

SPANISH LOAN WORDS VIA AZTEC

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0. In a paper published in IJAL in 1977 Larry Clark presented the phonological changes that 16th Century Spanish loan words underwent as they were acculturated to the phonological structure of Sayula Popoluca. He proposed that Popoluca speakers have had contact with speakers of Spanish for 450 years and that during that time Popoluca borrowed directly from Spanish.

Two years later in the same journal William Bright suggested that many American Indian languages "may have acquired some of their Hispanisms not directly from Spanish, but by borrowing from one or more intermediate languages, such as Nahuatl." (IJAL 3: 267). He then went on to comment on the apparent anomalies in Clark's phonological rules and suggested that many of these problems could possibly be solved if one considers that "the most likely hypothesis is that the Hispanisms in question were borrowed by Sayula not directly from Spanish, but rather through some Indian language as Nahua." (3:269)

The purpose of this present paper is to attempt to show that Aztec was indeed the intermediary language via which loan words from 16th century Spanish entered not only Sayula Popoluca, but also many other indigenous languages still spoken today from Arizona to Guatemala.

1. At the time of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico in the 16th century, Aztec was already the lingua franca of most of what linguists today call Mesoamerica, and I believe it continued to be so for at least another century. Thus many indigenous peoples of this region were bilingual in Aztec and their own native languages. At the end of the 16th century Joseph de Solís visited the region which extends from the Coatzacoalcos River to the present-day Río Seco and Huimanguillo in Tabasco. According to de Solís the eleven towns he visited in 1599 "están mixturados de indios mexicanos y popolucas, y en general todos los varones hablan la lengua mexicana y las mujeres la popoluca." Further on he says, referring to the town of Mecatepec, that "[ellos] usan la lengua mexicana y popoluca, que es que los varones usan de ambos dos y las mujeres sólo la popoluca..."¹

I believe we may conclude from this that it would have been possible for bilingual Popoluca men to have adapted into their own native idiom Aztec words that not only were of Aztec stock, but also words that had been borrowed into Aztec from Spanish and had subsequently undergone phonological changes as they were adapted to Aztec structure.

That the Popolucas did borrow Aztec words into their own language can be demonstrated by the following examples: Sayula Popoluca *tenčun* "chin" from Aztec *tenčon*; Oluta Popoluca *te·ku* "owner" from Aztec *te·ko*; Sierra Popoluca *té·skat* "mirror" from Aztec *te·skat*; and Texistepec Popoluca *tulé·čen* "egret" from Aztec *tole·čen*.

2. 16th century Spanish vowels were pronounced as they are today in Standard Mexican Spanish. In respect to the consonants, however, there were some differences which I will discuss below. I will discuss only those consonants that underwent change in the transformation of 16th century Spanish into modern Mexican Spanish.

Some authorities believe that 16th century Spanish still had a contrast between /b/, a voiced bilabial stop written with the graph *b*, and /β/, a voiced bilabial fricative written with either *u* or *v*.

The alveo-palatal sibilant /š/ contrasted not only with apico-alveolar /s/, but also with the pre-dorsal sibilant written with the graphs *ç* and *z*. That this latter sibilant was still pronounced as an affricate at the time of the Conquest seems improbable due to the fact that writers who adapted the Castillian orthography of the New World invariably used the digraph *tz* to represent the alveolar affricates they found in these languages. Nevertheless, Loan Cognate Set 2 shows that some 16th century immigrants from Spain may still have retained the affricate pronunciation.

The palatalized lateral resonant /ly/ was still the norm in most Hispanic dialects of our period but it was losing ground to delateralized /y/ in the south, especially in Andalusia.

If we may infer from modern Spanish pronunciation, we may hypothesize that 16th century Spanish stressed vowels were pronounced slightly longer than unstressed vowels. Thus modern Spanish jabón was probably pronounced [šabó.n] in the 16th century as I have indicated in Loan Cognate Set 1.

