

VERBAL MORPHOLOGY AND PROSODY IN OTOMI¹

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Verbs in Otomi (Otopamean; Otomanguean) have two distinct inflectional forms whose selection is conditioned by an interesting combination of prosodic and syntactic factors. In this article, I describe these two inflectional forms and the factors that motivate their usage. The phenomenon studied here is not common cross-linguistically, given that it constitutes a rare case where different levels of linguistic organization are significantly interconnected at the time a clause is uttered.

[KEYWORDS: verbal morphology, prosody, Otomi, Otomanguean]

1. Introduction. Most verbs in Otomi have two distinct inflectional forms, a “free form” and a “bound form.” The selection of these two forms is conditioned by a combination of prosodic and syntactic factors. The goal of this article is to describe these two inflectional forms together with the factors that motivate their selection and conditioning. The present analysis, however, does not intend to provide a workable formal account of the phenomenon.

Otomi is a Mesoamerican language spoken in Central Mexico.² The language belongs to the Otopamean family, which is the northernmost branch of Otomanguean. Otomi has great dialectal diversification, but the phenomenon studied here appears to be dia-systemic, given that it occurs in some way or another in (almost) all dialects. The data in this article come from my research on the dialect spoken in San Ildefonso Tultepec, a village located in the south of the state of Querétaro, referred to here as SI Otomi.³

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² Using English vowels, the name *Otomi* can be pronounced in English as [oto'mi:]. The name corresponds to Spanish [oto'mi], spelled with an accent as *Otomí*. I use the term *Otomi*—without the accent—following Suárez (1983) as well as Leon and Swadesh (1949), Hess (1968), Voigtlander and Bartholomew (1972), Bartholomew (1973), and Bernard (1974); other authors, like Andrews (1993) and Lastra (1998), prefer *Otomí*, with the accent. The native noun for the language in San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomi is *hñóñhó /hñó'ñhó/*. This noun derives from the verb *ñóñhó /ñó'ñhó/*, which, according to Hekking (2002), means ‘speak well’.

³ IPA conventions have been used in the transcription of Otomi, with these exceptions: <a> represents central /a/; <ñ> palatal /ɲ/; <š> postpalatal /ʃ/; <č> affricate /tʃ/; and the subscript left hook <V> represents nasality.

In **2**, I introduce some relevant grammatical facts about the language and then (in **3**) I introduce both inflectional forms as they are used in SI Otomi. Section **4** provides a morphological characterization of the forms, while **5** is devoted to exploring in more detail the distribution of a bound form. Section **6** explains a number of idiosyncrasies in the use of the forms presented, while in **7**, I compare the situation of SI Otomi to other Otomi dialects.

2. Some facts about San Ildefonso Otomi verbal morphology.

Morphologically speaking, most native verbs in Otomi have a complex stem consisting of a purely morphological root and a suffixed stem formative.⁴ The pattern is illustrated in (1). For convenience, the morpheme boundary between the root and the stem formative is represented by a plus sign:⁵

- (1a) $p\phi+d-$
 ROOT+STEM FORMATIVE
 ‘know’
- (1b) $?\omega\epsilon+d-$ (intr)
 ‘sew (activity)’
- (1c) $?\omega\epsilon+t-$ (tr)
 ‘sew (accomplishment)’

(1a) illustrates the verbal stem $p\phi d-$ ‘know’. In this stem, the morph $p\phi+$ is the morphological root, while $+d$ is a stem formative suffixed to this root. The stem in (1b) shares the same stem formative but has a different root. In contrast, the stem in (1c) has the same root as in (1b) but has the stem formative $+t$. The verbal stems in (1) represent bipartite formations that have lexicalized synchronically in most cases. In this sense, stem formatives such as $+d$ and $+t$ in the stems in (1) are semantically opaque in Otomi; they reflect petrified derivational morphology. Similarly, roots in such formations are equally obscure semantically in most cases. Broadly speaking, the verbs in (1) reflect the same pattern as the one found in some English verbs borrowed from French, i.e., *pre+fer*, *pro+fer*, *in+fer*, etc. In this light, the lexeme of bipartite verbs is expressed by the two morphs together, rather than by just the root.

At times, clear morphological patterns involving the stem formatives are discernible. For example, verbs with the stem formative $+d$ often co-occur in lexical pairs with verbs with $+t$, as in (1b) and (1c). In such cases, the verb with $+d$ commonly denotes an activity, while the verb with $+t$ expresses the

⁴ In Palancar (forthcoming), this pattern is found in 83.5% of a sample of 310 verbs.

⁵ Otomi is a tonal language, but tone is represented here in function words only, where it has been identified to have a morphological function (see n. 11).

same action but directed to a human participant, i.e., $\acute{s}\text{ɔ}+d-$ ‘pray’ ~ $\acute{s}\text{ɔ}+t-$ ‘pray to someone’; $th\text{ɔ}+d-$ ‘answer’ ~ $th\text{ɔ}+t-$ ‘answer someone’; $k\acute{\alpha}+d-$ ‘wear something below waist’ ~ $k\acute{\alpha}+t-$ ‘dress someone below the waist’; $\text{?}\acute{\alpha}+d-$ ‘hear’ ~ $\text{?}\acute{\alpha}+t-$ ‘obey’; etc.⁶ The language has a substantial number of patterns like this (see Palancar [forthcoming] for SI Otomi and Voigtlander and Bartholomew 1972 for Sierra Otomi). Verbs having complex stems like in (1) are relevant because the forms treated in this article occur (mainly) with such verbs.

Additionally, a large number of Otomi verbs have at least two distinct stems. One stem is used for the third person, when the verb inflects in tenses other than the present and the imperfect, and another is used elsewhere.⁷ I call the first the “nonpresent stem” (NPS)⁸ and the latter the “base stem,” since it is a default stem. Consider the stems in (2) for the verb meaning ‘take somebody away’:

- (2a) Base stem $tsi+ts'$ -
 (2b) Nonpresent stem $zi+ts'$ -

The nonpresent stem is morphologically built on the base stem by means of a number of internal changes. Such changes may involve the voicing of an initial voiceless consonant (except for ejective series). The nonpresent stem $zi+ts'$ - in (2b) is built on the base stem $tsits'$ - in (2a) by means of consonant mutation involving voicing. Internal changes in nonpresent stems are represented by angle brackets, e.g., $\langle z \rangle i+ts'$ -. In other cases, the nonpresent stem is formed by the application of a metathesized palatal prefix when the base stem has an initial glottal (e.g., $ho+n-$ ~ $h\langle j \rangle o+n-$ ‘look for’).

The language has zero object anaphora. Verbs inflect for both tense/aspect and the person of the subject by means of a complex paradigm of function words that always precede the verbal stem. Finally, SI Otomi has SVO as the pragmatically neutral order when a transitive clause has two overt NPs. Nonetheless, responding to pragmatic requirements, orders like OVS and VSO are also possible. When the transitive clause has a covert NP object, the order VS is rather common. As for in transitive clauses, VS is the norm.

3. Free forms and bound forms in Otomi. Verbs with complex stems have two relevant inflectional forms that can be called the “free form” and the “bound form.” We start with a free form (F-form). Broadly speaking, an F-form is used when a pause follows the verb. In this sense, the F-form of

⁶ Voigtlander (1998) is a useful attempt to reconstruct the meaning of these stem formatives. For some of them, traces of spatial meaning can still be observed.

⁷ The nonpresent stem is also used for the second person when the base stem of a verb begins with a glottal.

⁸ Kaufman (1988) refers to this morphology as the “potential/complete thematic state.”

a verb is a word form that can be uttered in isolation, and it is employed for this reason as the citation form of the lexeme. Examples in (3) illustrate F-forms. Following Katamba (1992), a prosodic pause is indicated by a double pipe (||):⁹

(3a) *ja bì theg-e* ||
CP 3.PST end-F

‘It’s over’. (Lit., ‘It ended’.)

(3b) *siempre mí pa Mʔondɔ mí m-pɛph-i* ||
always 3.IMP go Mexico 3.IMP DTR-work-F

‘They always went to Mexico to work’.

