HOW THE BLUE BOTTLEFLY MAKES SMOKE SIGNALS:
ON THE PRESENTATION OF A SERI TEXT

CÓMO LA MOSCA AZUL HACE SEÑALES DE HUMO:
SOBRE LA PRESENTACIÓN DE UN TEXTO SERI

Stephen A. Marlett

Introduction

This paper is about a very short Seri1 text (51 seconds long in one of the early recordings) that has been published in more than one form. The text is by no means the most interesting one to be analyzed, but there is value in comparing the different forms in which it has appeared. Some phonetic

1 Seri, ISO 639-3 code [sei], is spoken in Sonora, Mexico. For more information about the people and language, see O’Meara et al. (2013: 126-128) and the references cited there. Work on the text presented in this paper was facilitated in 2007 by a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities (FN-50007), gratefully acknowledged. I thank Carolyn O’Meara for her comments on an earlier version of this work. I also thank the anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions, and Richard White for his help on the date of the recording by Roberto Herrera.
detail presented here has still not been addressed in linguistic descriptions. Furthermore, the place of texts such as this one dealing with differences between early stages of the history of the world and present times has not been addressed in anthropological studies of Seri culture. We do not have an adequate context in which to discuss the continued interest that such stories have in the language community.

In the section History, the history of publication is reviewed. The text is given in monolingual format in the section Text, using the community-based orthography, and in interlinearized format in the section Glossed Text. In the section Comments, I briefly compare the versions (apart from orthographical issues) and discuss the notable differences. One difference is mentioned here, however. The word /ˈχkoomox/ ‘fly’ (*Musca domestica* in other contexts but referring to some other kind of fly here —see below) was written with a final /k/ after the /x/ in E. Moser (1968); this is anomalous since the word occurs without that final /k/ in all of the paper file slips that Moser used. The word is written here as it occurs in the Seri dictionary, M. Moser & Marlett (2010), including with a long vowel in the first syllable (as in the 1968 and 1976 versions, but unlike on the paper slips). Facsimile versions of earlier presentations of the text are given in appendices A-C.

A short summary of the contents of the text is given here: The reason why vultures can find carcasses of animals in the desert is because the blue bottlefly is sitting on them making smoke signals.

The free translation given in E. Moser (1968) is the following:

This story happened almost at the beginning of the world. The fly, by rubbing his front legs together, makes fire by friction-making-motions just like a person. Thus when the fly is with an animal carcass and makes fire by friction and makes smoke signals, the bird flying along finds the carcass on the desert. That is why it happens like that. Even today when any carcass is out of sight on the desert, the bird, due to the fly making fire by friction and making smoke signals, as it were, finds it and finally gets to it. That is how it happens.

---

2 The unpublished free translation of the version of this text published in Morales (1976) (found in Moser’s notes) is only slightly different.
The fly is identified in the title used in 1976 as *xcoomoj cooil*, which is the blue bottlefly (*Calliphora* spp.) according to M. Moser & Marlett (2010: 581). Some species, such as *Calliphora vomita*, are known to be attracted to rotting meat, where eggs are laid and larvae then develop. The flies can be observed rubbing their forelegs together, and this action evidently prompted the comparison with the human activity of starting a fire through friction. See Felger & M. Moser (1985: 123-125) for a description of the process. The verbs for this action are *quimatox* (transitive) and *coomatox* (intransitive, unspecified object form); see M. Moser & Marlett (2010: 514, 224). The intransitive verb figures into the text under consideration here.

Kroeber (1931: 13) includes the following “myth fragment” from his short time of interaction with the Seris: “Fire is from the fly, who made it by rubbing his hands together, as he still does (*fide* R. Thomson).”³ It may be that this myth fragment (which may not have been accurately recorded) prompted Edward W. Moser, who began to learn and analyze Seri twenty years after Kroeber’s visit to the area, to ask for and record the text presented here.

