

Small languages and small language communities 65

Editor: Nancy C. Dorian

NAHUATL AMONG JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES OF HUEYAPAN,
MORELOS: A CASE OF SPONTANEOUS REVITALIZATION¹

MAGNUS PHARAO HANSEN

Abstract

The sociolinguistic situation of Hueyapan, Morelos, is similar to those described in other studies of modern Nahua communities: the language is in a rapid process of decline. This article describes the situation within one particular subcommunity of the town: the congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. Here the Nahuatl language has experienced a revival within the last five years, to a degree where congregational meetings are now held mostly in Nahuatl, and where young Witnesses are probably the only group of youths in Hueyapan to communicate daily in Nahuatl. It is argued that this situation arose as a result of the combination of the general sociolinguistic background in Hueyapan and the specific value system and social dynamics that exist in the community of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Keywords: Nahuatl; revitalization; evangelization; Mexico.

1. The community of Hueyapan, Morelos

Hueyapan is a town in the northeastern corner of the state of Morelos in central Mexico, located about 2500–3000 metres above sea level on the southern slopes of Mt. Popocatepetl. It is the home of approximately 6900 inhabitants of indigenous Nahua ethnicity.² The Nahuas of Hueyapan have traditionally practised mostly subsistence agriculture focusing on avocado, peach, apple, pear and the staple crops maize and beans, but the last thirty years have seen a rapid economic development of the community. This development was first permitted by the intensive cultivation of marihuana in the 1970s and 1980s, then by important infrastructural improvements in the 1990s that linked the previously remote community to commercial centers such as Cuautla, Cuernavaca and Mexico City. Currently the development is sustained at a breathtaking

pace by an influx of dollars from the hundreds of Hueyapeños working illegally in the U.S., money that is rapidly being invested in small businesses, real estate and material commodities, and that has fostered the introduction of a new and growing class of skilled workers in Hueyapan, cabdrivers, hairdressers, shoetenders and construction workers.

In 2004, during my second period of fieldwork in Hueyapan, I learned by way of some of my consultants who were Jehovah's Witnesses that the local congregation was shifting from exclusive use of Spanish to use of Nahuatl in their services. This would represent an unusual and important phenomenon, if true, since it would reverse the commoner development in which the domains for minority-language use dwindle over time. Through attendance at congregational meetings I confirmed that this was the case, and over two subsequent fieldwork periods totaling nine months' duration between 2005 and 2007 I was able to observe the process by which this change was implemented.

2. Language and language attitudes in Hueyapan

Hueyapan has two languages. Spanish is the prestige language in which all inhabitants are fluent. It serves all public functions in the community and is the dominant language of at least half the town's inhabitants. The other is a central dialect of the Uto-Aztecan language Nahuatl.³

The sociolinguistic situation of Nahuatl in Hueyapan is similar to the situation described in studies of other Nahuatl speaking communities. Most registers of Nahuatl employ many loanwords and innovating linguistic constructions from Spanish, as well as code mixing and switching. In this way it is similar to the so called "syncretic" Mexicano of the Malinche region described by Hill and Hill (1986) and to "Cuatrero" Nahuatl of the Balsas region as described by Flores Farfán (1999). The use of Nahuatl is reserved almost exclusively for the private sphere, and the language is often used as a code of intimacy and solidarity among friends, relatives and acquaintances, similarly to the situation described by Messing (2007) for Mexicano of Tlaxcala. A speaker's level of proficiency is generally correlatable with age: elderly speakers (above 60) are often Nahuatl-dominant. Middle-aged speakers (40–60) are often fully bilingual. Adult speakers (30–40) are often Spanish-dominant but able to converse in Nahuatl. Youth (below 30) often have only passive skills in Nahuatl; some could probably be described as semi- or quasi-speakers (Dorian 1977, Flores Farfán 1999), and the majority do not have any Nahuatl skills at all. This indicates a language shift in progress, although not as advanced as in many other Mexican indigenous communities.