In (3a) and (3b), the F-form of the intransitive verbs *theg* ‘finish’ and *mpephi* ‘work’ precedes a prosodic pause. Nonetheless, an F-form cannot be characterized simply as a “pausal form” in prosodic terms because an F-form is also used when a verb precedes a clausal boundary, regardless of clausal prosody. (4) illustrates this point. Clausal boundaries are represented by square brackets:

(4) [*?in-dà ts’ɔn-i* [*porke ja bì <g>wad-i*
NEG-3.FUT go.off-F because CP 3.PST NPS.finish-F
[bì n-thin-i]]] ||
3.PST DTR-boil/ferment-F

‘It won’t go off because it fermented’. (Lit., ‘It finished fermenting’.)

(4) shows three F-forms. The verbs *ts’ɔni* ‘go off’ and *kwadi* ‘finish’ were phrased within the same intonational phrase; that is, no pause occurred between them, yet they occur in their respective F-forms. A pause is possible after *ts’ɔni* ‘go off’ just before the subordinate clause, but it is unnatural after *kwadi* ‘finish’ given that the two verbs *bì gwadi bì nthini* ‘it finished fermenting’ form a syntactic construct with semantic coherence. (3) and (4) suggest that an F-form is possible in SI Otomi in the following situations: (a) when the verb precedes a phrasal boundary realized by a prosodic pause; (b) when the verb precedes a clausal (syntactic) boundary; and (c) when both

⁹ Abbreviations are as follows: - morpheme boundary in source; < > nonconcatenative morpheme boundary; . nonmorpheme boundary in source; B bound form; CP complete particle; DEF definite; DEM demonstrative; DIM diminutive; DTR detransitivizer; F free form; FUT future; IMP imperfect; IND indefinite; INTER interrogative; INTR intransitive; LOC locative preposition; NEG negative; NPM nonpresent (stem) marker; NPS nonpresent stem; OBJ object; P.PERF pluperfect; PL plural; POSS possessive; PRES present; PST past; PURP purposive; QUOT quotative; SG singular; SI San Ildefonso Tultepec; SIM simultaneous; SUBJ subject; TR transitive.

clausal and prosodic boundaries coincide, as, for example, the last verb in (4), *nthini* ‘boil, ferment’, which occurs at both boundaries.

Apart from F-forms, verbs with complex stems also have a “bound form” (B-form). Broadly speaking, a B-form occurs in the context where an F-form is not required. In other words, a B-form is used when the verb does not immediately precede a clausal or phrasal boundary. (Things are not quite this simple, as later discussion will make clear, but this statement will suffice for now.) Additionally, a B-form is a cliticized form that cannot be uttered in isolation. Examples of B-forms are given in (5):

- (5a) [*?na=r* *či* *ču* *mí* *?ñe-?=joho* *ja* *?beto=?na*]
 IND=SG DIM lady 3.IMP have-B=two PL grand.child=QUOT

‘It’s said that an old lady had two grandchildren’.

- (5b) [*ntonse* *nu?ja* (*š*)*ta* <g>*wad-i* [*dà*
 then now 3.P.PERF NPS.finish-F 3.FUT

n-thing-a=no=r *se*]]

DTR-boil/ferment-B=DEF.SG=SG pulque

‘Then, when the *pulque* is fermented (. . .).’¹⁰ (Lit., ‘Has finished fermenting’.)

In (5a), the B-form of the transitive verb *?ñehē* ‘possess’ immediately precedes the NP object *joho ja ?beto* ‘two grandchildren’. The brackets representing clause boundaries indicate that the verb and the following NP belong to the same clause. In (5b), the B-form of the intransitive verb *nthini* ‘boil, ferment’ precedes the NP subject *nor se* ‘the pulque’. In this sense, the examples show that the use of a B-form is not conditioned by the syntactic function of a given following constituent; rather, I claim it is used when the verb occurs intraclausally and no pause is placed after it. The following examples provide further evidence for this claim:

- (6a) [*bì* <*m*>*a*] [*ba* *k’q?s-a=ká=r*
 3.PST NPS.go 3.PST.SIM go.to.see.someone-B=LOC.3POSS=SG

ngu=r *pale*]
 house=SG grandfather

‘They went to see her at their grandfather’s’.

- (6b) [*ntonse* *bì* *sigi* [*bì* *ñ?eng-a=man?agi=?na*]]
 then 3.PST go.on 3.PST play-B=once.again=QUOT

‘It’s said that he kept on playing once again’.

¹⁰ *Pulque* is the Spanish name given to the fermented alcoholic drink extracted from a *maguey* (a large cactus belonging to the species *amarilidacea Agave*).

In (6a), we have the B-form of the verb *k'ɔʔts'i* 'go to see someone' preceding a spatial PP headed by the preposition *ka*, a generic locative. Similarly, the B-form of the verb *n̄ʔeni* 'play' is used in (5b) before the temporal adverb *manʔagi* 'once again'. Since a B-form may also be used before a PP and an adverb, these examples show that the use of such a form is not motivated in principle by the syntactic function of the constituent following the verb.

F-forms and B-forms are not interchangeable. In other words, the use of one in a context where the other is expected (usually) results in ungrammaticality. This is shown by the ungrammaticality of (7):

- (7a) **[ʔin-dà ts'ɔng-a=[porke ja bi <g>wa-ʔ=[bi*
 NEG-3FUT go.off-B=because CP 3.PST NPS.finish-B=3.PST
n-thing-a]] ||
 DTR-boil/ferment-B

Intended meaning: 'It won't go off because it finished fermenting'.

- (7b) **[ntonse nuʔja (ʃ)ta <g>wad-i [dà*
 then now 3.P.PERF NPS.finish-F 3.FUT
n-thin-i no=r se]]
 DTR-boil/ferment-F DEF.SG=SG pulque

Intended meaning: 'Then, when the pulque is fermented (. . .)'.
 In (7a), we have the ungrammatical rendering of (4) with B-forms, where only F-forms are possible given that the verbs precede a clausal boundary. The same applies to (7b), an impossible alternative to (5b). Here, the use of the F-form *nthin-i* is ungrammatical because the verb occurs intraclausally.

4. The morphology of the two forms. The morphology of an F-form and a B-form contrasts in an interesting way. A number of verbs inflect for both forms by means of a replacive morph. For such verbs, the default morphological exponent of an F-form is the suffix *-i* (e.g., *tse+k-i* 'hack'), while the default exponent of a B-form is the suffix *-a* (e.g., *tse+k-a* 'hack').¹¹ Additionally, an F-form may also be realized by the allomorph *-e*, which occurs when the stem has the vowel /ə/ or /e/ (at times also /ɛ/) and has the stem formatives *+t*, *+d*, *+k*, *+g*, or *+ts*' (e.g., *ʔə+t'-e* 'do'; *he+t-e* 'dress someone above waist'; *je+ts'-e* 'turn upside down'; etc.). A number of verbs that illustrate this pattern are given in table 1.

Verbs with the nasal stem formative *+n* fall into two morphological classes. One class receives a velar augment while the other may not. The former can

¹¹ Tone appears to play a significant role in the realization of the forms. The suffix *-a* realizing a B-form always receives low tone. F-forms realized by the suffix *-i* often receive high tone, especially preceding a prosodic boundary. This topic deserves further research.

