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Barbara E. Hollenbach *SIL-UND*

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THREE POSSIBLE DIFFUSED WORDS IN AMERINDIAN LANGUAGES

Barbara E. Hollenbach

As I was reading Joseph Casagrande's article, "Comanche Baby Language" (IJAL 14:11-14, 1948), I was struck by the similarity of three words to Copala Trique forms in my field notes. Comanche 'Iti'.' or 'Iti'ti'ti'.' it's hot, used as a command to children to stay away from hot things, and the corresponding adult forms with r in place of t, are very similar to Copala Trique utItItI or ujijih or t't'is hot, used as an exclamation by the person feeling the heat. Comanche mamá' horse, used by children when they want to be carried on someone's back, is very similar to Copala Trique mamã' or mamãh to be carried on the back, used by both children and adults to each other for carrying a child. Comanche cicí' breast, bottle, milk, I want to be suckled, and the corresponding adult form pícip milk, breast, are very similar to Copala Trique ci breast and uci to nurse (intransitive).

The resemblances seemed worthy of note because of the considerable distance, both geographic and linguistic, between the two languages. Comanche is a Uto-Aztecan language spoken in Oklahoma; Trique is a Macro-Otomanguean language spoken in Oaxaca, Mexico. The words can hardly be cognate, yet they seem to be more than mere chance resemblances. I began to wonder if they did not represent forms widely diffused throughout Middle America and the U.S. Southwest. I therefore began to question my colleagues in the Summer Institute of Linguistics. My brief investigation revealed a number of possibly related forms. The name of the SIL member who provided each form is enclosed in parentheses after each.

The forms for to carry a child on one's back are: 'manci,

used in Apapantilla Totonac (Totonacan) and local dialects of Spanish as a one-word utterance to children (Ruth Bishop); 'meme, used in Tojolabal (Mayan) as a one-word utterance to children (Margaret Wendell), ma³má⁴, used in San Juan Lealao Chinantec (Macro-Otomanguean) as a modifier of the verb to carry (James Rupp). A likely source for these words is the Classical Aztec root mama or mame to carry on the back. Other possible, but in my opinion far less likely, sources are: Spanish mamar to nurse (intransitive); Spanish mamá mother; or Quechua (Quechumaran) 'mama mother (Peter Landerman).

The forms for it's hot are: tUtU, used in Rocoroibo Tarahumara (Uto-Aztecam) as a warning to children that food is hot (Donald Burgess); idit; used in Northern Faiute (Uto-Aztecam) both as an exclamation and as a warning (John and Joy Anderson) AčUčU, used in San Felipe Otlaltepec Popoloca (Macro-Otomanguean) as an exclamation (Ann Williams), ačIčI, used in San Esteban Atatlahuca Mixtec (Macro-Otomanguean) as an exclamation (Ruth Mary Alexander); ača'čau or ača'lau, used in Quechua as an exclamation (Peter Landerman). Candoshi (Jivaroan) has an onomatopoeic word for burning skin; čiřičačača (Lorrie Anderson). Perhaps these warnings and exclamations developed from onomatopoeic forms for sizzle.

The forms for <u>breast</u> are: chiche or chichi, used in Mexican Spanish, originally a loan from the Classical Aztec word chichihualli <u>breast</u> or chichi to <u>nurse</u> (intransitive); cikiit, used in Totonac (Ruth Bishop); ču², used in Tojolabal (Frances Jackson); c², m, used in Cakchiquel (Mayan) (Mary Mast); ču used in Tzeltal (Mayan) (Homer Gifford); č²u², used in Ixil (Mayan) (Ray Elliott); čhu², used in Tabasco Chontal (Mayan) (James Walker); šijí, used in Isthmus Zapotec (Macro-Otomanguean) (Virginia Embrey); ce²ck, used in Tlahuitoltepec Mixe (Zoquean) (Donald Lyon). All of the above contain either an alveolar or alveopalatal affricate. The five Mayan forms are probably true cognates.