Three different discourses about Nahuatl interact in Hueyapan. A “traditionalist” discourse includes older people who value “our language”, regretting its apparent loss and tending to blame the young who “can’t be bothered to learn” or “don’t understand” when spoken to, and a middle generation who feel unable to speak as well as they would like because of inadequate vocabulary and over-reliance on loanwords from Spanish. The young in turn tend to blame the parental generation for failing to expose them to Nahuatl or for belittling their efforts at speaking. A “purist” discourse disparages all but the purists’ own version of Nahuatl (Hill and Hill 1980). The critical attitudes of some purists with high community prestige discourage less puristic speakers, and the alien, sometimes incoherent variety spoken by extremists among the purists puts off ordinary speakers. Finally, a “developmentalist” discourse holds that “it’s more useful to learn English” and that they “don’t have time to learn another language”.

3. The social organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses

Jehovah’s Witnesses is a fundamentalist Christian denomination with more than 6 million adherents worldwide. Founded by Charles Taze Russell in 1872, it can be defined as theologically restorationist and millenarianist.⁴ As a religious movement it is best known to outsiders for the emphasis given to door-to-door evangelization and for its bimonthly publication *The Watchtower*, which is circulated in 167 languages and around 37 million copies. The social organization of the church is complex and strictly hierarchical, headed by a governing body composed of 12 men controlling all doctrinal issues and missionary strategies from the headquarters in Brooklyn, New York (Holden 2002).

The basic social unit of the church is the congregation, usually composed of around 20–50 “publishers”. A publisher is the term used for a baptized churchmember active in the ministry — the only kind of member considered an actual Jehovah’s Witness. Congregations are headed by “elders”, adult males responsible for the well-being of the congregation and its members and in charge of the local missionary effort. A congregation is assigned a territory within which it is responsible for evangelizing the inhabitants. Territories can be very large, especially in rural areas, and the level of “need” of a territory is calculated as the ratio of publishers to inhabitants. The national headquarters of each country in which Witnesses operate is called Bethel (Spanish: Betél). With Betél functioning as a kind of monastery, Jehovah’s Witnesses live together there and dedicate themselves to the administrative tasks of evangelization:

translation, publishing, printing and distribution of literature, keeping track of the hours of evangelization, and assignment of elders, missionaries and pioneers to the territories where they are needed.

The main source of social prestige within the congregation, as well as the only way to rise in the hierarchy of the organization, is the devotion of time to evangelization (Beckford 1975: 77–79; Holden 2002: 30–31). Every month publishers turn in reports of the amount of hours spent in the ministry, and responsibilities and privileges are awarded in accordance with achievements. An ordinary publisher does not have a specific requirement of hours to spend every month but is expected to spend at least a few hours every week. Spending less will be seen as a sign of “spiritual weakness”, and the elders of the congregation will take measures to correct this. Adult males who are “spiritually healthy” can achieve the title of “ministerial servant” with special rights to speak and teach in the congregation. A ministerial servant can, given time, devotion, and flawless conduct, become an elder. A publisher can also ask for the privilege of being promoted to pioneer or auxiliary pioneer — requiring them to dedicate 70 or 50 hours respectively to the ministry every month. The titles of pioneer and elder are among the most prestigious privileges to hold. The first can be held by both men and women, whereas the position of elder is exclusive to males, since women are not allowed to teach within the congregation.

Pioneers are often unmarried youths who travel to serve in outlying congregations where the need is greater in order to accomplish their monthly hours. Since the need for evangelization is often greater for minority than for majority languages, pioneers will often assist in minority-language congregations, striving to learn the language well enough to be able to preach from door to door.

An important part of the religious discourse of Jehovah's Witnesses is the relationship of the witnesses to “the world”. The world, also referred to as “the present system of things” is believed to be governed by Satan, and true Christians are not supposed to be part of the world. “Not being part of the world” implies the Witnesses' not sharing the values of the world, precluding them from striving for worldly prestige through economy, fame, or education. Possession of wealth, worldly prestige, and higher education are generally detrimental to one's prestige within the organization, only to be amended by a devout ministry and a pious way of life (Holden 2002: 31).

