the transitive verb *chihua*, ‘to do,’ and in all such cases the verbal loanwords are employed as nouns in the target language, as in the following examples:

- (8) *o-Ø-mo-chiva* *visidar* (ff. 17r, 25, 27r, 28r, 37r)
 ANTEC-3SG-REFL.3SG-do inspection
 ‘The inspection was made.’
- (9) *ν-Ø-tzunquiça* *viSitar* (f. 27v)
 ANTEC-3SG-end inspection
 ‘The inspection ended.’

- (10) *ycuac o-Ø-mo-chiva Reservar trigo yvan ycuac o-Ø-mo-chiva segar trigo* (f. 19r)
 when ANTEC-3SG- reserve wheat and when ANTEC-3SG- reaping wheat
 REFL.3SG-do REFL.3SG-do
 'When the reserve of wheat is made, and when the reaping of wheat is done.'

- (11) *o-Ø-q̃-chiuh padronal* (ff. 24, 26)
 ANTEC-3SG-OBJ.3SG-do census
 'He took census.'

- (12) *amo ti-c-chiva cūplir nimā presos* (f. 16r)
 no SBJ.1PL-OBJ.3SG-do obedience then prisoners
 '[If] we don't obey, then [we are made] prisoners.'

It seems impossible to determine whether the verb *chihua* served as a light verb before the contact with the Spanish. However, in early colonial texts (including the petitions studied here) this construction occurs mostly with the borrowings from Spanish, either verbs in the infinite, or nouns. In one of the 1572 petitions the light verb construction with *chihua* is used in a phrase composed entirely in Nahuatl. On f. 3v we read: *tonetoliniliz omochiuh*, 'the affliction was caused to us' (literally 'our affliction was caused') where the phrasing with the verb *tolinia*, 'to afflict,' would have been expected. These observations suggest a tentative conclusion that the construction itself started to be used due to the contact with the Spanish.

Karttunen and Lockhart see the phenomenon of nominalization of verbal borrowings as a proof of reluctance to borrow Spanish verbs (1976: 33–34). They also stress that it "seems to have remained a productive derivational process in areas of the peripheral far south as late as the 18th century" (1986: 32). However, as Søren Wichmann and Jan Wohlgemuth state, modifying an earlier observations by Edith Moravcsik, the borrowed verbs, while transferred from source language to target language, quite often turn into non-verbs. According to their explanation, "in the transfer process verbs may become alienated from the morphosyntactic contexts that define their part-of-speech membership and that they thus 'arrive' in the target language underspecified for this feature" (Wichmann and Wohlgemuth 2008: 103). Furthermore, Wichmann and Wohlgemuth inscribe it in the loan verb typology, proposing four major patterns: light verb strategy, indirect insertion, direct insertion and paradigm transfer. At the same time, these modes of integrations of loan verbs are hierarchical and diagnostic of the level of bilingualism (2005: 12). Thus, the application by the authors of the petitions

What is noteworthy, as far as the light verb construction use in the *memorias* is concerned, there are cases in which another Spanish verbal form, that is, past participle, is used instead of an infinitive and also functioning as a noun, as shown in the example (13). To my knowledge, the manuscripts forming the corpus of 1572 Guatemalan petitions are the only colonial texts in Nahuatl to have the Spanish verb borrowed not as an infinitive but as a past participle. Such an election cannot be explained by a structural calque from Spanish, since in this language the light verb construction with the verb *hacer*, 'to do,' would be followed by nouns: *reserva*, *siega*. The borrowing of Spanish past participle in Nahuatl in the petitions occurs also in the construction with the relational noun *ica*, 'by means of,' as in (14) and (15). These past participles are not used with the meaning they have in Spanish, e.g. the word *desterrado* does not mean 'banit' (a person who has been banished), but an effect of the action, that is, banishment. Also, again, the constructions do not replicate Spanish model, in which *por medio de* would be followed by the nouns *destierro*, 'banishment' (and not *desterrado*) and *encarcelamiento*, 'imprisonment' (and not *preso*).

