On the so-called “purposive” verbs in Nahuatl*
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1 Introduction

1.1 Directionals in Nahuatl

- Directional prefixes on-, wāl- ‘toward/away from’
- “Purposive” forms tīw-, kīw-, etc. ‘go/come in order to...’ (?)
- Verbal compounds with ‘go’/‘come’ verbs

Andative (outbound, translocative) vs. venitive (inbound, cislocative)

Table 1: Classical Nahuatl directionals

<table>
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<th>Directional prefix</th>
<th>Andative</th>
<th>Venitive</th>
<th>Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directional prefix</td>
<td>on-</td>
<td>wāl-</td>
<td>‘away from/towards’</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-tīw(i-)</td>
<td>-kīw(i-)</td>
<td>(nonpast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Purposive”</td>
<td>-tō(-)</td>
<td>-kō(-)</td>
<td>(preterit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-tī(-)</td>
<td>-kī(-)</td>
<td>(optative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal compound</td>
<td>-tīw(i-)</td>
<td>-tīwāl-wi(-)</td>
<td>‘go ...ing’ (also: ‘gradually’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.2 Andative vs. venitive

(1) *in īski-tlamantli=īn in Ø-kim-om-maka-ke’
    ART as.much-thing=the ART 3s-3PLO-AND-give-PST.PL
    ‘They [Aztec envoys] gave (andative) them [the Spaniards] all these things.’

(2) Ø-kin-wāl-kwepkāyōti-li’-ke’
    3s-3PLO-VEN-return.favor-APPL-PST.PL
    ‘They [the Spaniards] returned (venitive) them the gift.’

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(3) Ø-kin-w¯al-maka-ke’ k¯oskatl xoxotik kostik iwkin mā in Ø-¯apos¯onal-ne’neki
3s-3plo-ven-give-pst.pls necklace green yellow like as.if art 3s-amber-pretend
‘They [the Spaniards] gave (venitive) them [the Aztec envoys] green and yellow necklaces
which look[ed] like amber.’ (Florentine Codex XII, 6)

(For their metaphorical uses see Andrews (1981), Launey (1997))

1.3 “Purposive” verbs


(4) ka õ=ti-kim-itta-to’
in to-tēkw-yō-wān
in tēteo’ in ātl
AFF ANT=1plo-3plo-see-andp.pst-pls ART 1plo-lord-inal-pl.poss ART god.pl art water
i-’tik
3gp-inside
‘We went to see the gods, our lords out at the sea.’

(5) in īxkich mo-tilma’-tsin õ=ti-kim-maka-to’
ART all 2gp-cape-hon ANT=2plo-3plo-give-andp.pst-pls
‘We went to give them all of your capes.’ (Florentine Codex XII, 6)

(6) ka san tī-k-īxkāwī-ko’
in tī-k-to-siyankechi-llī-ko’
AFF only 1plo-3sgo-have.uniquely-venp.pst-pls ART 1plo-3sgo-refl.greet-appl-venp.pst-pls
in tī-k-to-tla’palwī-ko’
ART 1plo-3sgo-refl.salute.appl-venp.pst-pls
‘We came with only one purpose; we came to greet him, salute him.’
(Fllorentine Codex XII, 16)


1.4 Non-purposive use of “purposive” forms

(7) aw in õ=Ø-a’si-ko’
tekōwak ...
and when ANT=3s-arrive-venp.pst-pls Tecoac
‘When they arrived (lit. came to arrive) at Tecoac ...’ (Florentine Codex XII, 27)

(8) niman i’siwka Ø-wāl-pēw-ke’ Ø-a’si-ti-wetsi-ko’
in mēx’ko san yowal-ti-ka
then quickly 3s-ven-depart-pls 3s-arrive.l-fall-venp.pst-pls ART Mexico only night.l-by
in Ø-a’si-ko’
ART 3s-arrive-venp.pst-pls san 3s-ven-night-enter.pst-pls
‘Then they set out in a hurry towards here; they came to arrive quickly at Mexico; it was
already dark when they arrived (lit. came to arrive) here; they entered by night.’
(Florentine Codex XII, 17)
2.1 Typical use of “purposive” forms in Ixquihuacan Nahuatl

(10) *ma-Ø-walā-kā ma-Ø-kim-ñxmati-ki-h n ichtikeh*  
    OPT-3s-come-OPT.PL S OPT-3s-3PL-o-opt-PLS ART thief.PL  
    ‘May they *come to see* who the thieves are.’