Adult and elderly witnesses are often unable to serve as many hours per month as the younger ones, because of family commitments and health concerns, so that elderly witnesses often do not have the same prestige within the community as the younger, unmarried ones. Thus the elite

within the congregation is composed partly of unmarried youths who dedicate themselves nearly fully to the ministry, and partly of adult males who hold special privileges. Adult, married women are expected to support their family and husbands and are not generally able to gain special prestige within the congregation except through the achievements of their families, e.g. by being married to a husband with special privileges or by having well-behaved children.

4. The language politics of Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses' missionary efforts are based in Matthew 24:14, which states that the gospel must be preached in all the corners of the world. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that this must happen before Jehovah will begin the war of Armageddon to purge the world of Satan's influence and instate the millennial kingdom in the "New World". In order to reach inhabitants of every part of the world, Jehovah's Witnesses have an extensive language program, translating the Bible and their other literature into as many languages as possible and evangelizing in even more. Currently the bimonthly publication *The Watchtower* is translated into 167 languages. In Mexico it is published in Yucatec Maya, Isthmus Zapotec, Tzotzil and of course Spanish. An edition in Nahuatl is on the drawing-board. In addition to *The Watchtower*, religious literature in the form of pamphlets and treatises are available in 15 indigenous languages of Mexico,⁵ and congregations exist in another 16 languages with no published literature. Jehovah's Witnesses' approach to the linguistic endeavour of translating and publishing materials in indigenous languages is strictly pragmatic. It is a question of reaching the largest possible number of individuals with the message that they find so important.

When I interviewed Mr. Raimundo Camacho of the translation department of Betél in Mexico, he explained to me that because of the need for theologically adequate translations, Jehovah's Witnesses do not strive to provide translations of the Bible hurriedly. Probably the first Watchtower Bible and Tract Society translation of the entire Bible into an indigenous language of Mexico will be into Yucatec Maya, a project with a horizon of five to ten years. Yucatec Maya is among the Mexican indigenous languages that have the largest percentages of monolinguals. Many others have few or no monolingual speakers. In fact the overwhelming majority of speakers of indigenous languages in Mexico are functionally bilingual with Spanish as their second language, and conversely only a very small percentage of speakers of indigenous languages are literate in their indigenous language.

An important question then becomes: Why do Jehovah's Witnesses spend so many resources producing literature for populations that could largely be reached effectively through Spanish instead?

Mr. Camacho answered this question by providing an anecdote: A Jehovah's Witness pioneer was evangelizing in a community of Mixtec migrants in Baja California on the US-Mexican border, and had acquired a good command of the language. When a forest fire was extending into Mexico from the US, Mexican authorities alerted the Mixtec community telling them in Spanish to evacuate their dwellings and go south, because of the risk of the fire reaching their homes. The Mixtecs didn't react to these warnings and stayed put, thinking that the outsiders probably just wanted to loot their abandoned homes and steal their livestock. The pioneer then went to the community and warned them in Mixtec, whereupon the Mixtecs heeded the warning and left. The fact that the missionary spoke the indigenous language created an immediate feeling of trust which allowed the important message to be received favorably.

This anecdote can be understood as an important parable. The story is analog to a particular biblical tale favoured by Jehovah's Witnesses when explaining the nature of their mission: the story of Noah who knew of the coming deluge and tried to warn the people, who however refused to listen to him and consequently perished. It casts the pioneer in the role of Noah, and the Mixtecs in the role of the godless masses, but in this version the pioneer's ability to gain the trust of the Mixtec community by using their language allows him to save them from disaster. The key to understanding this is the fact that as a consequence of social marginalization processes, many indigenous languages of Mexico have taken on functions as codes of solidarity, secrecy, intimacy, and trust within the communities where they are used (Messing 2007), and apparently the sociolinguistic status as private-sphere languages can be exploited by missionaries to gain the trust and confidence of those they wish to save, much faster than they might by using Spanish, the language of the public sphere and the code of power. The anecdote illustrates that Jehovah's Witnesses are aware of this advantage and suggests that it is an important factor behind their choice to focus on evangelization in indigenous languages.