*History of the publication*

The text was recorded by Edward Moser sometime prior to 1968, according to the first footnote to the first published form, which was for an academic audience, as E. Moser (1968: 364-365). That presentation utilized Americanist symbols to represent what was thought to be a phonemic transcription of the text; see appendix A. A recording made in 1966 by Edward Moser is part of the collection of Seri recordings available through the Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin

³ The R[oberto] Thomson referred to here was a non-Seri Mexican “of Hermosillo and Rancho San Rafael, who is now the Mexican Government’s *Jefe de Vigilancia* for the Seris, and in effect what in the United States would be known as Indian Agent for the tribe” (Kroeber, 1931: 3). It is not clear how he helped with the information given here. (His last name was given to the Seri boy who became known later as Roberto Herrera, as mentioned in the section History. Various non-Seri Mexican families gave last names to Seri babies during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.)
America, resource ID: SEI003R002, and is evidently the one that is the basis for the 1968 printed version. (An mp3 version of this recording is available on this journal’s website.) The first footnote in the 1968 publication said that the text was told by Roberto Herrera Thomson, a man locally known as Cmiique Roberto and also known later as Roberto Herrera Marcos (1916-1988).

However, the next presentation of the text, as Morales (1976), for the Seri community and also under the sponsorship of Moser, ascribes it to Jesús Morales, and there is little doubt that we are dealing with the same text. See appendix B. In unarchived typed notes by Edward or Mary Moser, it is indicated that various recordings were made in 1964 by Edward Moser, Mary Moser, and Bernard L. Fontana, the latter from the University of Arizona. The notes say the recordings were made of Jesús Morales, who was 58 years old at the time. The recordings were made in Desemboque (place of residence of the Mosers and of Morales). In these notes it is mentioned that the story “The Fly Legend” was recorded, on R[ele] 79. That recording is part of the collection deposited by the Mosers at the Arizona State Museum but the specific recording of this text has not been located.

The story was published again for the Seri community as Morales (1983) with updating of the spelling conventions; see appendix C.

Neither of the narrators (Herrera or Morales) was a writer of the language. As one compares the versions of the text, one can appreciate the fact that the shape of the written language was being slowly developed from its first steps (in the early 1950’s, through the research of Edward and Mary Moser) through gradual improvements as various people in the community became interested and involved in reading and writing the language, through the early twenty-first century as confident writers helped to bring the writing of Seri into its present form. (Some of this history is traced in Marlett 2006.)

The presentation of the text here, in the section Text, updates the story once more to agree with the conventions used in the Seri dictionary, now in its second edition as M. Moser & Marlett (2010), which resulted from

---

4 http://www.iifilologicas.unam.mx/tlalocan.
long interaction with Seri men and women who served on the editorial committee for that work. The present version was done with the editorial help of René Montaño Herrera in 2007. Word breaks are slightly different than those used previous to 2005. A few examples of these are given in (1), with reference to the text itself as shown in the section Glossed Text.

1. a. The switch reference markers are separated off, and thus *cotama* in the first sentence is now written *cota ma*.
   b. The declarative enclitic is separated off, and thus *caahcaha* in the first sentence is now written *caahca ha*.
   c. The ubiquitous morpheme *x*, glossed as ‘ut’ (‘unspecified time’), written as a suffix in the versions published previous to 2005, is separated off; thus *tabcamax* in the third sentence is now written *tabca ma x*.
   d. The definite article *quih* (one of several articles in the language) is written that way always now, and as a separate word, unlike in the 1976 version.
   e. The complex demonstratives (composed of a deictic and a definite article), written as two words in 1976, are written as one word today; see the example *tiquij* in the second sentence, which was written as *ti quij* in 1976 and earlier.

Commas are also used now, unlike in the 1976 and 1983 versions—a development that was made even more necessary because of the changes in word divisions. Other small differences may also be observed, mostly dealing with when and how to represent vowel length.