3. When we compare the consonantal systems of Spanish and Aztec as they were spoken in the 16th century, we see that the latter lacked several consonants which were present in the former. Some examples are the series of voiced stops, the bilabial fricatives, the non-lateral liquids /ř/ and /ř'/, the apico-alveolar sibilant /ş/, and the palatalized resonants /ñ/ and /ly/.

16th century Aztec had four vowels; a, i, e and o. [o] fluctuates with [u] under certain conditions in several modern dialects.

4. In the Loan Cognate Sets below I will give the presumed 16th century pronunciation of the Spanish word, after which I will give the form in modern Aztec dialects as well as its form in other languages which probably borrowed the word in turn from Aztec.

4.1 16th century Spanish š was adapted into Aztec as the equivalent of Aztec š. Therefore no change occurred in this case as we see in Set 1.

4.2 The sibilant represented by the graphs ç and z, whether an affricate or not, was usually adapted to Aztec as the equivalent of Aztec s. Otherwise it was borrowed as an affricate as we see in Set 2.

4.3 An epenthetic vowel was often inserted between the two components of word-initial consonant clusters. We see one example in Set 2. Another example is pola.to from plato "plate".

4.4 As mentioned above, stressed vowels had non-phonemic length in 16th century Spanish. When a word with a long vowel was borrowed into an Aztec dialect that had phonemic vowel length, then the vowel length was interpreted in the borrowing dialect as phonemic and the vowel was therefore pronounced long. See Sets 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8.

4.5 Bisyllabic words that had ultimate stress in Spanish and that also ended in either n or a sibilant tended to switch the stress to the penultimate syllable in Aztec. See Set 1.

4.6 Voiced stops in Spanish tended to become voiceless in Aztec. See Set 1 in which Spanish b became Aztec p.

4.7 Word-final n was deleted following an unstressed vowel in several Aztec dialects. See Set 1.

4.8 ñ became y in at least one word in Aztec. See Set 3.

4.9 The non-lateral liquids ʎ, ʎ' and the cluster dr tended to be replaced by l in Aztec. See Set 4.

4.10 d between stressed é and unstressed i first became ʎ and then l in Aztec. See Set 5. Also remedio "remedy, help" became tlemélyo in Aztec of Tototeltepec, State of México.

4.11 Palatalized ly became unpalatalized as l between a stressed i and an unstressed vowel. See Sets 6, 7 and 8.

4.12 The Castillian apico-alveolar sibilant ʂ became ʃ in Aztec. See Sets 7 and 8.

5. Further changes in Mixe, Zoque, and Popoluca which had borrowed words from Spanish via Aztec.

5.1 The liquids r and l became n in the Mixe-Zoque family. This occurred undoubtedly because these liquids are very rare in this family. See Sets 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

5.2 Since s is a rare phoneme in Oluta Popoluca, Sayula Popoluca and Mixe, it was usually replaced by ʃ. See Set 2. This is also true of San Miguel Chimalapa Zoque, but the present data does not show it.

5.3 The alveolar series of consonants in Texistepec Popoluca and Sierra Popoluca were palatalized in palatalizing environments. This explains the ñ in Texistepec Popoluca in Set 6 and the tʎ in Sierra Popoluca in Set 8.

5.4 In Zoque of Santa María Chimalapa, s occurs palatalized as ʃ only in palatalizing environments. Thus ʃ became s in Set 1. This same ʃ became s in several other languages as illustrated by this set.

6.

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Aztec 1 | Arenas (1793) |
| Az 2 | unidentified source in González Casanova |
| Az 3 | San Juan Teotihuacán, Edo. de México |
| Az 4 | Totoltepec, Edo. de México |
| Az 5 | Tetelcingo, Morelos |
| Az 6 | Tepoxtlán, Morelos |
| Az 7 | Sierra de Puebla |
| Az 8 | Zacapoxtla, Puebla |
| Az 9 | Ixhuatlán, Chicotepec, Veracruz |
| Az 10 | Amatlán, Veracruz |
| Az 11 | Teutla |
| Az 12 | los Tuxtlas |
| Az 13 | Xoteapan, Veracruz |
| Az 14 | Pajapan, Veracruz |
| Az 15 | Mecayapan, Veracruz |
| Az 16 | Soconusco, Veracruz |
| Az 17 | Oteapan, Veracruz |
| Az 18 | El Salvador |
| Az 19 | Pochutla |
| Totonac 1 | Totonaco de Papantla, Veracruz |
| Tot 2 | Totonaco de la Sierra |
| Tot 3 | Totonaco de Xicotepec de Juárez |
| Tot 4 | Totonaco de Patla, Puebla |
| Tot 5 | Totonaco de Chapultepec, Veracruz |
| Tot 6 | Totonaco de Jilotepec, Veracruz |
| Tot 7 | Totonaco de San Francisco Apapantilla, Pue. |
| Tot 8 | Totonaco de Huitzila, Puebla |