5. Jehovah's Witnesses in Hueyapan

Hueyapan is a religiously diverse community. Besides the Catholic church, of which about half the inhabitants are members, there are at least seven other denominations represented in the small community.⁶ This situation is the result of a long development that began around 1900 with the

arrival of Protestant missionaries from the U.S., but the social and religious conflicts that are often associated with the arrival of new religions in Mexican indigenous communities (Hartch 2006: Bonner 1998) are a thing of the past in Hueyapan, which can be described as a quite religiously tolerant community. The Witnesses describe Hueyapan as an agreeable territory where people generally are open and ready to discuss their religious beliefs.

The Jehovah's Witnesses' congregation in Hueyapan is one of ca. 150 Nahuatl language congregations in Mexico. It has ca. 40 publishers who regularly attend congregation meetings. About 30 are natives of Hueyapan and 10 come from outside, either as pioneers or as ordinary publishers assisting in the Nahuatl territory. The average age of publishers in Hueyapan is rather young, ca. 35.

The change-over to Nahuatl was the result of an inquiry from Betél as to whether Nahuatl was an important indigenous language in the territory. At that time the presiding elder of the congregation was not a native of Hueyapan, but after conducting a personal investigation he concluded, somewhat exaggeratedly, that 90% of Hueyapeños spoke Nahuatl. After a handraising in the congregation, where more than half of the publishers stated that they spoke Nahuatl (note that handraising doesn't allow for recognizing semi- or quasi-speakers), the change was made official, to the dismay of some of the publishers who did not speak Nahuatl. They did not welcome the extra workload of having to learn a new language.

At first the change was not very noticeable. As elders are the principal speakers and there were no fluent Nahuatl speakers among them at that time, it was difficult for the congregation to proceed beyond Nahuatl greetings and smalltalk. An elder and some ministerial servants, assigned to facilitate the desired nahuatlization, introduced more use of Nahuatl, but discourses in their native Tetelcingo dialect proved poorly intelligible, and visiting speakers from other Nahuatl congregations were therefore recruited to fill the need. Although use of Nahuatl in the first year was probably less than 10–15%, it had a gradual and ultimately dramatic effect on the prestige mechanisms that operated within the congregation. While the use of Spanish was never prohibited or explicitly discouraged, little by little the official change and the implicit expectations of speaking Nahuatl in the congregation caused a reversal of the prestige mechanisms in the little community. Elderly publishers who used to be on the fringe of the congregation's social network suddenly found themselves to be sought out for advice by the younger publishers who felt they had to work harder to achieve the prestige associated with commenting in Nahuatl. Publishers also experienced a change in the door-to-door ministry, where speaking Nahuatl, even if just to make the initial greetings, was often met with

a more positive attitude than they were used to. After a year an important change happened when Rigoberto Zavala, a young Hueyapeño, returned to Hueyapan to serve as an elder. In spite of his age he is fluent in Hueyapan Nahuatl and with his arrival the amount of Nahuatl spoken from the podium drastically increased: he would simultaneously translate both Bible passages and discourses given in Spanish, and most importantly he formulated the questions to the congregation during *Watchtower* studies in Nahuatl.