The current presentation is less phonetically-oriented than previous versions. For example, the word in sentence 3.1 was written as *tijma* because the clause has reduced stress and the vowel loses some of its underlying length; today that word is written *tiij ma*, the reading of which does require some additional background on the part of the reader.
TEXT IN SERI

Hant com cmaa ipaxi quih iihax cota ma, hant com iti tahca ma, taax ano caahca ha. Xcoomoj tiquij, tiix cmiiique quih yámara. Ox isoj itáh toc cőtiij ma, ziix cooxi com itacoxl, toomatox, hamác cótootni ma x, hant quih iti tahca ma x, ziix quih cooxi quih hehe quih iiicot cocom quih hant quih iti toom ma x, ziic quih haquix mota x, imiiho tax. Taax ah oo cőtpacta x, ox tpacta, yoque.

Ox cőiiha hizac xox, ziix quih cooxi quih heecot coton, haquix toom ma x, haa tmaco xox, ziic quih imiiho tax; xcoomoj tiquij ah haa tiij x, mos taa oo cóitapacta x, toomatox, xah hax tahii hax taa ma x, hamác cőhaisx xah ziix cmis quih haa tap ma, itaho x, haptco cőcaafp iha. Taax oo cőtpacta, hant quih iti caahca ha.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Shortly after the creation of the world, the bluefly was sitting on the carcass of a dead animal, as usual, but he was lighting a fire and making smoke signals. Although the dead animal was between bushes and out of view, the vultures were able to spot it because they saw the smoke signals.

That’s the way it still is. A dead animal may be there in the desert, perhaps out of view, but the bluefly is there making a fire and smoke signals, as it were, and so the vultures spot the carcass right away and arrive to it. That’s how it happens.
GLOTTED TEXT

The text is presented in five word-aligned lines plus a (rather wooden) free translation in a sixth line.

The first line is the text as it is written using local writing conventions, as documented and utilized in M. Moser & Marlett (2010). (Written accents are not always used in locally written materials, but they are used consistently here; see discussion of the analysis in Marlett 2008a.)

The second line presents a phonemic transcription, following the analysis presented in Marlett, Moreno Herrera & Herrera Astorga (2005) and the conventions of the IPA (1999).

The third line presents a narrow, or allophonic, transcription. The publication of this text in E. Moser (1968) included a transcription that is quite comparable to the narrow transcription (although it was not intended that way). Our understanding of Seri phonology and phonetics has progressed since that time and so it seems appropriate to include here a narrow transcription. This is especially important since there are phonetic facts, such as the question of unstressed clauses, that are not easily presented using an automated word-by-word interlinearization program. In this narrow transcription, vowels and consonants marked with a half-length mark are phonetically lengthened as a result of stress on the preceding vowel (and even so the phonetic details are not fully represented). To date, no one has given an account of stress above the word level in Seri, and this makes Moser’s transcription valuable since it documented the phrasal stress. In the present narrow transcription, secondary stress is used to mark the place where primary stress would fall in a word-level transcription; vowel length in such syllables is very much reduced, and this is indicated here by a breve above each of the geminate vowels. Words that cliticize are preceded or followed by a bottom tiebar.

The fourth line presents a morphological analysis of the words, generally following the so-called Leipzig Glossing Rules. Morpheme breaks are not indicated in the text itself for various reasons. In fact, not all derived stems (such as causatives) are fully explicated; they are just glossed with

---

appropriate meanings. For detailed information on the morphology —
derivational as well as inflectional — see Marlett (2012). Morpheme
glossing in this text represents the latest analysis, including the fact that
three realis forms are no longer given meaningful labels since the earlier
labels (still to be changed in the grammatical description in progress) are
now deemed misleading.

The fifth line gives the citation form of the word in question, to
facilitate use of the dictionary, M. Moser & Marlett (2010). The special
abbreviations “+if ” (for “inflected form of”) and “+pos. var” (for
“positional variant”) appear in this line.

And the sixth line gives a relatively free translation of that unit of text. It
attempts to provide a clear translation that nonetheless closely reflects the
structure of the original text.

