

Language Ideology as an Intervening Process in Language Shift: The Case of Bilingual Education in Guatemala*

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ABSTRACT

In Guatemala, language planning efforts have been formulated in order to decelerate the language shift from the Maya language to Spanish. Although many studies of bilingual education have been conducted to understand its benefits and limitations, ideological intervention in language shift has rarely been dealt with. By exploring the discourses used by education practitioners and parents in Momostenango, a bilingual Mayan community, this study illuminates the ways in which language ideology about the K'iche' Maya language and language learning plays an intervening role in the on-going language shift in Guatemala. The language ideology can be summarized as follows: 1) the K'iche' Maya language is "naturally" learned without schooling; 2) home is not where language is learned; and 3) students recognize the K'iche' Maya language as a second language. I argue that language ideology's role needs to be taken into consideration for more effective language planning in Guatemala.

Key Words: Guatemala, language shift, language ideology, bilingual education, Maya

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INTRODUCTION

Language has served for the past century as a main symbolic means of discrimination against the minority Mayan Indian groups in Guatemala. Due to the long-lasting discrimination against Mayan languages, there has been a language shift away from Mayan languages to the official language, Spanish (Lewis 1993; Garzon et al. 1998). When the civil war that tore Guatemala apart finally ended in 1996, Mayan intellectuals came forward to demand the transformation of Guatemala into a multicultural state with institutionalized rights for Mayans to maintain their own forms of cultural expression. Currently, Mayan cultural activism promotes the maintenance of Mayan languages and revitalization of Mayan culture in an attempt to create support for a “unified Mayan identity” (Fischer and Brown 1996; Jimenez 1998; French 2010).

In response to language shift that Mayas are experiencing, the Mayan movement has started a series of actions that aim to revitalize Mayan languages and to promote their use among the members of the Mayan society by: 1) increasing linguistic consciousness among Mayas as well as decreasing Mayan and non-Mayan disdain toward indigenous languages; 2) expanding the domain and usage of Mayan languages through their maintenance and revitalization at all levels, especially written; 3) creating more bilingual education schools where children can receive instruction in both Mayan and Spanish language; and 4) emphasizing Mayan languages’ official recognition. This commitment in an official document indicated, for the first time, that the Guatemalan government was committed in broad terms to expand language planning in the form of bilingual education across the country. Specifically, the Guatemalan national bilingual education programs are implemented through the *Ministerio de Educación* or related agencies, either voluntarily or due to serious pressure from governments and organizations outside Guatemala. The impact of the growth of bilingual schools has shown a historical reverse in the acceptance of the Mayan languages in the school curriculum. DIGEBI, from 2001 to 2004, opened up 24 new bilingual-intercultural schools. Currently primary education offers minimum three years of bilingual education in the Mayan communities in Guatemala because bilingual education is believed to play a crucial role to decelerate the language shift to Spanish, the official language of Guatemala.

Researchers have discussed the benefits and limitations of bilingual education in Guatemala (Patrinos and Velez 2009; McEwan and Trowbridge 2007). According to Patrinos and Velez (2009), bilingual schooling resulted

in lower dropout rates among Mayan primary students in Guatemala. Several scholars have also documented limitations of current bilingual education (Maxwell 2009; McEwan and Trowbridge 2007; Greebon 2011). Maxwell (2009), for example, documents how instructional materials used in these settings maintain a discriminatory as well as essentializing Mayan culture. McEwan and Trowbridge (2007) point out that one of the major causes of low achievement among indigenous students in Guatemalan primary schools is the lack of bilingual education because it is not well supported by rural parents. Furthermore, Greebon (2011) has shown that even in the intentionally Maya-focused schools associated with Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya, the amount of instructional time spent in the students' first language (Maya) is far less than that spent in the second language (Spanish).

As we can see above, bilingual education has been assessed in terms of its effects on the local schooling, with much focus on the curriculum of bilingual schools and teaching practices. Few studies have investigated how Mayan indigenous people actually respond to language planning. Local perceptions about the meanings of bilingual education are crucial to understand the additional reasons for the limited success of bilingual education. In what follows, I review literature immediately relevant to language ideology and its relation to language shift and then provide how I went about gathering data.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODS

As mentioned above, bilingual education is a primary form in the current language planning in Guatemala, and it is meant to facilitate language revitalization while decelerating language shift. Unbalanced power relationship between two different speech communities may result in language shift, whereby the minority group's language loses ground (Fasold 1990). Language shift has been viewed to have a close correlation with the processes of migration, assimilation, urbanization, and ethnic revitalization. Sociolinguists have focused on how social structure affects a group's language attitudes and how these attitudes cumulatively result in language shift (Fasold 1990). Macrosociological factors, however, have limitations in their explanatory power, as Gal puts it: "What is of interest to know is not whether industrialization is correlated with language shift, but rather: by what *intervening processes* does industrialization, or any other social change, affect changes in language use?" (Gal 1979, 3, emphasis

mine). That is, simply saying, “urbanization or industrialization causes language shift” loses an important chance to understand how the change has come to be interpreted by the people who are experiencing the language shift.