TABLE 1

F-Form	B-Form	
<i>tsek-i</i>	<i>tsek-a=</i>	'hack'
<i>?ek-e</i>	<i>?ek-a=</i>	'comb'
<i>šond-i</i>	<i>šond-a=</i>	'breed'
<i>peng-i</i>	<i>peng-a=</i>	'return'
<i>šaš-i</i>	<i>šaš-a=</i>	'bother, disturb'
<i>nthot-i</i>	<i>nthot-a=</i>	'marry'
<i>het-e</i>	<i>het-a=</i>	'dress someone above waist'
<i>?at'-e</i>	<i>?at'-a=</i>	'do'
<i>kit'-i</i>	<i>kit'-a=</i>	'enter'
<i>tchm-i</i>	<i>tchm-a=</i>	'break (i.e., a volume)'

TABLE 2

Class	F-Form	B-Form	
I	<i>ñ?e+n-i</i>	<i>*ñ?e+n-a=</i>	<i>ñ?e+ng-a=</i> 'play'
II	<i>thi+n-i</i>	<i>thi+n-a=</i>	<i>thi+ng-a=</i> 'boil' (tr)

TABLE 3

Class	F-Form	B-Form	
I	<i>?ə+ts'-e</i>	<i>?ə+s-a=</i>	'detach'
II	<i>hə+ts'-i</i>	<i>hə+š-a=</i>	'carry (generic)'

be called class I and the latter class II. An example of each class is given in table 2. As shown in table 2, the stem of class I verbs receives a velar augment to construct the B-form. This is not a requirement for class II verbs, only a few of which may receive both morphologies.

Like the verbs in table 2, verbs with the stem formative *+ts'* also fall into two classes when they receive affixed material, as, for example, the exponent of a B-form. This is shown in table 3. Table 3 shows that verbs whose stem have the formative *+ts'* fall into two classes: verbs of class I mutate the ejective affricate of the stem formative into an /s/,¹² while those of class II mutate it into the postalveolar /ʃ/.

A number of verbs deviate from the pattern presented so far. Instead of an *-a*, verbs with the stem formatives *+i*, *+d*, *+g*, *+ph*, and *+h* receive a glottal stop as an exponent of a B-form. The stems of such verbs drop their formatives when the verb is inflected in B-form. The verbs in table 4 illustrate this

¹² Verbs of class I may at times surface as verbs in table 1, that is, without further stem adjustments.

TABLE 4

F-Form	B-Form	
<i>ne+i</i>	<i>ne-?</i>	'dance'
<i>tsi+d-i</i>	<i>tsi-?</i>	'hang' (intr)
<i>pe+d-e</i>	<i>pe-?</i>	'tell'
<i>hc+g-i</i>	<i>hc-?</i>	'let'
<i>the+g-e</i>	<i>the-?</i>	'end'
<i>ma+ph-i</i>	<i>ma-?</i>	'shout'
<i>ko+h-i</i>	<i>ko-?</i>	'keep something'

TABLE 5

F-Form	B-Form	
<i>tsə+hə</i>	<i>tsə-?</i>	'arrive (toward deictic center)'
<i>ki+hi</i>	<i>ki-?</i>	'enter (deictic center inside)'
<i>tsi+hi</i>	<i>tsi-?</i>	'bring (animate)'
<i>ša+ha</i>	<i>ša-?</i>	'bathe someone'
<i>?nē+hē</i>	<i>?nē-?</i>	'have'
<i>tə+hə</i>	<i>tə-?</i>	'win'
<i>tʉ+hʉ</i>	<i>tʉ-?</i>	'sing'

pattern. Additionally, a large group of verbs have the stem formative *+hV* in their F-form. The vowel of this formative copies the vowel in the morphological root. Like verbs in table 4, these verbs drop the formative entirely when they inflect in B-form (and they also receive a glottal stop suffix). Examples of this type of verb are given in table 5.

4.1. Restrictions. There are some morphophonological restrictions to the pattern presented so far. Verbs with the stem formatives *+hni* and *+šni* deviate from the pattern because they lack a morphologically distinct B-form. Examples of such verbs are *k'a+hni* 'shoot', *pe+hni* 'send', *pi+hni* 'peck, nibble', *tʉ+šni* 'get tangled', etc. The final /i/ in such verbs is treated as part of the stem, given that it does not have a contrastive morphological function. However, a verb ending in *+hni* occasionally surfaces as *+hna* in a context where a B-form would be expected, a fact which suggests that speakers have analogically reanalyzed such verbs as *+hn-i/a*, attending to the general pattern presented in table 1.

Other restrictions are lexical. Stative verbs, which qualify for the morphological rules above, do not inflect for the forms in contexts where they are otherwise expected.¹³ In other words, the rules that determine whether a verb

¹³ In addition to this feature, stative verbs show other inflectional idiosyncrasies that characterize them as a well-defined subclass (Palancar 2004).

appears in its F-form or B-form treat stative verbs differently (see 6.3 for more details). For example, such verbs do not take a B-form when they are part of the same clause as the following NP. For this reason, the final /i/ in these verbs has been treated as part of the stem. An example of the stative verb is given in (8):

- (8a) *ma ngu hingi Ø t'aši ||*
 1POSS house NEG 3.PRES be.white

'My house isn't white'.

- (8b) *hingi Ø *t'aš-a=/t'aši ma ngu*
 NEG 3.PRES be.white-B=/be.high 1POSS house

'My house isn't high'.

(8) shows the stative verb *t'aši* 'be white' in the natural context of an F-form, that is, preceding a clausal and/or prosodic boundary. However, (8b) shows that the potential morphological B-form of such a verb (i.e., **t'aš-a=*) is not used in the expected context. Other verbs of this (open) class include *ʔuši* 'be salty', *thengi* 'be green', *šini* 'be thin', *pots'i* 'be worn out', *šidi* 'be wide', *kīhi* 'be flavorful', *noho* 'be fat', etc.

In addition to the stative verbs, there are also a few isolated lexical exceptions that lack a B-form, such as *ništ'i* 'run' and *wqi* 'rain'. Also, the verb *tɔ+i* 'buy' deviates from the rule as it is a verb that receives the B-form proper of verbs of class I in table 2, i.e., its B-form is *tɔ+ng-a=* and not **tɔ-ʔ=*, as would be expected by analogy to *ne+i* 'dance' in table 4.

4.2. Verbs with object markers. The morphological contrast concerning F-forms and B-forms presented so far involves complex stems that occur in isolation, that is, denuded of suffixal material. However, verbs can also show the contrast with object and dative suffixes, as shown in (9):

- (9a) *ta tišudi kha gà pɔd-i tema no*
 up.to tomorrow be.LOC 1.FUT know-F what 3.DEF.SG
dà ʔbeph-k-i ||
 3.FUT order-1OBJ-F

'I won't know until tomorrow what he'll order me'.

- (9b) *bì ʔbeph-k-a=manʔagi=?na*
 3.PST order-1OBJ-B=once.again=QUOT

'He ordered me (it) again'.

The examples in (9) show the suffix *-k*, an alternant of the morpheme for first-person object/dative. In (9a), the complex stem verb *ʔbephi* 'order' occurs at

a clausal and prosodic boundary and is inflected in F-form by means of the vowel *-i*. In (9*b*), the verb occurs intraclausally—it is followed by the adverb *manʔagi* ‘once again’—and it is inflected in B-form by means of the vowel *-a*. This serves as additional evidence that the markers *-i* and *-a* are the default morphological exponents of the forms.

The pattern illustrated in (9) applies to all verbs in the language that can receive object/dative morphology (except for stative verbs).¹⁴ Such verbs also include monomorphemic stem verbs which do not show the contrast in other situations. This is illustrated in (10):

(10*a*) *pa* *dà* *hɔ* ||
 PURP 3.FUT bring
 ‘(For the car) to bring (it)’.

(10*b*) *pa* *dà* *hɔ* *ma* *thɔ*
 PURP 3.FUT bring 1POSS corn
 ‘(For the car) to bring my corn’.

(10*c*) *pa* *dà* *hɔn-k-a=ma* *thɔ*
 PURP 3.FUT bring-1OBJ-B=1POSS corn
 ‘(For the car) to bring me my corn’.

In all examples in (10), we have different occurrences of the monomorphemic verb *hɔ* ‘bring’. This verb, like others of its type, does not have the inflectional contrast between an F-form and a B-form. This may be seen in (10*a*) and (10*b*), which illustrate how the same form of the verb is used in the same grammatical context where other complex stem verbs would show the contrast. However, the contrast is realized when the verb receives object morphology, as shown in (10*c*), where the verb receives the object/dative marker for first-person *-k* and is inflected in B-form by means of the vowel *-a*, in the context where such a form is expected.