MosHum:1.1
1. Hant com cmaa ipaxi quih iiha cota ma,
   ˈʔant	 kom	 ˈkmaa	 iˈpaχi	 kiʔ	 ˈiiʔaχ	 ˈkota	 ma
   ˈʔant	 koŋ	 ˈkw̃ãã	 iˈpaχˑiˑ	 kʔ‿	ˌı̆ı̆ʔaχ	ˌkota	 ˌma
land
def;hz
now
3poss:[prop.obl.nmlz:]finish
def;fl
3poss:with
3:io:rlt:happen
ds
hant
com
cmaa
quixi+if
quip
iiha
coha+if
ma
When the earth was recently made,

MosHum:1.2
2. hant com iti tahca ma,
   ˈʔant	 kom	 iti	 ˈtaʔka	 ma
   ˈʔant	 kom	 ˌiti‿	 ˌtaʔka	 ˌma
land
def;hz
3poss:on
rlt:be_located
ds
hant
com
iti
cahca+if
ma
it happened;

MosHum:1.3
3. taax ano caahca ha.
   ˈtaaχ	 ano	 ˈkaaʔka	 ʔa
   ˈtaaχ	 ano.	 ˈkaaʔka	 ʔa
dem;dt;pl
[3poss:]in/from
sbj;nmlz:be_located
dcl
taax
ano
cahca
ha.
it happened then
How the blue bottlefly makes smoke signals

4. Xcoomoj tiquij, tiix cmiique quih yámatox.
   \( \chi'k\text{oomox} \quad \text{tikix} \quad \text{tiiχ} \quad \text{kmiiκε} \quad \text{kiʔ} \quad \text{jamatoχ} \)
   \( \chi'k\text{oomox}\,'\text{ox} \quad \text{tikix} \quad \text{tiiχ} \quad \text{kw̃ı̃ı̃kˑɛˑ} \quad \text{kiʔ} \quad \text{jamˑaˑtoχ} \)
   \( \text{Musca domestica} \quad \text{MD:CM} \quad \text{DEM:DT:SG} \quad \text{person_(Serí)} \quad \text{DEF:FL} \quad \text{RLY:UNSP:OBJ:use_firedrill} \)
   \( x\text{coomoj} \quad \text{tiiquij} \quad \text{tiix} \quad \text{cmiique} \quad \text{quih} \quad \text{coomatox+if} \)
   That fly was making fire [using a firedrill] like a person.

MosHum:3.1

5. Ox isoj itáh toc cötiij ma,
   \( \text{oxoχ} \quad \text{isox} \quad \text{iˈtaʔ} \quad \text{tok} \quad \text{ˈkiʔtiix} \quad \text{ma} \)
   thus 3poss:body 3sbj:rlt:say/do/put there 3.io:rlt:sit ds
   \( \text{ox} \quad \text{isoj} \quad \text{quih+if} \quad \text{toc} \quad \text{quij+iif} \quad \text{ma} \)
   He was sitting there as was his custom,

MosHum:3.2

6. ziix cooxi com itacoxl,
   \( \text{ʃiiχ} \quad \text{ˈkooχi} \quad \text{kom} \quad \text{itaˈkoχɬ} \)
   \( \text{ʃĭı̆χ} \quad \text{ˈkooχˑiˑ} \quad \text{kom} \quad \text{itaˌkoχɬ} \)
   thing sbj.nmlz:die.(animal) def;hz 3sbj:rlt:accompany
   \( \text{ziix} \quad \text{cooxi} \quad \text{com} \quad \text{cacoxl+if} \)
   he was staying with the carcass of a dead animal

MosHum:3.3

7. toomatox,
   \( \text{ˈtoomatoχ} \)
   \( \text{ˈtoomˑaˑtoχ} \)
   \( \text{RLY:UNSP:OBJ:use_firedrill} \)
   \( \text{coomatox+if} \)
   he was lighting a fire

MosHum:3.4

8. hamáč cötootni ma x,
   \( ?\text{aˈmak} \quad \text{ˈkʷtootni} \quad \text{ma} \quad \chi \)
   \( ?\text{aˈmak} \quad \text{ˈkʷtɔ̃t̊ni} \quad \text{ma} \quad \chi \)
   fire 3.io:RLY:UNSP:OBJ:touch ds ut
   hamáč cootni+if ma x
   he was making smoke signals;
MosHum:3.5
9. hant quih iti tahca ma x,

\textit{it happened},

MosHum:3.6
10. ziix quih cooxi quih hehe quih iicot cocom quih hant quih iti toom ma x,

\textit{the dead animal lying between the bushes was on the ground},

MosHum:3.7
11. ziic quih haquix mota x,

\textit{a bird came along},

MosHum:3.8
12. imiiho tax.