- (14) *matlacpoval-li* *meca-tl* *açotes* *ybā* *caStol-li* (f. 15r)
two.hundred-ABS.SG rope-ABS.SG lashes and fifteen-ABS.SG
tostones *amo-pena* *o-Ø-q̃(i)to* *ybā* *desterado*
tostones POSS.2PL-penalty ANTEC-SBJ.3SG- and banishment
OBJ.3SG-say
‘Your [pl.] penalty is of two hundred lashes and fifteen tostons’, he said. ‘And the banishment.’

- (15) *Ju° martin alguazil Ø-techch²²-ana-co yca preso* (f.15v)
 Juan Martín constable SBJ.3SG-OBJ.1PL-take- by means imprisonment
 INPURP.NFUT of
 ‘The alguacil Juan Martín came to take us by means of imprisonment.’

Another interesting aspect of the language of these *memorias* is the use of doublets or *difrasismos*. This linguistic²³ resource, revealing the rhetoric, elegant characteristic of traditional formal speech and first noted and named by Ángel M. Garibay K. (1940: 112), has been defined by Mercedes Montes de Oca as ‘the juxtaposition of two terms that are associated in order to build a meaning that may or may not differ from that stated by each lexeme,’ taking into account the fact that ‘the two terms of the diphrasism (...) form a unit even though the relation between these terms may be visualized as opposition, synonymy or complementarity’ (2000: 38). In the Guatemalan documents these constructions appear either in their traditional form, as Nahuatl-Nahuatl words:

- (16) *i-nan-tzín* *i-ta-tzín* (various occurrences)
 POSS.3SG-mother-REV POSS.3SG-father-REV
 ‘his/her mother, his/her father’
- (17) *yn-ya-uh* *yn-tlacual* (f. 37v)
 POSS.3PL-water-POSS POSS.3PL-food
 ‘their drink, their food’

or as combinations of Nahuatl and Spanish (see Olko 2015, Montes de Oca 2017). Sometimes these expressions are more descriptive, as in *solderos ayac namique* (f. 17r), ‘the unmarried, those who don’t have spouses,’ which could be compared to *telpupuchtin Ayamo namique* (f. 8r), ‘young boys, not yet married.’ In other cases they consist of giving the analogous terms from both languages:

22 It should be read as *tech*.

23 Even though traditionally *difrasismos* had been considered as a linguistic structure, Danièle Dehouve (2014) has proved that it goes beyond the verbal expression and is visible also on the material and performative level (e.g. in offerings or in rituals).

- (18) *ayac y-tilma ayac y-camiSSa* (f. 35r)
 no POSS.3SG-cloak no POSS.3SG-shirt
 ‘[They have] no cloaks, no shirts’
- (19) *tu-tatul tu-quexaz* (f. 35v)
 POSS.1 PL-words POSS.1 PL-complaints
 ‘our words, our complaints’
- (20) *tla-li solar* (f. 10r)
 land-ABS.SG lot
 ‘the land, the lot’
- (21) *meca-tl açotes* (f. 15r)
 rope-ABS.SG lashes
 ‘the rope, the lashes’
- (22) *mil-pan poeblo* (f. 35r)
 field-surface[RTL] village
 ‘the settlement, the village’

The last example shows the very particular use of the word *milpan*, literally ‘in the field.’ In the entire corpus of the letters from Santiago de Guatemala the noun *milli*, ‘field’ and *milpan* —the same term but combined with the relational word *-pan*— appear with a different meaning. The former is consistently used in reference to the cultivated field, while the sense of the latter is that of ‘settlement’ or ‘village,’ preserved in the place names of that region up to this day (cf. Sánchez Ochoa, 1989: 36). In one document (f. 15v), there is also one attestation of *milpas*, a Hispanized Nahuatl word (back loan) which came back to its source language, though not as a noun with the relational word (‘in the field’) but as a noun (‘field’), and is used with the Spanish plural suffix. This meaning of the word *milpan* is clear also in the expression *milpātaca* (f. 34r), ‘residents of the villages,’ parallel to others of this sort, such as *castilātlacat* (f. 25), ‘Spaniards (litreally, people from Castile), *xclauastlacat* (f. 28v), ‘slaves,’ and *yndiotlacatl* (f. 34v), ‘indigenous people.’