(11) *wan ENTONECES ok sipa y-Ø-kalaki-to n t-nānah n Luis,*  
     and then still once already-PST-3s-enter-ANDP.PST ART 3SGF-mother ART Luis,  
     *y-Ø-ki-nōtsa-to n akē t-wā ñkatka-h ompa kal-ihtik*  
     already-PST-3s-3SG-o-call-ANDP.PST ART who 3PLP-with PST-be.PST-PLS there house-inside  
     ‘And then, Luis’s mother went into the house (lit. *went to enter* the house) again; she *went to call* those who stayed in the house.’

(12) *ō-sē-yā-ya HASTA ZACATLÁN PARA sē-k-āna-tih, sē-Ø-kōwa-tih tlaōl,*  
     PST-1PLS-go-IPF until Zacatlán for 1PLS-3SG-TAKE-ANDP 1PLS-3SG-BUY-ANDP CORN  
     sē-Ø-kōwa-tih n tēn chikāwak ...  
     1PLS-3SG-BUY-ANDP ART REL strong  
     ‘We used to *go* all the way to Zacatlán to *take* [things]; we *go buy* corn; we *go buy* liquor (lit. something strong)...’

2.2 Non-typical use of “purposive” verbs in Ixquihuacan Nahuatl

(13) *ENTONECES ñ-øluyuwa-ko nipat ūeh n äftēntl ... ompa ñ-øluyuwa-ko,*  
     PST-be.dark-VENP.PST behing at ART riverside there PST-grow.dark-PST there  
     then

(9) *ka in ò=Ø-machisti-to in kaxtillan kil senka’ an-chikāwak-e’*  
    AFF ART ANT=3s-be.KNOWN-ANDP.PST ART Castile it.is.said very 2PLS-strong-PL  
    *an-tiŷa kāwān*  
    2PLS-brave.PL

‘It has *gone to be known* all the way to Castile that you are very strong and brave.’

(Florentine Codex XII, 16)
ō-ti-walah-keh
PST-1PLS-COME.PST-PLS

‘[On the way back from business,] [when we reached] at the riverside, the night fell. There the night fell, we came down there.’

(14) Ø-ki-wīka n kokox Ø-ki-mēmeh-tih, wan ohkôn ó-Ø-k-ahxītā-ya
3s-3SGO-Bring ART sick.person 3s-3SGO-bare-go and thus PST-3s-3SGO-reach.CAUS-IPF
ZACATLÁN, wan tlā Ø-políwi-tih ñch n ohtli ... O COMO milāk Ø-políwi-ñ̓weh ... Zacatlán and if 3s-be.lost-ANDP at ART road or like true 3s-be.lost-ANDP.PL

‘He [used to] carry the patient and brought him to Zacatlán; and if he passes away on the way there, ... say, if he really has passed away on the way, ...’

3 Semantic tests for “purposives”

(a) Does $M$ actually happen?
(b) Does $E$ occur after $M$ is completed?
(c) Is $E$ the objective of $M$?
(d) Do $M$ and $E$ share the subject?
(e) Does $E$ occur at the same place as the subject of $M$?

(a) Does $M$ actually happen?

(15) Context: I came to the market.

ō-ni-Ø-kōwa-ko no-ZAPATOS
PST-1SGS-3SGO-buy-VEN.PST 1SGP-shoes.PL

‘I came to buy my shoes.’

OK: I actually bought shoes.
OK: I haven’t bought any shoes but I’m still looking for ones.
OK: I could not find any shoes in the market so I gave up.