\textit{because he saw them}.
MosHum:4.1
13. Taax ah oo cötpacta x,

It was like that,

MosHum:4.2
14. Ox tpacta, yoque.

that’s how it was, they say.

MosHum:5.1
15. Ox cÖiiha hizac xox,

Although that’s the way it is nowadays,

MosHum:5.2
16. Ziix quih cooxi quih heecot cotom,

the dead animal lies in the desert,

MosHum:5.3
17. Haquix toom ma x,

it lies somewhere,
MosHum:5.4
18. haa tmaco xox,

\[ ?\text{aa} \quad ?\text{tmako} \quad \chi\text{o}x \]

\[ ?\text{aa} \quad ?\text{tmako} \quad \chi\text{o}x \]

there although

\[ \text{haa} \quad \text{cmaco}+\text{if} \quad \text{xox} \]

although it may not be visible,

MosHum:5.5
19. ziic quih imiiho tax;

\[ ?\text{jiik} \quad ?\text{i}^\text{mi}^\text{ii}^?\text{o} \quad \text{tax} \]

\[ ?\text{jiik} \quad ?\text{ki}^\text{i} \quad ?\text{i}^\text{mi}^\text{ii}^?\text{o} \quad \text{tax} \]

bird \( \text{DEFL} \quad \text{3SBF} \quad \text{RLMI} \quad \text{SECF} \quad \text{SRBD} \)

ziic quih quiho+if tax

the bird sees it;

MosHum:5.6
20. xcoomoj tiquij ah haa tiij x,

\[ ?\text{xkoomox} \quad \text{tikix} \quad \text{a}? \quad ?\text{aa} \quad ?\text{tiix} \quad \chi \]

\[ ?\text{xkoomox} \quad \text{tikix} \quad ?\text{a}? \quad ?\text{aa} \quad ?\text{tiix} \quad \chi \]

\( \text{Musca} \_\text{domestica} \)

\( \text{MD} \quad \text{CM} \quad \text{FOC} \quad \text{there} \quad \text{RETSIT} \quad \text{UT} \)

xcoomoj tiquij ah haa quiij+if x

that fly is sitting there;

MosHum:5.7
21. mos taa oo c\text{o}i\text{t}a\text{pacta} x,

\[ \text{mos} \quad ?\text{taa} \quad \text{oo} \quad \text{k}^\text{w}i\text{ta}^\text{pakta} \quad \chi \]

\[ \text{mos} \quad ?\text{taa} \quad \_\text{o} \quad \text{k}^\text{w}i\text{ta}^\text{pakta} \quad \chi \]

also \( \text{DEM} \quad \text{MD} \quad \text{PL} \quad \text{LIIM} \quad \text{3IO} \quad \text{3SBF} \quad \text{RET} \quad \text{DO} \quad \text{UT} \)

mos taa oo capacta+if x

he is also doing it like that;

MosHum:5.8
22. toomatox, xah hax tahii hax taa ma x,

\[ ?\text{toomatox} \quad \_\text{a} ? \quad ?\text{ax} \quad \text{ta}^\text{ii} \quad ?\text{ax} \quad ?\text{taa} \quad \_\text{ma} \quad \chi \]

\[ ?\text{toomatox} \quad \_\text{a} ? \quad ?\text{ax} \quad \text{ta}^\text{ii} \quad ?\text{ax} \quad \_\text{taa} \quad \_\text{ma} \quad \chi \]

\( \text{RET} \quad \text{UNSP} \quad \text{OBJ} \quad \text{use_firedrill} \quad ? \quad \text{RLET} \quad \text{PASS} \quad \text{feel} \quad \text{rather/very} \quad \text{RLET} \quad \text{AUX} \quad \text{DS} \quad \text{UT} \)

coomatox+if xah hax cquiij+if xah taa ma x

it is just as if be were starting fire with a firedrill,
MosHum: 5.9
23. hamác cöhaisx xah ziix cmis quih haa tap ma,

something resembling a smoke signal is there;

MosHum: 5.10
24. itaho x,

when he sees it,

MosHum: 5.11
25. haptco cöcaafp iha.

he arrives to it right away.