| | |
|------------|--|
| Popoluca 1 | Popoluca de Oluta, Veracruz |
| Pop 2 | Popoluca de Sayula, Veracruz |
| Pop 3 | Popoluca de Texistepec, Veracruz |
| Pop 4 | Popoluca de la Sierra |
| Zoque 1 | Zoque de Santa María Chimalapa, Oaxaca |
| Zoq 2 | Zoque de San Miguel Chimalapa, Oaxaca |
| Zoq 3 | Zoque de Copainalá, Chiapas |
| Zoq 4 | Zoque de Ocotepec, Chiapas |
| Zoq 5 | Zoque de Francisco León, Chiapas |
| Mixe 1 | Mixe de Guichicovi, Oaxaca |
| Mixe 2 | Mixe de Mazatlán, Oaxaca |
| Mixe 3 | Mixe de Coatlán, Oaxaca |
| Mixe 4 | Mixe de Totontepec, Oaxaca |
| Huasteco | Huasteco |
| Chon Tab | Chontal de Tabasco |
| Chol 1 | Chol de Tila, Chiapas |
| Chol 2 | Chol de Tumbalá, Chiapas |
| Tzeltal 1 | Tzeltal de Bachajón, Chiapas |
| Tze 2 | Tzeltal de Oxchuc, Chiapas |
| Tzo 1 | Tzotzil de San Andrés, Chiapas |
| Tzo 2 | Tzotzil de Zinacantlán, Chiapas |

| | |
|----------|---|
| Toj | Tojolobal |
| Kek | Kekchi |
| Achí | Achí |
| Cak | Cakchiquel |
| Poc 1 | Pocomchí |
| Poc 2 | Pocomam |
| Ixil | Ixil |
| Agua | Aguacatec |
| Jac | Jacaltec |
| Chuj | Chuj |
| Chor | Chorti |
| Ixca | Ixcateco |
| Mixtec 1 | Mixteco de San Miguel el Grande, Oaxaca |
| Mix 2 | Mixteco de Chayuco, Oaxaca |
| Mix 3 | Mixteco de Jicaltepec, Oaxaca |
| Mix 4 | Mixteco (unidentified) |

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Trique 1 | Trique de Chicahuaxtla, Oaxaca |
| Tri 2 | Trique de Copala, Oaxaca |
| Zapotec 1 | Zapoteco del Istmo, Oaxaca |
| Zap 2 | Zapoteco de Mitla, Oaxaca |
| Zap 3 | Zapoteco de Atepec, Oaxaca |
| Chat | Chatino de Tataltepec, Oaxaca |
| Maz | Mazahua |
| Cora | Cora |
| Hui | Huichol |
| Mayo | Mayo |
| Yaq | Yaqui |
| Pap | Papago-Pima |
| Chon Oax | Chontal de Oaxaca |

7.