On the other hand, object markers may appear in morphological doublets.¹⁵ The doublets for the first person are either *-kagi* or *-gagi*. When such doublets occur, the contrast between the forms is neutralized, as shown in (11):

¹⁴ When a stative verb denotes a property concept predicated of a first or second person, the latter is encoded as object. As a general rule, stative verbs that receive object morphology do not show the contrast other verbs do, i.e., (*ñ*)*hɛti* ‘be noisy’ : *ši ñhɛt-ki* ‘I’m noisy’ ~ *ši ñhɛt-ki manʔagi* ‘I’m noisy again’ but not **ši ñhɛt-k-a=manʔagi* ‘I’m noisy again’. However, this phenomenon is still poorly understood and requires further research.

¹⁵ In a morphological doublet, a given morph expressing person is repeated with a certain vocalic adjustment (i.e., *-g* > *-ga-gi*). This doublet carries out the same morphological function as the simple morph.

- (11) *no=r mole ja bì ?ra-kagi nu ma*
 DEF.SG=SG granny CP 3.PST give.to.1/2-1OBJ DEF 1POSS
bokho=?na
 money=QUOT

‘He says that the old lady gave me my money’.

(11) shows how the verb with a doublet object marker does not reflect the contrast. A hypothetical B-form like **?ra-kag-a* does not exist.¹⁶

5. A closer look at bound forms. A B-form of a verb is used when the verb does not precede a clausal or a prosodic boundary. Phonologically, a B-form cliticizes to the first free word of the syntactic phrase that follows the verb. This is illustrated in (12):

- (12) *nu?mi gá šok-a=[nu ma gɔʃthi]*
 when 2.PST open-B=DEF 1POSS door

‘When you opened my door’.

(12) shows that the B-form of the verb *šoki* ‘open (i.e., a door)’ cliticizes to the definite morpheme *nu*, which is the first free morphological unit of the NP *nu ma gɔʃthi* ‘my door’.

Most commonly, a B-form is also used as a host for the enclitic *=r /r/*, an allomorph of the singular morpheme {*ar*}. When this happens, B-forms marked with *-?* drop the glottal in contact with the flap because of phonotactic constraints:

- (13) *ja bì-n the=[r kwento-r pada ko=r šaha]*
 CP 3.PST-NPM end.B=SG story=SG vulture with=SG turtle

‘The story of the vulture and the turtle ended (here)’.

(13) shows that a B-form is also found when the verb receives the enclitic singular *=r*. This enclitic is always associated with an NP, and as we will see in the next section, NPs constitute the most natural context for a B-form to occur.

On the other hand, a B-form is sensitive to syntax given that it CANNOT occur when there is a clausal boundary, which is evidence that a B-form is not motivated by mere phonological sandhi. This feature is illustrated in (14):

- (14a) *pwes dà ?<j>i-?=ha ja šo?thai*
 so 3.FUT NPS.get.in-B=LOC PL cannon

‘And he would get in the cannons’.

¹⁶ A doublet for first person such as *-kagi* can be further analyzed as *-ka-gi*. It is interesting that the same vocalism that applies to F-forms and B-forms is also used here.

(14b) *hingi* ∅ *pɔd-i* / **pɔ-ʔ=* *ha* *dà* *khap-i*
 NEG 3.PRES know-F/know-B what 3.FUT do-F

‘He doesn’t know what to do’.

(14a) shows the natural occurrence of the B-form of the verb *kihi* ‘get in (deictic point inside)’¹⁷ before a PP headed by the preposition *ha*, a free alternant of the general locative preposition *ka*, seen in (6a) above. As expected, this B-form is cliticized to the preposition, since the latter is the first word of its phrase. (14b) provides a similar phonological context to the one in (14a). However, no B-form is possible here since the verb precedes a syntactic boundary before a subordinated clause. In (14b), only the F-form of the verb *pɔdi* ‘know’ is possible, even though the complementizer *ha* ‘what/if’ in (14b) is homophonous to the preposition in (14a).

5.1. Bound forms and prosody. A B-form of a verb is a dependent verbal form conditioned by prosody. As a general principle, a B-form is used when the verb is prosodically phrased together with a following constituent within a clause. However, Otomi shows certain idiosyncrasies regarding the interface between prosodic parsing and the type of syntactic phrase with which the verb is phrased together. Verbs in Otomi are ALWAYS phrased together with a following NP (providing it pertains to the same clause). This phenomenon is illustrated in (15). Following the convention used in Dresher (1994), natural prosodic phrases are indicated by parentheses:

(15) (*no=r* *ndə*) (*bi* *ʔɛʔm-a*=[*no* *ma*
 DEF.SG=SG man 3.PST drive.down.cattle-B=DEF.SG 1POSS
 mɛhti])
 cattle

‘The man drove my cattle down (the plain)’.

(15) shows that the inflected verb *bi ʔɛʔmi* ‘s/he drove cattle down’ is phrased together with the NP *no ma mɛhti* ‘my cattle’, and in such a context, it naturally occurs in B-form. In such cases, the head of the following NP carries the main stress of the intonational unit, while the verb in B-form receives a secondary stress.¹⁸

In current approaches to prosody, such as Selkirk (1984), Nespor and Vogel (1986), and Dresher (1994), prosodic structure is understood to be hierarchical. At the bottom of the prosodic hierarchy is the phonological word

¹⁷ The nonpresent stem *ʔjɪhi* (14a) of the verb *kihi* ‘get in (deictic point inside)’ is irregular; one would expect **<g>ihi* (see 2).

¹⁸ A similar phenomenon to the one treated here was first observed by Soustelle, who described it in passing for the Otomi of San José del Sitio, Mexico State (see 7 and Soustelle [1937] 1993).

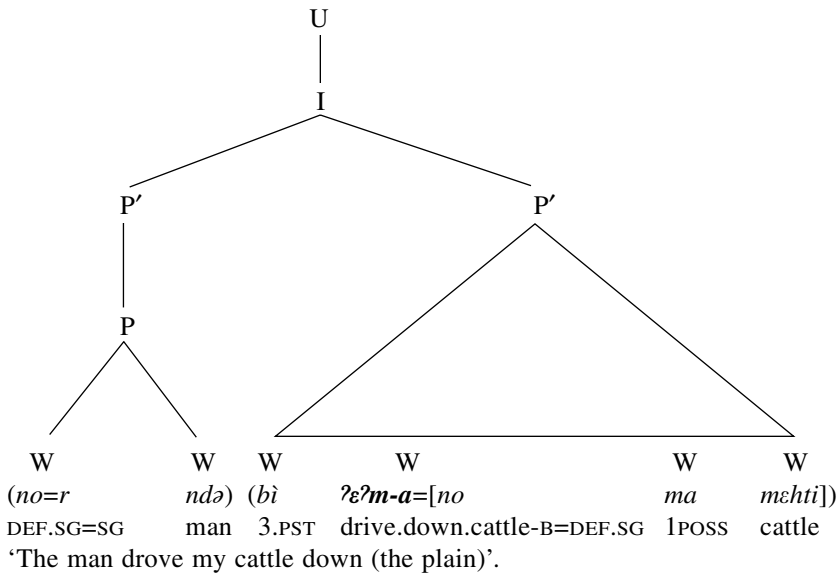


FIG. 1

(W), which is followed by the phonological phrase (P). The conjunction of phonological phrases within the same intonational unit creates the intonational phrase (I). At the top of the hierarchy, there is the utterance (U). Even though I do not try to give a formal account of the distribution of the forms here, the use of tree diagrams to represent relevant prosodic phrasings may be convenient to clarify the arguments. With this goal in mind, consider the tree diagram in figure 1.

All levels of the prosodic hierarchy have been represented for the clause in figure 1. What is interesting in the representation is that both the verb and the following NP are treated within the same phonological phrase (P'). Generally, a phonological phrase is defined here according to a phonetic parameter of whether a pause is naturally possible at the utterance of the structure.¹⁹ The utterance of the NP subject *nor ndə* 'the man' forms another phonological phrase. These two phrases together form the intonational phrase represented by the I-node, which in itself forms the utterance at a higher level.