Another important part of the linguistic change was devising a specialized vocabulary of what Witnesses refer to as “theocratic terminology”. When devising new terminology the elders will often consult the elderly speakers of the congregation to inquire about the appropriateness of specific terminology. This again contributes to the heightened prestige of elderly publishers, who in this way receive crucial responsibility for theological considerations which are otherwise always reserved for only the highest echelons of the Watchtower Organization. For example, the verb *teōchīwa* meaning ‘to pray’, was deliberately avoided by the congregation. Elderly speakers identified it with the Spanish verb *rezar* and associated it with the Catholic practice of saying predetermined prayers such as the Ave Maria or Padre Nuestro, whereas the Witnesses encourage only the use of personally formulated ad hoc prayers, a practice that they express in Spanish with the verb *orar*. The elders therefore decided to use the Nahuatl verb *tlatlahtia* ‘to petition’ instead. Another example concerned the translation of the words ‘spirit’ and ‘spiritual’, very frequently used among the Witnesses. In Hueyapan the word usually used to refer to immaterial beings are *yehyekameh* ‘winds’, but this word is frequently used in contexts of traditional non-Christian religion, for example by the *kiohtlāskeh*, the ‘rain petitioners’ who use it to refer to nature spirits, and by traditional healers who use it to refer to malevolent spirits that cause certain types of illness. The word *yehyekatl* was therefore adopted instead with the meaning of ‘demon’, and the Spanish words *espíritu* and *espiritual* are left untranslated in most contexts. (I have heard the phrase *yehyekatl chipāwak* ‘the pure wind’ used as a translation of ‘the holy spirit’ — but my primary consultants find this usage to be theocratically inadequate and prefer to leave it untranslated.) This is an ongoing task in which the members of the congregation try out and adopt the vocabulary that best expresses the various theocratic concepts. Some terms are borrowed from other Nahuatl dialects, specifically the dialects from Guerrero and from Northern Puebla in which the Watchtower Society publishes treatises. Sometimes new vocabulary has also been acquired from visiting speakers from other dialect areas or from other Nahuatl congregations encountered in the assemblies.

Again the pragmatic nature of the Jehovah's Witnesses' linguistic project shines through: loans from Spanish or, infrequently, from other dialects of Nahuatl are the preferred solution when an adequate word in Hueyapan Nahuatl is missing. Creation of neologisms is rarely, if ever, the strategy used, probably because of the risk that such creations might hinder, rather than facilitate, communication with those whom the Witnesses wish to reach. Purist concerns about *legítimo Nahuatl* are also non-existent within the congregation — precisely because of the focus on Nahuatl as a means of communication, not as the center of an independent ideology. In fact the learning environment is so inclusive that much of the Nahuatl spoken from the podium and from the floor would probably be dismissed by most linguists as semi- or quasi-Nahuatl, because of the very limited proficiency of some learners. This judgement however is not made by the congregation, and commenting, even in broken, pidgin-like Nahuatl with grammatical structures calqued directly from Spanish, is always encouraged. Mistakes are never publically corrected, although friendly suggestions on how to improve wordings and phrases may be given personally after the meeting.

As the changeover from nearly all Spanish to more use of Nahuatl progressed, publishers began to travel outside of Hueyapan evangelizing the most rural parts of their territory. A large part of the territory is located in south-western Puebla where there are many Nahuatl-speaking communities, and quite a few maintain the use of Nahuatl in more social domains than is true in Hueyapan. This made the use of Nahuatl in the ministry even more useful. Publishers and pioneers also came from outside the community to assist in the congregation, and they came with the specific purpose of learning Nahuatl. In this way the local publishers were provided with stronger motivation to become proficient in Nahuatl in order to be able to help the newcomers, instead of being surpassed by them.

Currently Rigoberto Zavala is serving as presiding elder of the congregation, and two new ministerial servants who are native Hueyapeños and proficient Nahuatl speakers have been appointed. The ratio of Nahuatl to Spanish spoken from the podium has reached around half. Returning to Hueyapan after two years of absence in May 2008, I was surprised to see that even those young publishers who had been opposed to the change and who had been most reluctant to begin to use Nahuatl were now giving comments and presentations in Nahuatl with a high degree of fluency and also with a degree of Spanish influence that does not appear to be greater than is true of most other speakers.

All in all I must conclude that when judged as a project of Nahuatl revitalization or development, the language change of the Hueyapan

congregation has been highly successful. The congregation is likely to be the only subcommunity in Hueyapan where youths below 30 years of age actively use Nahuatl to communicate with each other on a daily basis, and where they also actively strive to improve their levels of proficiency.