(b) Does $E$ occur after $M$ is completed?

(16) Context: My friend lives in another village and I went to say hello to him.

ō-ni-k-tlahpalō-to sē no-AMIGO
PST-1SGS-3SGO-greet-ANDP.PST one 1SGP-friend

‘I came to greet a friend of mine.’

OK: I came to his house and said hello to him.
NG: Soon after I left my village, I ran into him and said hello.
(17) **Context:** My brother is sick; so we brought him to the hospital.  
\[ \text{o-Ø-pohpoliwi-ko} \quad \text{n} \quad \text{no-knih} \]  
\[ \text{pst-3s-pass.away-venp.pst} \quad \text{art} \quad \text{1sgp-brother} \]  
**OK:** He died before arriving at the hospital.  
**NG:** He died soon after the arrival at the hospital.

(c) **Is E the objective of M?**

(18) **Context:** I visited my friend at his house and said him hello.  
- a. \[ \text{o-ni-k-tlahpalö-to} \quad \text{së} \quad \text{no-AMIGO} \]  
\[ \text{pst-1sgs-3sgo-greet-andp.pst} \quad \text{one} \quad \text{1sgp-friend} \]  
- b. \[ \text{o-ni-k-ahsi-to} \quad \text{së} \quad \text{no-AMIGO} \]  
\[ \text{pst-1sgs-3sgo-arrive-andp.pst} \quad \text{one} \quad \text{1sgp-friend} \]  

(19) **Context:** On my way to the city, I ran into my friend and said him hello.  
- a. \[ \text{o-ni-k-tlahpalö-to} \quad \text{së} \quad \text{no-AMIGO} \]  
\[ \text{pst-1sgs-3sgo-greet-andp.pst} \quad \text{one} \quad \text{1sgp-friend} \]  
- b. \[ \text{o-ni-k-ahsi-to} \quad \text{së} \quad \text{no-AMIGO} \]  
\[ \text{pst-1sgs-3sgo-arrive-andp.pst} \quad \text{one} \quad \text{1sgp-friend} \]  

(d) **Do M and E share the subject?**

cf. (13)–(14)

(e) **Does E occur at the same place as the subject of M?**

(20) **Context:** I’m on my way back to my village in order to help my family build a new house. On my way to the village, they called me and said that they had just finished building the house.  
\[ \text{o-Ø-tlami-ko} \]  
\[ \text{pst-1sgs-3sgo-finish-venp.pst} \]  
Intended meaning: ‘It finished when I came to this point.’

4 **Discussion**

**Question:** How can these two uses be accounted for in a uniform way?

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1(17) is a problematic example; the follow-up study revealed that what makes (17) unacceptable with the latter context is that (17) is uttered at the hospital. For instance, it is possible to say ołpohpoliwiito on the way home from the hospital, even if the “brother” died at the hospital.
Table 3: Semantic tests for “purposives”

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“Purpose” use</th>
<th>“On-way” use</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Does $M$ actually happen?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Does $E$ occur after $M$ is completed?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>(c) Is $E$ the objective of $M$?</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Does $E$ occur at the same place as the subject of $M$?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 A unified account: Three presuppositions

(i) “Purposive” as $M$–$E$ succession: “Purposive” forms themselves do not mark any logical or causal relation between $M$ and $E$; they simply denote that $M$ and $E$ occur in succession.

(ii) Projection of semantic features: The argument structure of the verb stem is projected onto the whole “purposive” verb (verbal complex); the “purposive” suffixes do not affect the argument structure of the entire verb.

(iii) Relevancy condition: Two logically or cognitively irrelevant events cannot be combined into one verb.

“Purpose” use:

(21) $ni$-$Ø$-$kōwa$-$tih$ no-ZAPATOS
1sgs-3sgo-buy-andp 1sgp-shoes
‘I went in order to buy my shoes.’