The phenomenon illustrated in figure 1 occurs in all situations regardless of the type of verb used (i.e., transitive or intransitive) or the syntactic

¹⁹ Phrase-level stress also plays a role in defining the scope of a phonological phrase, but I leave this information unspecified here since it requires further research.

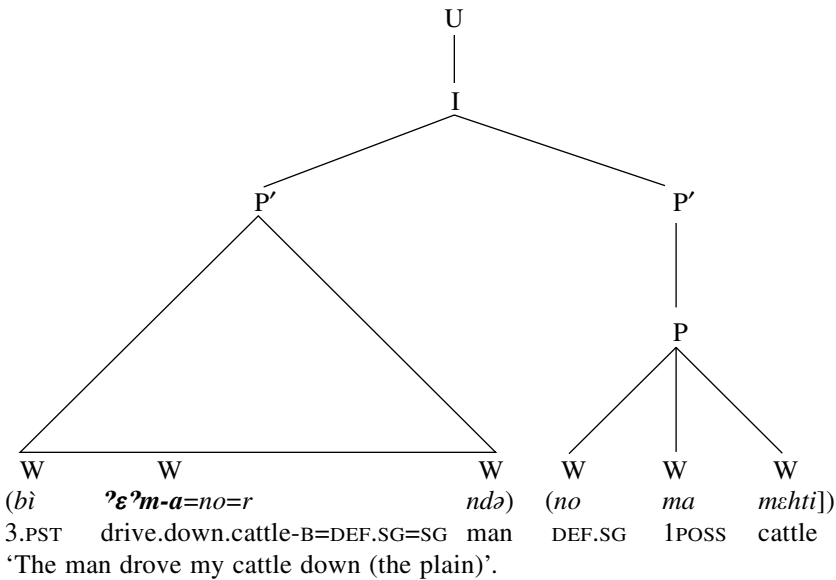


FIG. 2

function of the NP within the clause (i.e., subject, object, locative, etc.). As further evidence of this point, the example in figure 1, with the order SVO, is rendered in figure 2 with subject inversion (VSO). As in figure 1, the verb and the following NP are treated in figure 2 within the same phonological phrase. Here, the NP following the verb functions as subject, which proves that the prosodic parsing is not sensitive to syntactic function but only to the type of syntactic phrase that follows the verb. The utterance of the NP object *no ma mehti* 'my cattle' falls within a different phonological phrase.

Furthermore, no pause is possible between the verb and the NP when phrasing a clause like the one in figure 1. This is illustrated by the ungrammaticality of figure 3, which shows an ungrammatical prosodic alternative to figure 1. Figure 3 shows a verb that is phrased independently from a following NP. Since there is a pause after the verb, the verb must occur in F-form. However, such a prosodic parsing is utterly ungrammatical in natural discourse.

Figure 3 shows that no prosodic boundary is acceptable between a verb and a following NP. Nevertheless, a pause is possible within the NP itself, when speakers allow themselves time to think of a possible head for that phrase. This is illustrated in (16), taken from an oral text:

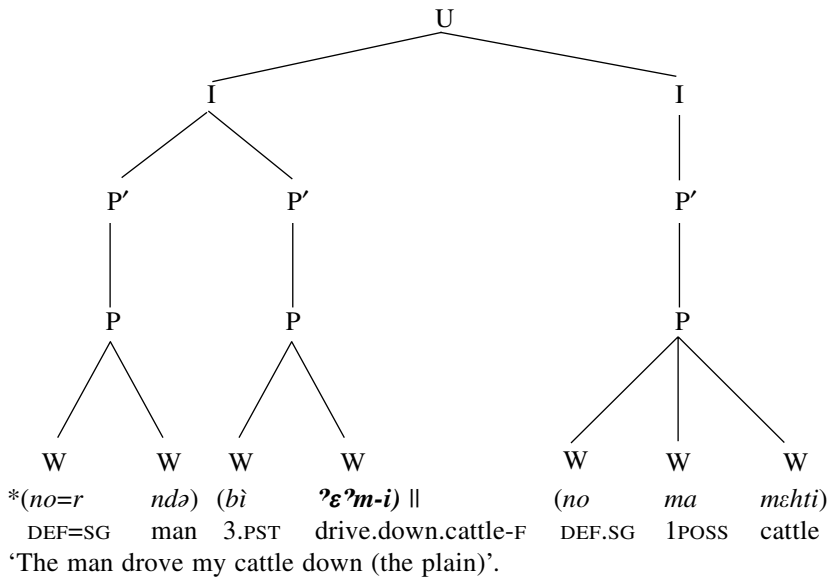


FIG. 3

- (16) (dà <d>ɔng-a=[?na=r]) || (?na=r) || (káro)
- 3.FUT NPS.buy-B=IND=SG IND=SG car
- ‘He’d buy a . . . a . . . car’.

(16) shows a possible prosodic parsing of a verb and a following NP. The stem of the verb plus the first element of the following NP forms a phonological word on its own. They can be uttered in isolation and the verb in B-form receives the main stress of the sequence, i.e., /'dɔnga=?naɾ/.

Examples like (16) strongly suggest that the complex phonological phrase formed by the verb and the following NP—as in figure 1—has the lower internal prosodic structure represented in figure 4. In figure 4, the phrase *bi ?ε?ma=no ma məhti* ‘(he) drove my cattle down’ from figure 1 is divided into two phonological phrases; the first one comprises two words, the functional word expressing person and tense/aspect and the B-form of the verb together with the first unit of the following NP. The structure in figure 4 enables the spontaneous occurrence of the type of parsing shown in (16).

5.1.1. Exceptions to the pattern with noun phrases. The above examples illustrate that a B-form of the verb must be used if the verb is followed by an NP within the clause. The examples additionally show that in such cases the verb is prosodically phrased together with the NP. Nevertheless,

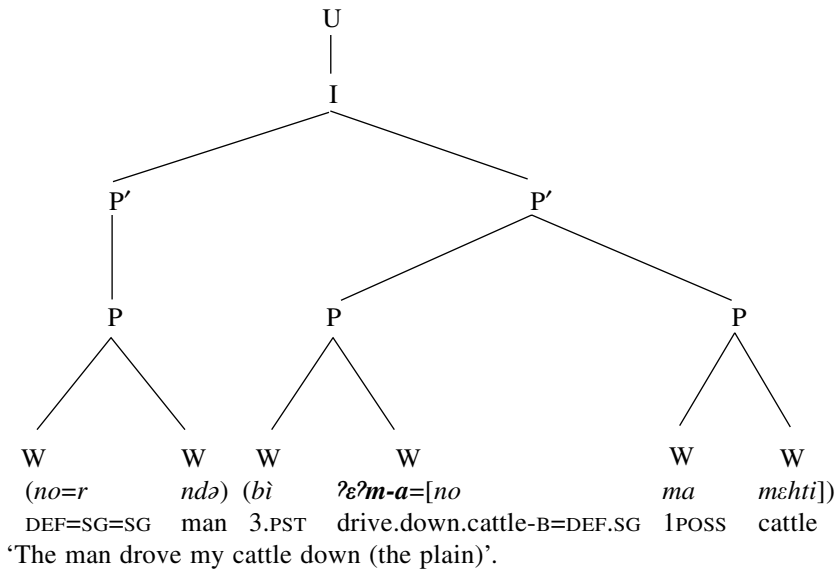


FIG. 4

there are possible discourse contexts which may alter these conditions. Consider for this purpose (17), the only example in my extensive data which apparently contravenes the generalization:

- (17) (*en otomí es*) ("pa dà zɨnt'-i || (ar bida")
in Otomi is PURP 3.FUT sound-F SG violin

'In Otomi it's: *pa dà zɨnt'i ar bida* (to play the violin).'

(17) is a metalinguistic example produced by my main consultant during a working session to correct a recorded textual sequence that she considered improper in Otomi. The prosodic parsing between the verb and the NP in (17) is very clear. According to the dominant pattern shown in figure 1, we expect such a phrasing to be ungrammatical. However, the example is an instance of metalinguistic use, and it is well known that such a use of language employs prosody in special ways for its own communicative purposes.