The last group of doublets is of Spanish-Spanish pattern. Even though both their components are loans, apparently the general rule by which they operate is very similar. Thus, what the *alcaldes* and *regidores* want to say in the statement *mochi ticchiva ca ypā titlatoa tictequipanoa yn ātas y māca* (f. 4r), ‘We do everything since we are in charge of, we are responsible for the carrying

platforms and the decorations [of the cross],’ is that they are in charge of organizing the religious festivities rather than providing the platforms and decorations of the cross in particular. This example shows how the Nahuatl mechanisms of creating rhetorical tropes easily absorbed Spanish-sourced loanwords.

3.2 *Unusual Reverential*

One of the notable features of the Nahuatl from Santiago de Guatemala petitions, which appears only in one letter (ff. 3r-4v), is that the writer, apart from using the “traditional” reverential forms, both nominal (the addition of the suffix *-tzin*) and verbal (the use of the applicative or causative form with the reflexive pronoun), also seems to calque the use of the Spanish honorific *usted* (cf. Dakin and Lutz, 1996: 92, n. 8). Even though the letter is addressed directly to the king, the writer, consistently throughout the entire text, chooses the 3rd person singular where one would expect the 2nd person singular, as it is common in other documents:

*ma ypāpa yn itlatocayotzīn ma quivalmocnoytili yn ialtepetzīn nicā
Sanctiagio quauhtemala mochi novia ma quīnmotlaocolili yn imacevalvan*
(f. 4v)

May you [lit. he], on account of your [lit. his] royal authority, have pity on your [his] city here in Santiago de Guatemala. May you [lit. he] be merciful with all your [lit. his] vassals, wherever they are.

The consistent application of this form leads to a conclusions that with all probability the author(s) of the document were speakers of more than one language and that they dominated Spanish on a relatively high level. Another possible explanation of the use of these forms is the fact that the author(s) made calques of Spanish legal formulae in which 2nd person (e.g. *vuestra majestad*) and 3rd person (e.g. *su majestad*) function in the similar way.

Such an unusual reverential form in Nahuatl is hardly attested in the colonial documents written in this language. To my knowledge, there is only one more example, encountered by Sergio Romero (2014: 70) in the anonymous seventeenth-century sermon from the same region (Guatemala) known as *Teotamachilizti in yiuliliz auh in ymiquliz Tutemaquizticatzim Iesu Christo*, “A divine instruction on the life and death of our redeemer Jesus Christ”, whose printed copy is housed at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence, RI:

*avh vquilhui: nutecuiue, tehuatzim quinequi quipaca nuixitam? tehuatzim in huel nelli Dios, nutepicavh, nutecuiutzim? (Teotamachilizti f. 15v)*²⁴

And he said to him: my lord, do you want to wash my feet? You, who are the very true God, my creator, my lord? (trans. Julia Madajczak, in Madajczak, 2016)

As pointed out by Romero (2014: 70), this honorific construction, highly uncommon in Nahuatl, corresponds to a structure attested in K'ichee', one of the Mayan languages widely spoken in Santiago de Guatemala and its surroundings. On one hand, this fact could help to explain the presence of such a construction in the texts from this particular region, given that at least some of the petitioners were non-native speakers of Nahuatl, but native speakers of one of the Mayan languages. Also, as has been pointed by Jane Hill and Kenneth Hill, this type of reverential is rarely attested in early colonial documents from Central Mexico and "even in the very conservative prayers and orations of the *huehuetlatolli* (Sahagún, 16th c.), 3rd person DR [distance-respect, A.B.] usage appears only sporadically" (1978: 149). Therefore, the contact of the writers, apparently influenced by the honorific from the language of the conquerors, with K'ichee'-speaking communities, might have reinforced the process of calquing from Spanish, the dominant and the most prestigious language at the moment of the production of the Guatemalan petitions.

4 Of Deer, Horses and Other Beasts

The encounter of the two languages, Nahuatl and Spanish, not only induced adaptations on lexical and syntactic levels, but also it was simultaneous with the collision of and the transfer between two cultures, two different world-views and two different classification systems. Once the equivalents in both tongues had been found, usually the native speakers of the two languages involved tended to apply them interchangeably, as if their semantic fields and cultural connotations were identical. Such an approach, which was part of a much more complex process of cross-cultural interaction, is also visible in the 1572 petitions.

24 The transcription and translation of this fragment of *Teotamachilizti* has been prepared by Julia Madajczak. I would like to thank her for sharing this hitherto unpublished material with me and for allowing me to use it in this paper.

