Comments on Canger

A few minor points needing correction:

1. p. 4 UC notes that in parsing

 0-ne:ch-0-maka

 3Subj-1sgObj-3sgObj-give

She correctly notes that "two specifying object prefixes never co-occur in one verb form, the place of the 0 is arbitrary and example (11) may just as well be written this way 0-0-ne:ch-maka.

 This is not completely the case. Although a secondary specific object (0) cannot be expressed in the presence of a specific primary object, the plurality of the secondary object can be overtly expressed (by -im-) and its position is not artibitrary. Thus

 0-ne:ch-0-maka

 'S/he gives it to me'

but

 0-ne:ch-imi-maka

 'S/he gives them to me'

-imi (the second /i/ is epenthetic) expresses the plurality of the secondary object. The plural object marker is kim-, and the single object is k-, so we can parse kim- 3pl as k+im. It is interesting that plurality can be detached from specificity morphologically. But it is important to note that at some level -imi- does express plural specific referents.

2. There is an exception to the statement that "two specifying object prefixes never co-occur in one verb form" and that occurs with reflexive ditransitive constructions. Consider

 ninokowilia

 ni-0-no-kow(a)-lia

 1sgSubj-3sgObj-Reflex-to.buy-applicative

 I buy it for myself.

But also possible is

 niknokowilia

 ni-k-no-kow(a)-lia

 1sgSubj-3sgObj-Refl-to.buy-applicative

 I buy it for myself.

The no- in the example is the reflexive marker and I would consider it a specific primary object marker used when the primary object is coreferent with the (specific) subject. Again here we see that two specific object markers occur overtly.

3. Launey notes that "passive" constructions with inanimates are formed with reflexive markers (at least functional passives). Thus 'e:kchi:wa' is 'to build'.

 ni-k-e:kchi:wa no-kal

 1sgS-3sgObj-to.build 1sgPoss-house

 I build my house

But to suppress the agent the reflexive is used

 mo:stla 0-m(o)-e:kchi:wa-s no-kal

 tomorrow 3Subj-refl-to.build-fut.sg my house

 My house will be built tomorrow

Whether one wants to call this a "passive" seems irrelevant. The important thing is the discourse function which is, as Launey notes, the "effacement" of the agent. Note that the reflexive marker is mo- and not ne-, which is used only with -lo and in deverbal nominalizations.

4. More on the reflexive. The first is that reflexives are not always what one writer has called "two person events with the two "persons" referencing one individual". Often the reflexive is in paradigmatic relationship with specific objet markers:

 ni-mits-tlasohtla

 1sgSubj-2sgObj-to.love

 I love you

 ni-no-tlasohtla

 1sgSubj-Refl-to.love

 I love myself

But the paradigmatic slot of mits- and no- is not the same, positionally. This is apparent when a directional prefix is used:

 ni-mits-wa:l-pale:wia

 1sgSubj-2sgObj-intraverse.directional-to.help

 I come to help you

but

 ni-wa:l-no-pale:wia

 1sgSubj-intraverse.directional-Refl-to.help

 I come to help myself

Prefixes that are less specific tend to be closer to the verb stem, on the right side of directional. This and the example of niknokowilia suggest that the reflexive is less specific than the specific objects.

5. More on the reflexive

There are verbs that are not transitive (i.e., cannot take an object, specific or nonspecific (I call them nonreferential) but must be reflexively marked. One example is tlalowa 'to run'

 ni-no-tlalowa

 1sgSubj-Refl-to.run

 I run

This seems more like a middle voice. But whatever the analysis, a specific object cannot occur instead of no-

 \*ni-k-tlalowa

6. Reflexives can be used with human subjects to indicate a "get passive". Thus UC gives the example

 ni-no-mik-tia

 1sgSubj-Refl-to.die-Caus

 I kill myself

But a common use of these constructions is to indicate 'you will get yourself killed', i.e., a non-volitional action.