$M$–$E$ succession: ‘come’ → ‘buy my shoes’

Projection: The whole verb is agentive/volitional

Relevancy: This is a volitional complex event which ‘coming’ follows ‘buying my shoes’

“On-way” use:

(22) $ō$-tlayuwa-ko
pst-be.dark-venp;pst
‘Night fell when [we] came at this point.’

$M$–$E$ succession: ‘come’ → ‘it gets dark’

Projection: The whole verb is non-agentive, impersonal

Relevancy: This is an impersonal complex event which ‘coming’ follows ‘it getting dark’

6
(23) \(\emptyset\)-poliwi-tih
3s-be.lost-venp.pst
‘He passed away on his way.’

**M–E succession:** ‘go’ \(\rightarrow\) ‘pass away’

**Projection:** The whole verb is non-agentive

**Relevancy:** This is a non-agentive complex event which ‘going’ follows ‘passing away’

5 Implications

(7’) \(aw\) in \(\bar{o}=\emptyset-a\text{-}si\text{-}ko\text{-}'

\(\text{tekówak ...}
\)

and when \(\text{ant}=3s\text{-arrive-venp.pst-pls Tecoac}
\)

‘When they **arrived** (lit. came to arrive) at Tecoac ...’

(Florentine Codex XII, 27)

(8’) \(niman\ i\text{-}siwka\ \emptyset\text{-}wål\text{-}pēw\text{-}ke’ \(\emptyset\text{-}a\text{-}si\text{-}ti\text{-}wetsi\text{-}ko\text{-}' \(\text{in mēxi’ko san yowel\text{-}ti\text{-}ka}
\)

then \(\text{quickly \(3s\text{-arrive-venp.pst-pls ART Mexico only night\text{-}l\text{-}by}
\)

\(\text{in \(\emptyset\text{-}a\text{-}si\text{-}ko\text{-}' \(\text{san \(\emptyset\text{-}wål\text{-}yowel\text{-}kalak\text{-}ke’}
\)

\(\text{ART \(3s\text{-arrive-venp.pst-pls san 3s\text{-ven\text{-}night\text{-}enter.pst-pls}
\)

‘Then they set out in a hurry towards here; they came to arrive quickly at Mexico; it was already dark when they **arrived** (lit. came to arrive) here; they entered by night.’

(Florentine Codex XII, 17)

(9’) \(ka\) in \(\bar{o}=\emptyset\text{-}machisti\text{-}to\)

\(\text{in kaxtīllān kil senka’ an-chikāwak\text{-}e’}
\)

\(\text{AFF ART ant}=3s\text{-be.known-andp.pst ART Castile it.is.said very 2pls\text{-}strong\text{-}pl}
\)

\(\text{an\text{-}tiya’kāwān}
\)

2pls\text{-}brave.pl

‘It has **gone to be known** all the way to Castile that you are very strong and brave.’

(Florentine Codex XII, 16)

<table>
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<th>Table 4: Normal and “purposive” verb paradigms (Ixquihuacan)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Indicative present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicative future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicative imperfect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicative preterit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(24) a. \(\bar{o}\text{-}ni\text{-}tla\text{-}kwā\text{-}to\ ‘I went to eat’

b. \(\bar{o}\text{-}ni\text{-}tla\text{-}kwah\text{-}ti\text{-}yah\ ‘I went eating’
‘We merely come to stand sleeping, we merely come to dream. It is not true, not true that we come to live on earth.’ (Cantares Mexicanos f. 14v; Bierhorst, 1985, 174–175)

Abbreviations

1 = first person; 2 = second person; 3 = third person; AFF = affirmative; AND = andative; ANDP = andative purposive; ANT = antecessive; APPL = applicative; ART = article; CAUS = causative; HON = honorific; IPF = imperfect; INAL = inalienable; L = linking suffix; NEG = negative; OPT = optative; PL = plural; PLO = plural object; PLP = plural possessor; PLS = plural subject; PST = past (preterit); REFL = reflexive; REL = relative pronoun; SG = singular; SGO = singular object; SGP = singular possessor; SGS = singular subject; VEN = venitive; VENP = venitive purposive

References