The knowledge and use of Nahuatl in the province of Santiago de Guatemala was, to a certain point, associated with prestige, since it was connected to the authority and served as an intermediary between Spanish and Mayan languages. Unfortunately, not all the indigenous people had the ability of communicating in it. For this reason in one of the letters *alcaldes* and *regidores*, preoccupied by this situation, stated:

*axca çenca timotequipahova ypanpa ypilvan yn dios amo mohi quimati
mexico tlatolli çequi ma yolquidi çequi amo ça yoqui mjqui cavallo* (f. 6r)

“Now we are greatly concerned because not all of the children of God know the Mexican language. Some of them make confession, some do not, they just die like horses” (trans. Julia Madajczak).²⁵

What catches the attention in the quoted fragment is quite an unusual comparison of non-Nahuatl speakers with horses. Basically, it implied that they were uncivilized people whose road to redemption was obstructed or even blocked by their incapacity to comprehend the Christian doctrine because it was preached in Nahuatl. In my opinion the expression used in the quoted fragment came as an effect of a complicated process of cultural and linguistic translation, and can be explained either by taking as a starting point Nahua culture, or by adopting the perspective of the Spanish language and culture.

Firstly, the comparison of an unconfessed person to a horse (*caballo*) can be explained by parting from the concepts of Nahua culture. Before the arrival of the Europeans to the Americas horses were unknown in that area. In Central Mexico the biggest quadruped animal comparable to it was deer, *mazatl*. This Nahuatl term could also be used metaphorically, as one of the manners

25 This arguments serves indigenous rulers and, at the same time non-native speakers of Nahuatl, to reinforce their petition to retribute them a Dominican friar who had taught them Christian doctrine before. Interestingly enough, the same explanation was used by the indigenous people to achieve completely different goals. As has been pointed out by Pardo (2004: 112), in 1570 Alonso Martínez de Zayas, a secular priest from Teutenango and Matlatzinco, another region where more than one native language was spoken and where Nahuatl was not the original, complained: “They do not want to confess so badly, from which I infer that they are still very many to be confessed, excusing themselves that they do not understand at all the Mexican language” (*Háceles tan de mal el confesar, que entiendo que se quedan muchos por confesar, excusándose que no entienden nada de la lengua mexicana*, in García Pimentel, 1897: 168).

of indicating the wild, rabial, uncivilized and also immoral state of the human beings. Very often *mazatl* was paired with *tochtli*, ‘rabbit,’ in a couplet or *difrasismo*. As has been pointed out by Louise Burkhart (1986: 122–125), to follow the way of rabbit and deer was like moving away from the human space. In Fray Bernardino de Sahagún’s writings describing Nahua culture this metaphor appears with frequency in reference to ‘disobedient, antisocial person who fails to comply with the moral strictures of elders and ancestors’ (Burkhart, 1986: 108):

In otitochtiac, in otimaçtiac: Injn tlatolli, itechpa mjtóaia: in aqujn aiocmo ichan nemj, aiocmo qujtlacamati in jtatzin, in jnantzin: ça choloa, in jquac qujnonotzaznequj: ça campa qujqjztinemj, aiocmo ichan motlalia, ça canpan çeçemjlvitia, ça canpan cocochtinemj: iuhqujn tochtli omuchiuh, maçatl omuchiuh, ic ilviloia in aqujn. Otitochtiac, otimaçtiac, otimochocholti, otimoquaquaquauhlti: oticnamjc in tochtli iovi, in maçatl iovi. (Sahagún, 1969: 253)

‘You have become a rabbit, you have become a deer.’ These words used to be said about one who no longer lives at home, who no longer obeys his or her father, his or her mother. He or she just flees when they want to advise him or her, just goes about passing by, no longer settles at home, just passes each day somewhere, just goes around sleeping somewhere. He or she becomes like a rabbit, a deer. Thus one used to be told, ‘You have become a rabbit, you have become a deer, you caused yourself to bound away, you made yourself hard-headed. You encountered the road of the rabbit, the road of the deer.’ (trans. Louise Burkhart, 1986: 107)