Apart from the exception in (17), the imperative appears to set a semantic restriction to the pattern. Verbs in the imperative may appear in F-form when the following NP has an animate referent. This is illustrated in (18):

- (18a) (*tsi-?=[ma ?behño]!*)
bring.animate-B=1POSS woman

'Bring my wife!'

- (18b) (*tsih-i*) ([*ma* *?behño*]!)
 bring.animate-F 1POSS woman
 'Bring my wife!'

In (18), the verb *tsihi* 'bring an animate' is used in the imperative. Both its B-form *tsi?e* (18a) and its F-form *tsihi* (18b) are possible here. However, such alternation is not possible when the clause is either a statement or a question, as shown in (19):

- (19) *(*ha* *gì* *tsih-i*) ([*ma* *?behño*]?)
 INTER 2.FUT bring.animate-F 1POSS woman
 'Are you going to bring my wife?'

The pattern illustrated in (19) is only possible with animate referents. Verbs in the imperative occur in B-form with a following inanimate NP. This restriction appears in (20):

- (20) (*k'í?š-a* = /**k'í?ts'-i* [*nu=jí* *ja* *?bɔirza*]!)
 uproot-B = /uproot-F DEF=DEM.PL PL bush
 'Uproot those bushes!'

(20) shows how the use of the verb *k'í?ts'i* 'uproot' in the imperative still occurs in B-form before an NP expressing an inanimate referent. The use of the F-form of the verb in this context renders an ungrammatical result. This pattern contrasts with (18b), where the use of such a form is possible.

Finally, we have seen that some verbs lack a morphologically distinct B-form in contexts where other verbs have it. Among such verbs we have stative verbs, as in the examples in (8); monomorphemic verbs, as in (10a) and (10b); and loanwords. Such verbs are phrased in prosodic terms as if they occurred in F-form for all contexts. In other words, when a verb of this type is (for example) followed by an NP, both the verb and the NP form different phonological phrases because a pause may be placed freely after the verb, as shown in (21a). Most commonly, however, such a pause is not necessary, as indicated in (21b). This pattern contrasts fully with the ungrammaticality of figure 3.²⁰ Examples in (21) are repetitions of (8b):

- (21a) (*hingi* \emptyset *t'aši*) || (*ma* *ngu*)
 NEG 3.PRES be.white 1POSS house
 'My house isn't white'.
 (21b) (*hingi* \emptyset *t'aši*) (*ma* *ngu*)
 NEG 3.PRES be.white 1POSS house
 'My house isn't white'.

²⁰ The same could be said of (18) if the verb were to occur in F-form.

5.1.2. Bound forms and prepositional phrases. We have seen in the previous section that verbs in Otomi are phrased together with NPs and that they occur in B-form when this is the case. However, verbs do not have the same prosodic constraints when followed by other types of constituents. For example, verbs in Otomi are normally phrased together with most PPs and with adverbs that express location in space or time. Verbs followed by a PP headed by the generic preposition {*ka*} are naturally phrased together with the PP. This is illustrated in (22):

- (22) (gà *kĩʔtʰ-a=ka* ʔna=r *kubeta*) || (gà
 1.FUT put.mass.in-B=LOC IND=SG bucket 1.FUT
 hqš-a=ka=r *molino*)
 carry-B=LOC=SG mill

‘I would put it (the boiled corn) into a bucket and take it to the mill’.

Unlike what happens with NPs, as shown in the impossibility of figure 3 above, a pause may occur between the verb and the PP in (22). The use of such a pause will naturally trigger the use of an F-form. Such a prosodic parsing is shown in (23):

- (23) (gà *kĩʔtʰ-i*) || (*ka* ʔna=r *kubeta*) || (gà
 1.FUT put.mass.in-F LOC IND=SG bucket 1.FUT
 hqtsʰ-i) || (*ka=r* *molino*)
 carry-F LOC=SG mill

‘I would put it into a bucket and take it to the mill’.

(23) shows a possible prosodic alternative to (22), where the verb is produced in isolation from the PP. Nevertheless, such a prosodic parsing is very infrequent in natural texts, even though it represents a possible structure. Moreover, the use of an F-form is unnatural if no prosodic pause is used between the verb and the PP. This is illustrated in (24):

- (24) (gà *kĩʔtʰ-i*) (*ka* ʔna=r *kubeta*) || (gà
 1.FUT put.mass.in-F LOC IND=SG bucket 1.FUT
 hqtsʰ-i) (*ka=r* *molino*)
 carry-F LOC=SG mill

Intended meaning: ‘I would put it into a bucket and take it to the mill’.

(24) shows a rather unnatural prosodic rendering of an F-form followed by a PP headed by *ka*. I have found variation across speakers regarding the extent to which they accept sequences like (24) as appropriate. Some regard them as ungrammatical, others do not. However, in general, speakers do not

produce such sentences in a natural context. Otomi does not have a great number of prepositions, but the same applies for those PPs headed by prepositions that express a spatial relation, such as *maño* ‘on top of’ and *məte* ‘behind’, or others based on *ka*, such as (*š*)*ta ka* ‘up to’ and *de hɔi ka* ‘under’, etc.

Interestingly, a B-form is unnatural before a PP headed by the preposition *ko*, which may express instrument, (inanimate) comitative, and cause. Examples in (25) illustrate this point:

- (25a) (*komo ški <g>qt'i*) || ([*ko=r nu*] || (*ko*
 as 3.P-PERF NPS.paint-F with=SG DEF with
pintura)
 paint

‘As she had painted it (the fleece), with the . . . with paint’.

- (25b) (*ja bi <d>ehm-i*) ([*ko ?na=r do*])
 CP 3.PST NPS.break.of.volume-F with IND=SG stone

‘He broke it with a stone’.

Both examples in (25) illustrate the natural use of the F-form when the verb is followed by a PP headed by the preposition *ko* ‘with’. (25a) occurs frequently and illustrates how a prosodic pause can indeed be placed between the verb and the *ko*-PP. Similarly, (25b) shows how the verb *tehm* ‘break (i.e., of a volume)’ occurs before the *ko*-PP, with no prosodic pause between them.

Interestingly, the use of a B-form in a situation like (25b) is as unnatural as the use of an F-form in (24) above. This is shown in (26):

- (26)?? (*ja bi <d>ehm-a=[ko ?na=r do*])
 CP 3.PST NPS.break.of.volume-B=with IND=SG stone

‘He broke it with a stone’.

On the other hand, when the *ko*-PP is used to express cause, the use of a B-form is completely ungrammatical, as shown in the contrast between (27a) and (27b):

- (27a) (*bi ?<j>ot'-i*) ([*ko hjadi*])
 3.PST NPS.dry-F with sun

‘It dried in the sun’.

- (27b) *(*bi ?<j>ot'-a=[ko hjadi*])
 3.PST NPS.dry-B=with sun

‘It dried in the sun’.

TABLE 6

I		II		III	
++B-Form/F-Form		++F-Form/B-Form		F-Form/*B-Form	
<i>mbo</i>	'inside'	<i>nfrente</i>	'opposite'	<i>mambo</i>	'inside'
<i>nthi</i>	'outside'	<i>n'alado</i>	'beside'	<i>manthi</i>	'outside'
<i>nu'wa</i>	'here'	<i>mɔs-i-ngehni</i>	'in front'	<i>ši-ñho</i>	'well/good'
<i>nuni</i>	'over there'	<i>nzotho</i>	'beautiful(ly)'	<i>nts'edi</i>	'hard'
<i>ja'pi</i>	'far'				
<i>man'agi</i>	'once again'				
<i>mande</i>	'yesterday'				
<i>šudi</i>	'this morning'				
<i>nkhani</i>	'that way'				

5.1.3. Bound forms and adverbs. We have seen in the previous section that a semantic generalization may be made for the distribution of the forms with PPs. For adverbial phrases, such a generalization is difficult, and I prefer to view the phenomenon as lexically triggered. In general, adverbs differ from PPs in that adverbs that favor the use of a B-form will also accept an F-form, which suggests that F-forms are more acceptable with adverbs. As with PPs, pauses between the verb and the adverb are possible. In such cases, an F-form is used, as expected. Table 6 lists a number of adverbs, noting their preference for one of the forms.