7. Interpretation of te:-

UC glosses this as Unspec:Obj:Hum but this is not really how it is used. For example if a person berates another for the bad behavior of a child in the house the house owner may excuse him/herself by saying te:kone:w

te:-kone:-w

NonRefl-child-possessed.sg

But this doesn't it 'someone's child' but 'someone ELSE's child'. This is sort of grammaticalized Gricean discourse: one's own child is "someone's" child but one would never use te:kone:w with one's own child. Indeed, the te:- and tla- marker (as well as -lo and -wa) do not seem to be directly related to specificity. So we can consider a misbehaving child and one might answer

 yehwa xnokone:w, te:kone:w, i:kone:w Juan

 He is not my child, he is someone else's child, he is Juan's child.

Or one could say, in response to a comment about a child's behavior

 te:kone:w, i:kone:w Juan

 He is someone else's child, he is Juan's child.

The response of simply

 i:kone:w Juan

 He is Juan's child

is discursively aberrant, that would be the response to 'Whose child is it?'

More on this below, but the key is that the te:-, tla-, -lo and -wa markers are used for discurive pragmatic purposes. Moreover, they are not necessarily nonspecific.

8. As Mithun noted re: the discussion of noun incorporation, use of tla- in Nahuat is not simply about referentiality (UC calls this specificity) but can be related to lexicalized forms. Thus for ex. (9) niktlamaka. The tla- does not mean Unspecific:Obj:Nonhuman but is lexicalized to mean 'to feed'. Ne:chontlamakas nokone:w 'My child will go take me something to eat'. Indeed, tla- can have a specific lexicalized meaning.

But the major discussion is around forms such as ne-tlalo:lo and nikwa:lo. For various reasons I think that the second was a specific Aztec innovation that evolved from certain poetic/discursive needs. I don't think it is documented (except lexicalized, e.g., kwalo, kwahkwalo). The argument that -lo is a subject marker (given that in ne-tlalo:-lo the ne- presupposes a subject is interesting, but I am not sure it captures the use of -lo in general (e.g., as -lo:ni an instrumental ending and its possible presence in deverbal nouns, tla-kwa-l-li 'food' (cf. kwa 'to eat')

First, consider that transitives have

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Forms such as ni-tla-kwa "efface" the object, leaving A and Pred accessible to discursive manipulation/reference. And forms such as tla-kwa-lo are best interpreted, I think, as a discursive device to isolate the predicate for reference/discussion. Indeed, the form, with -ya:n, enters into nominalizations:

 tlakwa:lo:ya:n 'place where eating occurs' 'dining hall'

 te:machti:lo:ya:n 'place where teaching occurs' 'school

with -ni as a prefect of experience nikkwa:ni 'I have eaten it' (i.e., I have experienced eating it) one has instrumentals with -lo:ni 0-tla-teki 'it cuts' (it is sharp) and tlatekilo:ni 'knife'.

Historically, the only common uses of -lo (besides the nominalizations above) were

 1a. After the object was effaced in transitive verbs, to efface the subject: tlakwa:lo 'eating happens'

 1b. With intransitives, indicating again that the predicate event occurs, but with "human" implied actors:

 ki:salo 'leaving occurs'

 nika:n ki:salo 'here leaving occurs' (i.e., here is where one leaves, hear is the exit)

but with tla- we have a constrastive

 tlaki:sa 'leaving (of inanimate) occurs, i.e., 'the rainy season ends'

 2. Not often discussed is the use of -lo with transitivized intransitives to indicate patients of a non-volitional agent.

 kiawi (it) rains

 0-kiawi:lo 's/he is rained upon'

 yehyeka 'wind blows'

 yehyekawi:lo 'it/she/he is blown over by the wind'

 to:na 'it is hot'

 nito:nawi:lo 'I am beaten down upon by the sun'

In all the above cases the transitive form can be implied. Thus the vowel lengthening in -wi:lo reflects a verbal/verbalizing ending -wia (denominal verbs) \*kiawia, which does not exist. These forms are the closest Nahuat comes to passives, but the agent is non-volitional. It is also found in forms such as 'to be attacked by bugs'.

\*ne:chmako

nimako

\*ne:chpale:wi:lo

nipale:wi:lo

Is this object promotion. Usually

I hit the ball.

The ball was hit.

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Subject specific | Subject not specific |
| Object specific | ni-k-kwa | \*ne:ch-kwa-lo |
| Object not specific | ni-tla-kwa | tla-kwa-lo |