Thus, the study of language shift should involve the study of a people’s perception and interpretation of language shift and any effort to reverse it. Speakers’ perceptions and interpretations about language can be understood as language ideology, defined as “a set of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalization of perceived language structure and use” (Silverstein 1979, 193). It is similar to the definition of language attitudes, but ideology additionally implies a distorted reflection of the reality and its rationalization (Woolard 1998). Furthermore, ideology does not simply reflect social structure, but also reproduces it.

Several scholars have explored how language ideology affects language shift. For example, Kulick (1992) describes how a local language, Taiap, gave way to Tok Pisin, an English pidgin, as villagers gradually embraced the ideology of modernity, ceasing to speak Taiap to their children after missionary beliefs and capitalism were introduced into the town. He primarily discusses how language practices associated with the language shift were, in fact, also gendered. In the local ideology of people in Gapun, New Guinea, speaking the vernacular, Taiap, was intimately linked to female and old ways, whereas Tok Pisin was linked to modernity and male ways. Meek (2007) documents that among Kaska speakers in Watson Lake, Canada, children prefer the vernacular language because it reflects the value of respect for elders.

Some studies of indigenous languages in Latin America also have shown that ideas attached to languages and policies have important role (Luykx 2000 for Bolivia; McEwan and Trowbridge 2007 for Guatemala). However, no study has paid attention to the relationship between language shift and language ideology. There are numerous studies of education reform and bilingual education in Latin America (Reid 2011; McEwan and Trowbridge 2007; Lopez 2008; Tummons, Henderson, and Rohloff 2011), but they mainly focus on school’s role rather than local people’s reaction to the policy. Both Bolivia and Peru are comparable to Guatemala because the issue of language planning and concern about multiculturalism are similar, but going through different stages in each society. In the case of Bolivia, although Bolivia embraced multiculturalism, there is still dilemma that educators experience in classroom when it comes to teach interculturality that seems to reflect ‘Western’ value rather than local one (Luykx 2000). According to Hornberger and King (1996), Peru’s language revitalization

movement in the 1990s led to bilingual education even for those learning Quechua for the first time. This education is part of an effort to prevent a complete language shift away from Quechua to Spanish. In the book edited by Hornberger (2008), many authors pay particular attention to ideological spaces opened up by policies or discourses. Similarly, since 1996, more bilingual education programs have been implemented in many communities of Guatemala. However, bilingual programs are not enough to promote the use of Mayan language (McEwan and Trowbridge 2007).

The aforementioned studies of Latin American cases tend to position bilingual education as an important tool to reverse the language shift and to influence people's ideas. In the case of Guatemala, Heinze Balcazar (2008) finds the motivation for language shift is the ideology of modernity associated with Spanish. However, she did not look at any ideology revolving around bilingual education. Bilingual education cannot be effectively implemented unless we take into account the local concept of socialization. In this paper, I hypothesize that ideological dimension is an 'intervening process' in language shift in Guatemala. In order to examine the ideology as an intervening process, I describe and analyze the data gathered through interview about bilingual education and observation of local language practice. Specifically, it describes the bilingual education experienced by local people in Momostenango, focusing on the opinions of bilingual teachers and parents, as well as a few examples of classroom interaction and home encounters to illustrate language socialization processes at home. I observed schools and homes where interaction between children and adults occurs, in order to identify how language ideology is enacted in everyday practice.

The data presented in this paper are drawn from my fieldwork in the town center of Momostenango, a K'iche' Mayan community located in the western highlands of Guatemala. The data were collected through observations of homes and bilingual schools during the summer of 2010. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted. Interviewee samples reflect different areas, generations, and positions. Interviewees include education practitioners such as three teachers and two coordinators of public school bilingual programs, and three parents in the center and three parents in rural areas. I visited two different schools that adopted bilingual education, one in the town center and the other in the rural hamlet. Although primary interviewees were educators and parents, I also interviewed two primary school students along with their parent in *ahrua*, and three secondary school students in the center since they are actually experiencing it at school. I was able to gather both observational data and interview data even

though it was done during a short period of summer because I had visited Momostenango numerous times earlier and had previous contact with many people prior to my research trip in 2010.