MosHum: 6.1
26. Taax oo cötpacta,

It is like that,

MosHum: 6.2
27. hant quih iti caahca ha.

it happens like that.
Comments

In the following subsections I present comments on the text itself, primarily comparing published versions, and then comments about grammatical points.

Textual comments

In this section I briefly compare the actual text of three versions: 1968, 1976 and the present one. For this comparison, I use the community-based orthography and the unit numbers that appear in the section Text above.

In 1.1, the word *ipaxi* was just that in 1968 but was changed to *cöipaxi* (adding the prefix *cö*) in 1976, probably because Jesús Morales gave it that way. The current version excludes the prefix.

In 1.1, the word transcribed *quihax* in 1968 and 1976 is taken as *quih iihax*; the word *iihax* is part of more than one idiom based on the irregular verb *coha*, as shown in M. Moser & Marlett (2010: 206).

In sentence 2, the word *yámatox* was *cöyámatox* in 1968, but was *yámatox* in 1976. I have no explanation for why this finite verb changed its form to drop the prefix *cö*- in the 1976 version except that probably Jesús Morales gave it that way. It would seem to make sense for the prefix to occur to agree with the nominal of comparison *cmiique quih*, but the prefix was nonetheless dropped.

The words *toc cötiij ma* in 3.1 were transcribed without the prefix *cö*- in 1968 and 1976. In this case, we know that it was simply a matter of not hearing the obviously non-salient consonant *cö*- /kʷ/ in this context. We now know that the locative *toc* always requires that prefix (or its allomorph *co*-) on the verb that follows, as is obvious from all of the phonological contexts that permit it to be heard well.

The nominalized verb *cocom* in 3.6, now in a relative clause, was originally the finite verb *cotom* and not in a relative clause.

The definite article *quih* in 5.2 (and elsewhere) wrong-way cliticizes with whatever follows the noun phrase and is typically pronounced as *[kʔ]* when it precedes a vowel or a glottal stop and a vowel. This article is etymologically related to the nominalized verb *quiih* /kiiʔ/; see Marlett &
M. Moser (1994). It is likely that reanalysis has taken place and now the presence of [i] in the occasional allomorph [kiʔ] of the article is due to a postlexical epentheses rule. In the 1976 version of the text, the article is written attached to the verb on which it leans, and so ziic quih imiiho [ˈʃiik kʔ iˈmiiʔˑoˑ] (‘bird the it.sees.it’) in 5.5 was written ziic chimiihho. By 1983, the custom was to write this article always as quih, regardless of how it was actually pronounced.

Each of the presentations utilize six sentences, although the most recent version uses a semicolon in the middle of the fifth sentence as there is a fairly major break there (which could have been represented with a period). The most recent version uses commas in crucial ways that have proven to be helpful to readers for appropriate “chunking” of the text. Commas are used after dependent clauses, as in sentence 1. They have also been used after noun (or determiner) phrases that are then followed by the demonstrative pronoun, as at the beginning of sentence 2. Commas have been placed after the subordinator xax, as in sentence 5.

Other differences between the versions of the text are primarily matters of orthography —dealing with extremely knotty issues of the representation of phonetic and phonological facts, but there are a few other small differences such as the inclusion of an additional article or enclitic x.

**Grammatical comments**

The use of the “horizontal” article com with the word for ‘land’ in 1.1 indicates that the land in its broad expanse is being referred to, not the earth as a sphere (which would use the “compact” article quiʔ). More information on the use of articles can be found in Marlett & M. Moser (1994) and Marlett (2012).

The combination iihax cota is an idiom that indicates the simultaneity of the events mentioned.

The expressions with the verb caahca (in its different forms) in 1.2 and 1.3 have to do with the matter of an event happening.