Already in the colonial times, at the very early stage of contact, the word *mazatl* started to be used in reference to horses. By the mid-sixteenth century, when the Spanish word *caballo* entered into the Nahuatl lexicon, the semantic fields of the terms *mazatl* and *caballo* partially overlapped. Moreover, the meaning of the term *mazatl* was further extended to embrace, in addition to horses, also donkeys, cattle and other similar animals (cf. Burkhart, 1986: 130; Tomicki, 1990: 48).²⁶ In Spanish such a generic term for the quadruped animals, both wild and domestic, such as donkeys, oxen, mules and, particularly, horses, was

26 Similar example of lexical acculturation coming from the Mayan region was reported by Cecil Brown for the Tzeltal language in Chiapas, Mexico. In it the meaning of the native term for deer was extended to refer to sheep (1999: 30).

bestia. However, this same word could be also used in the metaphorical sense: a Spaniard would supposedly use it while comparing a human to an animal. As Sebastián de Covarrubias explains in his 1611 dictionary, ‘we call beast a man who knows little and who is ignorant, similar in his way of living to the brute’ (*Bestia llamamos al hombre q sabe poco, y tiene pensamientos baxos, semejäte en su modo de viuir a los brutos*). This terminology, based on the Bible (e.g. 1 Peter 2:12; Jude 1:10), was adopted by Spanish ecclesiastics to describe the ignorance of the indigenous people before they got to know the Christian doctrine. One of the first Franciscan friars who came to New Spain after the fall of Tenochtitlan, Fray Pedro de Gante, remarked: ‘common people were like animals without reason, untameable, whom we could not bring them to the union and congregation of the Church, nor to the doctrine, nor to the sermon’ (*la gente común estaban como animales sin razón, indomables, que no les podíamos traer al gremio y congregacion de la Iglesia, ni a la doctrina, ni al sermón*, 1886, 11: 223), an opinion repeated by Fray Diego Valadés (in Ramírez Vidal, 1996: 18) and other Spanish friars, such as Fray Toribio de Benavente (Motolinía), Fray Diego Durán, and Bartolomé de las Casa, to name just a few. A comparison of the death without having received the sacraments to the death of a beast or animal appears also in a 1613 letter addressed to the judges of the Inquisition Tribunal, today housed in the *Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico*. In it a Spanish priest, Alonso Hidalgo, declares: “my sins were so numerous and detestable that it was impossible [to remember them], I abandoned the effort wishing rather to die like a beast, without the sacraments” (in Cervantes 1994: 98–99).

In his *Vocabulario...*, Fray Alonso de Molina translates ‘bestial man’ (*bestial hombre*) into Nahuatl as *tlacamaçatl*, literally ‘human deer’ or ‘deer-person’ (1992, 1: 19v; 1992, 2: 115r),²⁷ and ‘bestiality’ (*bestialidad*) as *tlacamaçayotl* (1992, 1: 19v). The term *tlacamazatl* is also used as an insult, together with Spanish *puerco*, in one of the Guatemalan petitions quoted above. This *mazatl*-*bestia* equivalency, re-inforced by the pre-Hispanic ‘deer’ metaphor, was easily adopted in the colonial times by Christian discourse in reference to sinful way of living. It appears frequently in Sahagún’s work, with *mazatl* in the Nahuatl text and *bestia* in the Spanish part. It occurs, among others, in the description of the way of living of a harlot, who in the Nahuatl part follows the way of rabbit and deer (Sahagún, 1961: 56) and in the Spanish one ‘follows the way of the beasts’ (*sigue el camino de las bestias*, Sahagún, 2001: 790; cf. Burkhart, 1986: 122). An Augustinian friar Juan de la Anunciación, while describing in his 1577

27 Chimalpahin, for his part, gives this term a more literal reading, using the word *tlacamazatl* for mythological centaur and zodiacal Sagittarius (1997, 11: 128, f. 64r).