What then, were the conditions that made this micro-scale case of spontaneous revitalization possible?

Firstly, the community was provided with strong motivation to shift: they were told to do so by their leaders. Jehovah's Witnesses being a highly hierarchical organization, orders from above are seen as expressing not only the will of the leaders but also that of Jehovah. However, mere obedience cannot account entirely for the success, since any individual publisher who had not wished to make Nahuatl his or her primary language of worship could have freely changed to a Spanish language congregation, for example the one in the neighboring town of Tetela del Volcán, something none of the Hueyapan publishers did. An equally important motivational factor was probably the strong encouragement to engage in communication with the people who have Nahuatl as their primary language. Jehovah's Witnesses have something they want to say, and saying it in the language that is most favorably received is in their own best interest.

Secondly, the social organization of Jehovah's Witnesses is directed by a different value system than that of the general society. In this case it so happened that their value system neutralized some of the factors that inhibit the use of indigenous languages in Mexican society in general: namely negative prestige, negative economic consequences, and racial stereotypes. Jehovah's Witnesses' value system explicitly rejects the negative value ascribed to indigenous languages in the "developmentalist" discourse. Furthermore, because the language change attached a new prestige to the Nahuatl language, the existing social hierarchy within the congregation was threatened with being turned upside down, favoring the adult and elderly publishers instead of the young ones as had been the case until then. This situation motivated the young publishers to work extra hard to acquire proficiency in the language.

Thirdly, because the Witnesses have the explicit purpose of communicating efficiently and are not worried about rescuing the Nahuatl language or about enforcing special linguistic norms or promoting particular language ideologies, they were unaffected by the "purist" discourse. This allowed them to create a positive learning environment where students could learn from older, more proficient speakers without being discouraged by excessive correction. The learning environment in the congregation can be compared to the situation in other Mexican indigenous

communities where speakers only begin to learn their indigenous language when they reach adulthood and begin to participate in adult society (Waterhouse 1949), and to the mentor system applied in some revitalization attempts with North American indigenous languages (the master-apprentice method described in Hinton [1997]).

Important questions for further study are whether and how language development within particular subcommunities can trigger developments in the community as a whole. In the present case I think that this will be difficult, since important factors prevent the rest of the community from allowing themselves to become influenced by Jehovah's Witnesses. However one must also not underestimate the effect it may have on speakers who often feel that their language is an emblem of poverty and inferiority and a thing belonging to the past to be sought out by well dressed, polite youths who address them in their own language, and even show a desire to learn more of it. Studies such as those by Muntzel (2004) and Terrill (2002) suggest that merely by speakers becoming aware that their language is of value to others, and that it can be written down like more prestigious languages, a more positive language attitude can be created, thus possibly facilitating continued language development, or at least slowing the pace of language shift.

University of Copenhagen

Correspondence address: magnuspharao@gmail.com

Notes

1. This article is a byproduct of successive fieldwork periods conducted in Hueyapan, Morelos, from 2003 to 2008 with a total duration of about one and a half years. The data used consists of observations of ca. 75 congregational meetings and of formal interviews and informal interaction with Jehovah's Witnesses in Hueyapan, and an interview with Raymundo Camacho of the translation division of Betél, Mexico. I wish to thank Rigoberto and Claudia Zavala Amaro for acting as patient consultants and the congregation of Hueyapan for their friendliness and hospitality. *Small languages and small language communities* editor Nancy Dorian is also to be thanked for her copious, patient and encouraging editorial comments. The author is not a theologian or a specialist in the sociology of religion, and any misunderstandings or flawed terminology in the description of Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs and practices fall back on the author, not on the consultants.
2. Population is given according to a 2002 unofficial census by the municipal *ayudante* of Hueyapan; there is no official census data available for Hueyapan, since it is only one of the communities within the municipality of Tetela del Volcán. The issue of ethnicity is complicated. I state categorically here that the people of Hueyapan are of Nahuatl ethnicity as a simple consequence of the fact that 50 years ago everyone in the town spoke

Nahuatl. Although probably not all inhabitants would self-identify as Nahuas, I have heard some Hueyapeños refer to themselves as *nāwatlāka* 'Nahua person', and others refer to themselves as indigenous or pejoratively as "indios". Politically at any rate, Hueyapan as a whole is considered an indigenous community and is eligible to receive different kinds of economic support reserved for indigenous communities by the Mexican government.