The adverbs in table 6 are arranged in three columns according to the type of verbal form that is commonly used with them. Adverbs in column I normally occur with a B-form but an F-form is also possible. In contrast, adverbs in column II generally occur with an F-form, while a B-form is also acceptable. Finally, adverbs in column III occur only after a verb in F-form. A B-form is not possible with such adverbs. The adverbs *nfrente* 'opposite' and *n'alado* 'beside' in column II are loans from Spanish. Their preference for an F-form may be related to the fact that they are loanwords, like the preposition *ko* in (25) above. The adverb *mɔs-i-ngehni* 'in front' translates literally as 'more over there' and the preference for an F-form can be explained by the fact that the adverb *mɔs* 'more' involves a clausal boundary, as it is also commonly used with stative verbs denoting property concepts. The adverbs *mambo* 'inside' and *manthi* 'outside' in column III can only occur with an F-form. Morphologically speaking, these two adverbs include the free adverbs *mbo* 'inside' and *nthi* 'outside' in column I, plus the bound morph *ma-*, which appears to have functioned in historical times as a locative marker. However, their behavior regarding the forms is not motivated by the co-occurrence of *ma-*, given that the spatial preposition *maño* 'above' takes a B-form and it is based on *ma-* plus *ño*, a word meaning 'head'. Other adverbs denoting properties are placed in column III, such as *ši-ñho* 'well', *nts'edi* 'hard', etc., because they function as predicates; they are based on

stative verbs and thus set a clausal boundary before the verb. The lexeme *nzɔtho* ‘beautiful(ly)’ in column II is an apparent exception to this pattern.

6. Other uses of the forms. In this section, I explore other uses and idiosyncrasies of the forms in SI Otomi. In **6.1**, I describe how two completion verbs occur in B-form when they function as matrixes of a periphrasis. In **6.2**, I present an example of the use of an F-form before the quotative clitic. **6.3** introduces some examples of nominal compounds in the language which have stative verbs in B-form. Finally, in **6.4**, I briefly present two verbs that have a different meaning when they are used in either form.

6.1. Bound forms and the completion periphrasis. Completion verbs like *thege* (intr) ‘end’ and *tege* (tr) ‘extinguish something’ are often used in SI Otomi as the matrix verbs of a periphrastic construct that renders both the completion of an action and the total affectation of a thematic participant. I call such a construct a “completion periphrasis.” Under such circumstances, an F-form is expected, given that the periphrasis includes two verbs. However, the verbs may also occur in B-form. This phenomenon is shown in (28):

(28a) *nu=ja mbəhə=ʔi* ([*bì* *theg-e* [*bì* <*d*>*u*]])
 DEF=PL mestizo=3PL 3.PST end-F 3.PST NPS.die

‘Those mestizos people died out’.

(28b) ([*bì* *the-ʔ*= [*bì* <*d*>*u*]])
 3.PST end-B=3.PST NPS.die

‘Those mestizos died out’.

In (28a), we have the natural occurrence of the F-form of the intransitive verb *thege* ‘end’ before the inflected verb *bì du* ‘(s/he) died’. Prosodically, the matrix verb in F-form in this construction is always phrased together with the content verb. A B-form in this syntactic context is not expected, but it is possible, as shown in (28b). The use of a B-form in this context is common, and examples like these suggest that the inner syntactic boundaries within the periphrasis have become loose as the aspectual matrix is phrased together with the content verb. Nevertheless, the phenomenon is still poorly understood at the present time and deserves further investigation.

6.2. Free forms and the quotative enclitic. As with suffixed material in general, verbal stems in Otomi undergo readjustment when they host enclitics. This is illustrated in (29) with the verb *honi* ‘find’:

(29) *ge bì h<j>oñ=ʔa*
 REL 3.PST NPS.find=3SG(SUBJ)

‘He was the one who found it’.

In (29), the nonpresent stem of this verb is *hjon-*. In contact with the glottal of the clitic *=ʔa*, the nasal in the stem is palatalized. However, a verb is used in F-form when it hosts the quotative clitic *=ʔna*, which is commonly used when the predication was said by someone else and not by the speaker (i.e., quotative) or when the speaker does not commit to the truth of the predication. An example is given in (30):

- (30) (*ʔne* *bì* <*m*>*a=pja*) (*bà* ***hon-i***=*ʔna*)
 and 3.PST NPS.go=now 3.SIM look.for-F=QUOT

‘And it’s said that it (the tiger) went to look for it (the cricket)’.

The enclitic *=ʔna* in (30) is the grammaticalized outcome of the defective verb *ʔena* ‘say’. Since it is a clitic and has a glottal, we expect here the same phonologically adjusted stem as in (29) above, i.e., **hoñ=ʔna*. However, the verb must occur in F-form here, which suggests that the clitic preserves its verbal origin and places a syntactic boundary before the verb.

6.3. Bound forms and nominal compounds. We have already seen in 4.1 that stative verbs do not have a contrast in the grammatical context where it is expected. There is, however, a grammatical context where their B-form may be used. The vast majority of stative verbs in the language denote property concepts in the sense proposed by Dixon (1982). On the other hand, nominal compounding is a grammatical strategy in the language to attribute a property to the referent of a noun, and the language allows six stative verbs to occur as members of such nominal compounds: (*n*)*t’aši* ‘be white’, (*n*)*theni* ‘be red’, (*n*)*k’ast’i* ‘be yellow’, (*n*)*k’angi* ‘be blue/green’, (*n̄*)*ʔu* ‘be sweet’, and (*n*)*zɛhwa* ‘be silly (for an animal)’.²¹ The first four qualify for the morphological rules presented in 4 above, and they appear in their expected B-form when they occur in such nominal compounds, as illustrated in (31):

- (31) *dá* *tɔng-a=ma* ***k’ašt’-a-pahni***
 1.PST buy-B=1POSS be.yellow-B-sweater

‘I bought my yellow sweater’.

In (31), we have the compound *k’ašt’a-pahni* ‘yellow sweater’, where the verb expressing the color property (*n*)*k’ašt’i* ‘be yellow’ occurs in B-form. When such verbs are used in the compounds, they must occur in B-form, as shown by the ungrammaticality of (32), with an F-form:

- (32) ****k’ašt-i-pahni***
 be.yellow-F-sweater
 ‘yellow sweater’

²¹ The prefix in such verbs is a morphologically conditioned morpheme that is part of the inflection of all stative verbs.

In addition to stative verbs, the language has another large class of inchoative verbs. All members of this class can occur in such attributive nominal compounds, and when they do, they must occur in B-form. For example:

- (33) *ma nošk-a-ngə*
 1POSS harden (for meat)-B-meat
 ‘my hardened meat’

In (33), we have the B-form of the inchoative verb *noški* ‘harden (i.e., for meat)’. (31) and (32) above suggest that stative verbs take a B-form when they are part of the same NP as the following noun. The same applies to inchoative verbs, which like other verbs can also take a B-form when they precede NPs in a clause.

6.4. The forms and the lexicon. All verbs that inflect for the forms have the same meaning except (at least) two of them: *thogi* ‘pass by’ and *ʔopho* ‘write’. When *thogi* ‘pass by’ is used in B-forms, it evokes the motion of a moving figure who passes by a given location and has no contact with the observer, e.g., a person who walks by with no further interaction. On the other hand, when the verb is used in its F-form, the verb evokes contact and interaction, e.g., a person who comes by and stops to talk. Similarly, the intransitive verb *ʔopho* means ‘write’ in its F-form but ‘get married in a registry office’ in its B-form. The role played by the forms in such lexical processes is difficult to pinpoint at this stage and deserves further study.²²

7. The forms in other dialects. A number of previous studies have reported the existence of B-forms in other dialects of Otomi. Soustelle ([1937] 1993) is the earliest source attesting B-forms. The author mentions the phenomenon in passing for the dialect of San José del Sitio, Mexico State. He points out that a verb in this dialect at times forms a phonological word together with the following element, and speculates that such a phenomenon occurs in eloquent speech (Soustelle [1937] 1993:139 [my translation; Soustelle’s transcription has been adapted]): “The word that follows the verb fuses with the verb in the pronunciation. We have only one word from a phonetic point of view, as in *mizɔnkartsiwəni*, instead of *mizɔni kartsiwəni*.” Soustelle’s Otomi example is analyzed in (34):

- (34a) *mi-zɔn-kar-tsi-wəni*
 3.IMP-cry-DEF.SG-DIM-child
 ‘The small child was crying’.