Sermonario... the groups of people who will not be able to follow the road to heaven due to their inappropriate moral conduct, states: 'Also those who will not follow it [the road to heaven, AB] are deer, that is, those who do not live as humans, but just become beasts [lit. deer] through sin' (*Yhuan amo vel quito-cazque yn mamaça, quitoznequi. Yn aquique amo yuhqui tlaacnemi, y çan tlat-lacoltica momaçatilia*, Anunciación, 1577: 11v). As has been noted by Burkhart, "The Nahuas compared with deer persons who in Christian moral discourse were compared with brute animals. Hunter or prey, fierce or timid –these were fundamental distinctions in Nahua animal symbolism which were not so important in Christian. [...] The identification of *mazatl* with the pejorative usage of 'beast' may derive from the adoption of the indigenous ethical metaphor into Christian teaching, with a Christian interpretation, and not from native taxonomy" (Burkhart, 1986: 130). This conceptual framework was seemingly accepted and perpetuated by the indigenous people. In one of the documents from the early inquisitorial processes against 'idoltrous Indians' (*indios idólatras*), Francisco from Coyoacan, accused in 1538 of bigamy, confessed that he had heard that having two wives was a great sin but the indigenous people (including himself) 'are as deer who walk around and who do not know' (*son como venados que van por ahí é no saben*, *Proceso...*, Burkhart, 1912: 80).

Horse as a non-Christian animal appears in yet another expression. In the inquisitorial documents from the process carried out between 1544 and 1546 in Yanhuitlan various witnesses, while testifying against rulers and priests from that *pueblo*, repeated that the accused 'was no more Christian than his horse' (*no era más cristiano que su caballo*, in Sepúlveda y Herrera, 1999: 91, 225, 247). This Spanish idiomatic expression allowed to compare someone who did not live or act accordingly to Christian doctrine with the least Christian person or thing, horse being one of those gentile creatures.²⁸

Taking the above into account, the Spanish *caballo*, 'horse', being equated with *mazatl*, a Nahuatl word for 'deer', and, by extension, for any animal or *bestia*, took on the metaphorical meaning as well, which could explain its unusual usage by the authors of Guatemalan *memorias*. A non-native speaker of Spanish (and probably of Nahuatl, given the linguistic situation in the surroundings of Santiago de Guatemala), familiar with both names given to the animal, might have thought he could choose either one, since, for him, they expressed the very same concept both literally and metaphorically. The semantic fields of deer-horse-beast triada began to overlap, giving the impression of a perfect coherence.

28 I would like to thank Eva Bravo García for sharing this data with me.

5 Conclusions

The collection of Guatemalan 1571–1572 petitions from General Archive of the Indies in Seville, thematically homogenous, was composed by a heterogenous group of writers whose proficiency in Nahuatl varied. Despite this fact, they decided to prepare their letters to the king of Spain in an indigenous language considered as the most prestigious and suitable for the communication with the representatives of Spanish colonial administration. Their efforts allow modern scholars to see how this peripheral variant of Nahuatl was influenced not only by other indigenous languages spoken in that region, but, mainly and above all, by the language of the conquerors.

The appropriation of the European alphabetic written genre itself in order to let the king hear about their miseries implied the translation and adoption of certain official formulas. As can be judged from the studied documents, the indigenous authors of the *memorias* were familiar with similar letters in Spanish and in some cases even decided to copy entire fragments without rendering them in Nahuatl. However, these can be treated as exceptions since, more often than not, the borrowings from Spanish were reduced to single words or short phrases referring to the cultural phenomena (especially related to the administration and economy) introduced after the conquest. These loans (nominal and verbal) were then incorporated into the lexico-syntactic structures of Nahuatl (e.g. in form of doublets or *difrasismos*). Thus, the material under study does not differ substantially from other sources of this kind produced in Central Mexico. Nevertheless, some of the linguistic features, such as, among others, the incorporation of the Spanish verbs in past participle, and the reverential forms which seem to correspond with the Spanish syntax, have been discovered so far only in the Nahuatl of southern provinces of the New Spain. Quite noteworthy is that in the process of borrowing everything is treated as noun roots (e.g. a Spanish article together with a noun, like in *laodiencia* instead of 'la Audiencia'), which are then adapted phonologically due to the lack of corresponding morphemes (typical substitutions), as well as reinterpreted semantically (e.g. *desterado* for 'banishment').

The reading of the Guatemalan petitions also offers an insight into how language contact and culture contact are the two sides of the same coin and need to be studied together in a unified, comprehensive approach. The encounter of two different worldviews and systems of classification, shaped by and expressed through the language, may lead to ambivalent results of cross-cultural translation. The analysis of an unusual use of the Spanish word *caballo* by indigenous authors is an example of how a superficial equivalence, translated into supposed interchangeability, is just the tip of the iceberg of a

more complex process of cultural translation that permeates colonial writings in native languages.

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