3. Nahuatl may be considered the name of a dialect continuum rather than a language, and often speakers of the individual varieties refer to their language by another name. In nearby towns the language is referred to as *Mōsiehualli* (in Tetelcingo, Morelos) or *Mexicano* (in Puebla), but it seems to be called *Nahuatl* (pronounced [na:waṭl]) by the majority of speakers in Hueyapan.
4. Restorationist because the adherents see themselves as restoring the original christianity of the first century after a "great apostasy" committed by all other Christian denominations, and millenarianist because they await the coming of a postapocalyptic, millennial kingdom ruled by Christ.
5. The languages are Ch'ol, Huave, Isthmus Zapotec, Mazatec, Mixe, Nahuatl of the Huasteca, Nahuatl of Northern Puebla, Nahuatl of Guerrero, Purhépecha, Tojolab'al, Totonac, Tlapanec, Tzotzil and Yucatec Maya. Publications in Central Nahuatl and Mixtec are also on the drawing board.
6. In Hueyapan there are Adventists, three branches of Pentecostals, Baptists, Sabbatists and Jehovah's Witnesses. A few Hueyapeños congregate with the anti-Catholics in the neighboring town of Alpanocan, Puebla, and some are followers of the charismatic church La Luz del Mundo and congregate in Tetela del Volcán, the municipal government seat. There are also some practitioners of different forms of traditional indigenous religion, although these are mostly counted among the Catholics, and furthermore a great many areligious people.

References

- Beckford, James A. 1975. *The trumpets of prophecy: A sociological study of Jehovah's Witnesses*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Bonner, Arthur. 1998. *We will not be stopped: Evangelical persecution, Catholicism, and Zapatismo in Chiapas, Mexico*. Parkland, FL: Universal Publishers.
- Dorian, Nancy C. 1977. The problem of the semi-speaker in language death. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 12. 23–32.
- Flores Farfán, José Antonio. 1999. *Cuatrerros somos y toindioa hablamos: Contactos y conflictos entre el náhuatl y el español en el sur de México*. México: CIESAS.
- Hartch, Todd. 2006. *Missionaries of the state: The Summer Institute of Linguistics, state formation, and indigenous Mexico, 1935–1985*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Hill, Jane H. & Kenneth C. Hill. 1980. Mixed grammar, purist grammar and language attitudes in modern Nahuatl. *Language in Society* 9. 321–348.
- Hill, Jane H. & Kenneth C. Hill. 1986. *Speaking Mexicano: The dynamics of syncretic language in Central Mexico*. Tuscon, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
- Hinton, Leanne. 1997. Survival of endangered languages: The California master-apprentice program. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 123. 177–191.
- Holden, Andrew. 2002. *Jehovah's Witnesses: Portrait of a contemporary religious movement*. London: Routledge.

Small languages and small language communities 137

- Messing, Jacqueline. 2007. Ideologies of public and private uses of language in Tlaxcala, Mexico. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 187/188. 211–227.
- Muntzel, Martha. 2004. The role of literacy in language revitalization. Paper presented at *Dialects — Fòrum Universal de les Cultures*, Barcelona, 21 May. http://www.barcelona2004.org/esp/banco_del_conocimiento/docs/PO_35_EN_MUNTZEL.pdf (accessed 3 February 2009).
- Terrill, Angela. 2002. Why make books for people who don't read? A perspective on documentation of an endangered language from Solomon Islands. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 155/156. 205–219.
- Waterhouse, Viola. 1949. Learning a second language first. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 15. 106–109.