LOAN COGNATE SET 1

16th C. Spanish [šabó·n] "jabón" (soap)

| | | | |
|-------|--------|----------|--------------|
| Az 2 | šápo | Pop 1 | šapúʔn |
| Az 3 | šápo | Pop 2 | šápu·n |
| Az 4 | šápo | Pop 3 | šápun |
| Az 5 | šápo | Pop 4 | šá·pun |
| Az 6 | šápo | | |
| Az 7 | šápo | Zoq 1 | šá·puh |
| Az 8 | šápoḥ | Zoq 2 | šá·puh |
| Az 9 | šápo | Zoq 3 | šapún |
| Az 10 | šápo | Zoq 4 | šábun |
| Az 11 | šápo | Zoq 5 | šápun |
| Az 12 | šápo | | |
| Az 13 | šápo·n | Huas | šabu·n |
| Az 14 | šápo·n | | |
| Az 15 | šápo·n | Chon Tab | šápum |
| Az 16 | šápon | | |
| Az 18 | šápun | Chol 1 | šapun |
| Az 19 | šabó | Chol 2 | šapóm |
| Tot 3 | šápu | Tze 1 | šapón |
| Tot 4 | šapú | Tze 2 | šapón |
| Tot 8 | šápu | | |
| Tot 9 | šápu | Tzo 1 | šapón, šavón |
| | | Tzo 2 | šavón |
| Mix 4 | šapu | | |
| | | Kek | šabʔon |
| Zap 1 | žabúʔ | | |

| | | | |
|----------|---------|-------|--------|
| Maz 1 | šáβo | Achí | šibon |
| Cora | sépuun | Cak | šabʔon |
| Hui | šapúní | Poc 1 | šapon |
| | | Poc 2 | šapuan |
| Mayo | sáabom | | |
| | | Ixil | šapon |
| Yaq | sáabu | | |
| | | Agua | šawon |
| Pap | šawóni | | |
| | | Jac | šapun |
| Chon Oax | galšabu | | |
| | | Chuj | sawon |
| | | Chor | šapun |

LOAN COGNATE SET 2

16th C. Spanish [krú.ʔ] "cruz" (cross)

| | | | |
|-------|-----------------|-------|--------------|
| Az 2 | kruže, kruži | Tri 1 | rugúži |
| Az 5 | krúhži, koruhči | Tri 2 | ruže, rugúže |
| Pop 1 | kunúʔš | Maz | ngrónsi |
| Pop 2 | kúnu·š | | |
| Pop 3 | kúnus | Cora | kúruu |
| Pop 4 | kúnus | | |
| | | Mayo | kúurus |

| | | | |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Mixe 1 | kɪnú:ʒim | Yaq | kus |
| Mixe 2 | kru:ʃ | | |
| Mixe 3 | kru:ʃ | Pap | koroʃ |
| | | Chon Oax | lanʔkurus |

LOAN COGNATE SET 3

| | | | |
|---------|-----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 16th C. | Spanish [pá·ño] | "panuelo" | (handkerchief, shawl) |
| Az 8 | pá·yoh | Pop 1 | pá·yu |
| Az 19 | payó "rebozo" | Pop 2 | pá·yuh |
| | | Pop 3 | pá·yuʔ |
| Tot 3 | pá·yu | | |
| Tot 7 | payo | Chon Tab | payu |
| Tot 8 | payo | | |
| | | Tri 2 | wayon, bayon |
| Zoq 1 | pá·yuh | | |
| Zoq 2 | pá·yuh | Zap 1 | bayuʔ |
| Zoq 3 | páyuh | Zap 2 | bay |
| Zoq 4 | páyu | | |
| | | Chat | payú |
| Mixe 1 | pá·yɨ | | |
| Mixe 2 | pá·yɨ | Yaq | páyum |
| Mixe 3 | pa·y | | |
| Mixe 4 | pá·yu | Chon Oax | albaʔyu |