²² The differences here are lexical; in other words, the verbs have a different meaning regardless of the syntactic context in which they occur.

(34b) *mi-zɔn-i* *kar-tsi-wɛni*
 3.IMP-cry-F DEF.SG-DIM-child

‘The small child was crying’.

Unfortunately, Soustelle did not investigate this phenomenon further, but the example he gives is reminiscent of a B-form in SI Otomi. In (34a) we have the form *zɔn-* for the verb *zɔni* ‘cry’ in a context where a B-form is expected. The B-form of such a verb would be *zɔnga=* in SI Otomi. B-forms are also attested in Bernal Pérez (1986), a valuable dictionary containing the inflectional paradigms of 505 verbs in Mezquital Otomi. B-forms in this dictionary are treated as “medial forms”; however, no further account is provided of their distribution. As expected, the texts from Mezquital Otomi in Hess (1968), Lanier (1974), and Salinas Pedraza (1984) reveal clear cases of B-forms. However, in such texts, B-forms are rather scattered and appear quite unsystematically, due mainly to the written character of the texts (see 7.1).²³

Apart from Mezquital Otomi, the existence of such forms has not been reported in Sierra Otomi by Voigtlander and Echegoyen ([1979] 1985), but their texts from this language do show a couple of instances which are reminiscent of Soustelle’s data given above. The contrast does not seem to exist in Ixtenco Otomi (Lastra 1997; 1998) given that this language is highly suffixal and B-forms are not expected in systems where verbal bases rarely occur stripped of all suffixal material (for an exception, see 4.2 above). Likewise, the contrast is not seen in the texts in Bartholomew (1973; 1984) or in Lastra (1989; 1992) for the Otomi spoken in the south of Mexico State; but Andrews (1993:1, n. 1) does report: “In this language, and all other Otomí dialects spoken in the State of Mexico, verb stems ending with certain syllables or *y* lose these endings in utterance-medial position. For instance *bi=thogi* ‘he passed by’ becomes *bi=thoh ni* ‘he passed by there’ when *ni* ‘there’ is added.” Andrews’s observations are very interesting and I take them to indicate that a similar phenomenon may be found in the Otomi dialects from the State of Mexico. However, I am not sure to what extent Andrews’s analysis is accurate, given that the adverb *ni* ‘there’ is probably an enclitic. If this is true, it is common for an Otomi stem to undergo phonological adjustment in contact with any type of suffixed material (see 29 above).

As for Santiago Mexquititlán Otomi, a neighbor of SI Otomi, Hekking and de Jesús (1984) do not report on the forms, but a closer look at the spoken texts in Hekking (1995) reveals that they are present in this dialect too, al-

²³ Ecker (1937) and Bernard (1974) account for a couple of B-forms in their samples as being verbs with a third-person object marker. However, intransitive verbs also inflect B-forms, making this analysis untenable. Similarly, the phenomenon was not noticed by Leon and Swadesh (1949).

though they may be at a different stage of development or use. Further research needs to be done on other dialects, in the light of the phenomenon described in this article, in order to understand to what extent this pattern is indeed a family feature, as I suspect it is.

7.1. Bound forms and current writing conventions. In the previous section, I pointed out that B-forms do not seem to occur in other dialects of Otomi, or they may not yet have been noted as a grammatical category. A number of such dialects have some degree of written tradition, which constitutes the bases for the writing standards of other dialects. This is certainly the case with the ethnographic document in Mezquital Otomi by Salinas Pedraza (1984) and religious translations by the Summer Institute of Linguistics. These texts have had some impact on both communities and various institutions in charge of native language programs. Salinas Pedraza (1984) and *Ra Maꞩat'øde de ra Marco* (1957) do not show B-forms, although they are written in a dialect where such forms exist.²⁴ B-forms are not used when writing Santiago Mexquititlán, which has traits of B-forms (see, e.g., Hekking and de Jesús 2002 or the texts in Villegas 2002). Thanks to the efforts of Ewald Hekking and his group, Santiago Mexquititlán Otomi has played an important role in the slowly emergent writing standard of Northwestern Otomi, the dialect closest to SI Otomi geographically. With a written tradition that does not include recording B-forms, speakers of dialects with B-forms have not really had a chance to express them in writing, since these forms are not yet properly categorized. For this reason, B-forms cannot be expected to occur in standard renderings of native texts, though they may occasionally appear as an isolated phenomenon (cf. Hekking and de Jesús 2002).

8. Conclusion. In this paper, I have presented data on the distribution and use of two inflectional forms of verbs in San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomi: “free forms” and “bound forms.” Broadly speaking, a free form (F-form) is used when the verb precedes a clausal boundary or a prosodic pause. Because an F-form can be uttered in isolation, it is also employed as the citation form of the verb. In contrast, a bound form (B-form) is used when the verb occurs intraclausally. A B-form cannot be uttered in isolation; it acts as a bound morph and is cliticized to the first word of the following phrase. It has

²⁴ Albert Bickford has raised the interesting point of why the written tradition for Mezquital Otomi does not represent B-forms. As he suggests, perhaps the reason is a conscious or unconscious decision on the part of the writers to write everything in the form that would appear in isolation, influenced perhaps by the tendency of newly literate readers and writers to pronounce each word in a text separately. Once the written tradition for Mezquital was established, it is understandable that other dialects would follow the same conventions and not represent B-forms either. I am grateful to him for this valuable observation.

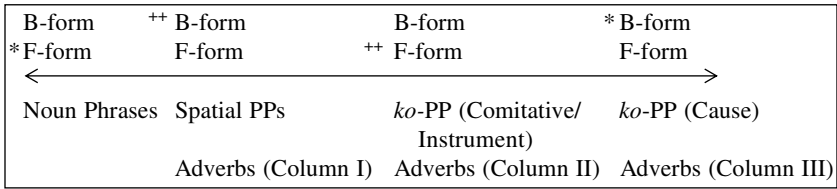


FIG. 5.—The prosodic continuum.

been argued that the distribution of the forms is strongly conditioned by prosody. However, Otomi shows various idiosyncrasies in this respect, as NPs following verbs are not treated in the same fashion as other constituents. The data suggest the existence of a prosodic continuum behind the conditioning for the use of these forms. This continuum is presented in figure 5. At the left end of this continuum, we have cases where B-forms are the only possible alternative. At the other end, only F-forms are possible. Different constituents within the same clause occur along this continuum. NPs occur at the left end, while PPs headed by the preposition *ko* expressing the cause of an event, as shown in (27), occur at the other end, together with a number of adverbs from column III of table 6.

The phenomenon I have described is not found often in languages. To my knowledge, no other Otomanguean language has been reported to have a similar phenomenon.²⁵ However, outside the macro-family, something similar has been reported within Mesoamerica for some Mayan languages, for example, in K'iche' (Pye 2001:63–64) or in Acatec (Kanjobal) (Zavala 1992:64). In these languages, verbs receive a special series of suffixes, commonly called "terminal suffixes" or "thematic vowels," which—broadly speaking—are used when the verb precedes a clausal or prosodic boundary.

While there is as yet no formal account that successfully predicts all the usages and idiosyncrasies of B-forms and F-forms in Otomi, the idea of prosodic phrasing explains a significant amount of the data. Further research may allow us to sharpen the formal analysis and representation to account for other factors that may influence the distribution of this contrast.

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²⁵ Albert Bickford has pointed out to me that Copala Trique (Hollenbach 1984) has an alternation between phrase-final and non-phrase-final third-person pronouns.

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