The demonstrative tiquij in 2 is appropriate for insects of this type (not too long, not too tall); they are all prototypically presented as sitting rather than standing unless in motion.
The phrase *ox isoj itáh* in 3.1 is an idiom that indicates customary action or habit. I believe that there is some kind of construction illustrated here—seen in many other texts—of a relatively informative clause such as the one just mentioned that is followed by a positional verb in a fairly formulaic way (*toc cötiij ma*) that should be translated in a way that combines the two clauses. This construction has not been investigated in detail, but the intonational contour is similar to that of the phasal verb construction discussed in Marlett (2008b), a fact that supports an analysis that combines the two clauses in some way. (For this reason, a comma does not follow the verb *itáh* in 3.1.)

Only one sentence, 4, includes the main verb *yoque* ‘one says’, which is often used as an evidential marker in texts such as this (and actually very weakly articulated—unstressed, and sometimes virtually unheard), indicating that we are dealing with information that is not first-hand.

The expression *haa tmaco* in 5.4 is an idiom that indicates that something is hidden, hard to see, or difficult and complicated. The verb *tmaco* is inflected with the realis *t*-prefix. While one might think that the *m* is the negative prefix, it is not (at least synchronically; see Marlett, 2002 for discussion). The verb may be negated: *tommaco*. Since the verb only occurs in this and one other idiom, we do not know what it means in itself.

The expression *hamác cöhaisx* in 5.9 means ‘smoke signal’, but is literally ‘injured fire’.

Two main clause finite verbs in this text, the verbs *imiiho* in 3.9 and 5.5, are in the *mi*-realis form. The use of this form (rather than the *yo*-realis form) is appropriate since the author is not asserting personal observation of the events. It is curious, however, that the first main-clause finite verb in the text is actually in the *yo*-realis form; see *yámatox* in 2. It might be noted that some other main (final) clauses have non-finite verbs—a rather common situation—followed by a modal enclitic. These all happen to be subject nominalized forms. See *caaha* in 1.3 and 6.2, and *cöcaafp* in 5.11.

The text seems to be relating the modern world and the world as it was first made. The first paragraph (sentences 1-4), as currently formatted, tell what happened when the world was first made. The second paragraph (sentences 5-6) indicates that the modern situation is parallel to what happened back then. As an anonymous reviewer pointed out, the current
how the blue bottlefly makes smoke signals 241

translation differs in some key ways from the 1968 translation. The verb forms do not provide the difference between past and present (a topic that needs much more research). The current translation pivots significantly on the difference between the introductory phrase (“Shortly after the creation of the world”) and the beginning of sentence 5 that transitions to the modern world.

Lines 3.9 and 5.5 end with the word *tax*, identified as a weak subordinator in Marlett (2012). This analysis does not make much sense here but an alternative analysis has not been offered. The similarity of this word to the demonstrative pronoun *taax* may or may not be accidental, but the similarity does require the writer to think carefully about how to write the word and how to punctuate a sentence that contains one of these words.

*Appendix A. The 1968 version*

A facsimile version of the text as it was published in E. Moser (1968) is included here. (Only the text itself is presented; the two pages on which it appears are spliced together in this reproduction.)

1. *ránt koŋ kʷáq ipáXXií kí?aX kotama *ránt kom iti
ta?kama táaX ano káa?ka?a. 2. Xkóommoxk ti kíx tiX
kʷíkk Xí keí? kʷyámmaatoX. 3. óX isox ita? tok tijma šíX
kóoXXií kom itakoXlí tóommaatoX *amák kWotnimaX
ránt ki? iti ta?kamaX šíX ki? kóoXXií ki? *éppë iíkkoó
ki kotom *ránt ki? iti tóommaX šíík *ákkiíX mota imíípp’oo
taax. 4. táaaXa?o kWtpaktaX óX pákta yoke. 5. oX
kʷípp’aa *iš ak xoX šíX ki? kóoXXií ki? *ékkkoó kotom
*ákkiíX tóommaX *áa tmako xoX šíík ki? imíípp’oo taaX
Xkóommoxk ti kíx *áa tixX mos táao kʷítapaktaX
tóommaatoX xa? *aX ta?íi *axtáma *amák kʷáisX Xa? šíX kʷís k’aa tapma itápp’ooX *áptko kkwʷápp’i?a. 6. táaaXo
d kWtpakta *ránt ki? iti káa?ka?á.
Appendix B. The 1976 version