LOAN COGNATE SET 4

| | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| 16th C. Spanish | [komá·dre] | "comadre" | (godmother, female ritual relative) |
| Az 2 | komále | Huas | kuma·le |
| Az 9 | komóre | | |
| Az 14 | gomá·le | Chon Tab | kumale |
| Az 15 | komá·leh | | |
| Az 19 | kumaléu | Chol 2 | kumale |
| Tot 3 | iʔškumá·leh | Tze 1 | kumare |
| | | Tze 2 | kumale |
| Pop 1 | kumá·ne | | |
| Pop 2 | kumá·nih | Tzo 1 | kumale |
| Pop 3 | kumá·n | Tzo 2 | kumale, komale |
| Zoq 1 | kumá·neh | Toj | kumare |
| Zoq 2 | kumá·neh | | |
| | | Mix 1 | komari |
| Mixe 1 | kwa:n | Mix 2 | kumali |
| Mixe 2 | kwa:n | Mix 3 | kumari |
| Zap 1 | male | Tri | mare (de hombre) male (de mujer) |
| Zap 2 | ma·l | | |
| | | Maz | ngwane |
| Chat | mali | | |
| | | Cora | kumuá |
| Chon Oax | galgummale | | |
| | | Pap | komal |

LOAN COGNATE SET 5

16th C. Spanish [mé·dio] "medio real" (half real - a Spanish coin)

Az 19 milyú Tzo 2 merio

Pop 1 me·ñu Zap 3 béliu

Mixe 2 me:ñ Maz merio

Mixe 3 me:ñ

Mixe 4 me·n

LOAN COGNATE SET 6

16th C. Spanish [kučí lyo] "cuchillo" (knife)

Az 14 gočilo Huas kuči·l

Az 15 kočilo

Chol 1 kučiro

Tot 2 kuči·lu Chol 2 kučilo

Tot 3 kuči·lu

Tot 5 kučil Tze 1 kučilo

Tot 6 kučil Tze 2 kučilo

Tot 7 kuči·lo

Tzo 2 kučilo

Pop 1 kučí·nu

Pop 2 kučí·nuh Toj kučilo

Pop 3 kučé.ñ

Tri 1 šilu

Hui ku^tsi·ra "machete"

Zap 2 guči·l

Yaq kučiri

LOAN COGNATE SET 7

16th C. Spanish [ʃí·lʏa] "silla", "montura" (chair, saddle)

| | | | |
|--------|------------|-------|-----------|
| Az 14 | šílah | Tze 2 | šila |
| Az 15 | ší·lah | | |
| | | Tzo 1 | šila |
| Pop 1 | ší·na | Tzo 2 | šila |
| Pop 2 | ší·nah | | |
| Pop 3 | še·lah | Ixca | ya-šila |
| Pop 4 | ši·nah | | |
| | | Tri 2 | žila |
| Mixe 1 | ši·ŋɛ | | |
| | | Zap 2 | ya·k-ši·l |
| Pap | sihl, šihl | Zap 3 | šilá |

LOAN COGNATE SET 8

16th C. Spanish [kaʃtí·lʏa] "Castilla" (Spain)

| | | |
|-------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Az 1 | kaštil - tototl | "gallina" (hen) |
| Az 2 | kastilan | "castellano" (Spanish) |
| Az 8 | kašti·l | "gallo" (rooster) |
| Az 19 | tilán | "gallina" |
| Tot 1 | šti·la·n | "gallina" |
| Tot 2 | šti·la·n | "gallina" |
| Tot 3 | kašli | "gallina" |
| Pop 3 | ka·šdʰ á·n | "pan" (bread) |
| Pop 4 | kaštʏaʔna·ñi | "pan" |

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|--|
| Zoq 3 | kašlaʔáne | "pan" |
| | kahši | "gallina" |
| Huas | kutsila·n košol | "gallo de pelea" (fighting cock) |
| Chon Tab | kaštran tʔan | "castellano" |
| | kaštran wah | "pan" |
| Chol 2 | kašlán | "ladino" (non-Indian) |
| | kašlán wah | "pan" |
| Tzo 1 | kašlan | "gallina" |
| Tzo 2 | kašlán | "gallina" |
| Toj | kašlan | "ladino" |
| Tri 2 | žila | "extraño de Castilla" (foreigner from Spain) |
| Cora | kastiran | "castellano" |

FOOTNOTE

¹Translation: "are mixed Mexicans and Popolucas, and in general all the men speak the Mexicano language and the women the Popoluca." (Modern day usage would be either Aztec or Nahuatl where de Solís said Mexican and Mexicano.) "[they] use the Mexicano language and Popoluca, that is the men use them both and the women only Popoluca..."