A facsimile version of the text as it was published in Morales (1976) is included here without the illustration that followed it.

\[
\text{xcóommoojc cóil quih cuiyámmaatox ac}
\]

\[\text{jesús morales}
\]

\[\text{tíx óahhiha}
\]

Hánt cong cuáa cuipáxxii quíhax cotama hánt com iti tahcama táax ano cáahcaha. Xcóommoojc tí quij tíx cuícquee quih yámmaatox. Óx isoj itah toc tijma zíx cóoxxi com itacoxl tóommaatox hamáe cótotnimax hánt chiti tahcamax zíx quih cóoxxi chéhhe íccoott quih cotom hánt chiti tommax zíx chácquixi mota imíiíhhoo táax. Táaxaho cótpactax óx tpácta yoque. Ox cuíhhaa híz ac xox zíx quih cóoxxi chéeccoott cotom háécquixi tommax háa tmaeo xox zíic chimííhhoo táax xcóommoojc tí quij háa tíx mos táo cuítpactax tóommaatox xahax tahii hax tama hamac cuháisx xah zíx cuís chaa tapma ítáhhoox háptco ecuáafpiha. Táaxo cótpacta hánt chiti cáahcaha.
Appendix C. The 1983 version

A facsimile version of the text as it was published in Morales (1983) is included here with one of the illustrations done by Cathy Moser [Marlett] that accompanied it. (The two pages on which it appears are spliced together in this reproduction.)
Abbreviations

3 third person  OBL oblique
AUX auxiliary  PASS passive
CM compact  PL plural
DCL declarative  POSS possessive
DEF definite  PROP proposition
DEM demonstrative  PROX proximal (locative, demonstrative)
DS different subject  RLMI realis “mi” form
DT distal  RLTI realis “t” form
FL flexible, out of sight, or default  RLYO realis “yo” form
FOC focus  SBJ subject
HZ horizontal  SBRD subordinator
IO indirect object  SG singular
LIM limiter  TR transitive
LOC location  TWI toward
MD medial  UNSP unspecified
NMLZ nominalizer  UT unspecified time
OBJ object

The prefix \textit{i-3.subj} basically only appears when the subject and direct object are both third person.

References

\textsc{Felger, Richard S. \& Moser, Mary B.}

\textsc{IPA (International Phonetic Association)}

\textsc{Kroeber, Alfred L.}

\textsc{Marlett, Stephen A.}
http://journals.dartmouth.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Journals.woa/2/xmlpage/1/article/1

[http://journals.dartmouth.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Journals.woa/1/xmlpage/1/article/321](http://journals.dartmouth.edu/cgi-bin/WebObjects/Journals.woa/1/xmlpage/1/article/321)


2012 “A grammar of Seri.” Summer Institute of Linguistics and University of North Dakota. ms.  

MARLETT, Stephen A., F. Xavier MORENO HERRERA, & Genaro G. HERRERA ASTORGA


MARLETT, Stephen A. & Mary B. MOSER


MORALES, Jesús


1983 “Xcomoøj coil quih cöiyamatox,” in *Hapxa quih oot cop cöîbaasitim ac czaxöîha: ziix quih hmaa taax mos czaxöîha (Como el Conejo engañó al Coyote y otros cuentos)*, Roberto

Moser, Edward W.

Moser, Mary B. & Stephen A. Marlett, compilers

O’Meara, Carolyn, Francisco Morales Herrera, Alma Imelda Morales Romero, & René Montaño Herrera
2013 “Donde fue tirado el pantalón y cómo se llega a esa bahía.” *Tlalocan* 18: 125-140.


Recibido el 17 de mayo de 2013
Aceptar el 18 de agosto de 2013