The municipality of Momostenango is a bilingual (K'iche' and Spanish) community, with a population totaling approximately 60,000 inhabitants. More than 95 percent of the population belongs to the K'iche' Mayan ethnic group. There is little use of Spanish in the *aldeas* (hamlets) that surround the town center, while people in the town center have no trouble speaking both languages. Spanish is primarily used in interactions with the local Ladinos and in public places and situations. Ladinos belong to a non-Mayan ethnic group whose mother tongue is Spanish, and they do not form a major part of the local population in Momostenango, unlike in big cities such as the national capital. The variety of Mayan language that Momostecos speak is K'iche' Maya, which is one of the 22 Mayan languages and is spoken by the majority of the Mayan population in Guatemala. Diglossic distribution is common throughout the country (Brown 1996; Choi 2011; French 2010), but communities like Momostenango have a greater number of indigenous Mayan people who are either Mayan monolingual or Mayan-Spanish bilingual. Spanish is a high-prestige variety for formal purposes, while K'iche', the vernacular language variety is used for less formal and more personal purposes. Spanish is rarely used in the remote *aldeas* (hamlets) surrounding the town center of Momostenango, but people in the town center can easily speak both languages. Spanish is primarily used in interactions with the local Ladinos and in public places and situations.

REFLECTIONS ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN MOMOSTENANGO

In this section, I describe local language ideologies that are articulated in discourses about K'iche', bilingualism and bilingual education. I discuss some of the culture-specific concerns that Mayans have and how they might be related to less use of K'iche' and, eventually, language shift away from K'iche'. First, I will investigate the local perception of bilingual education and education in general, showing how contrastive the discourse about schooling is. Then, I will address language socialization practice at home. Finally, I will describe educational practices and teachers' discourses and then discuss how schooling is understood as a path to improve the current language policy.

“Why Teach K’iche?”: The Perception of Bilingual Education In Rural Momostenango

As the national language policy mandates, Momostenango has a bilingual curriculum in its public schools, and some private schools have bilingual programs as well. Primary school students in Momostenango learn K’iche’ as well as math and social studies in K’iche’. However, each school I visited allocated different hours for the subjects taught in K’iche’, rather than having standardized hours and forms of instruction. All the schools commonly have K’iche’ literacy class. At this point, therefore, even though there is standardized bilingual curriculum in Momostenango, with national bilingual program such as EBI (Educación Bilingüe Intercultural), the curriculum that each school adopts varies.

There is a bilingual education coordinator whose office is located in the town center and who sometimes visits the bilingual schools. The bilingual education coordinator explained that the children already speak K’iche’ but what they needed was to gain proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking in Spanish. The schools that I visited include two public schools and two private schools. The two public schools include one located in the town center and the other in an *aldea* about 30 minutes away. I chose these schools primarily because of my intention to balance my observations of both public and private schools, and schools located in the town center and *aldeas*. In addition, I selected the schools of teachers whom I had already met during my previous research.

Many parents in Momostenango are interested in their children learning Spanish, because they believe it is the only “true” way to succeed in life. Others take Spanish as the starting point for their children to pursue formal education. Possible causes of this phenomenon are the following: 1) Spanish is the language of prestige, and therefore, it has to be taught to children at home; and 2) parents desire to prevent their children from suffering rejection and feelings of inferiority because of their inability to speak Spanish (Choi 2011).

In the three schools that implemented the DIGEBI program, Maya languages and government-distributed EBI textbooks are used only when the majority of the children are monolingual Maya speakers. The following excerpt is from an interview with a teacher who is dedicated to bilingual education and currently teaching at a public primary school with a bilingual curriculum.

Not every family agrees with us teaching K'iche' at school. Some parents protest the idea of bilingual education because *they think their children are wasting time by learning an extra language*. I was surprised, and a parent said, "*Why do they have to learn K'iche' when they already know how to speak it? They don't have to learn it at school.*" This way of thinking has to change. There are fewer and fewer K'iche' speakers, and we know the language is disappearing, but through bilingual education, we are making efforts to revitalize K'iche' with the support of the government (emphasis mine).

In addition, valuing labor seems to be another factor that prevents children from receiving formal education. Cash crop farms have a large effect on children's academic performance because rural parents have a strong preference for labor over education when farming opportunities are available. The following is from another interview with a teacher working in an *aldea* called Tierra Colorada, which is approximately 30 minutes away from the town center of Momostenango.

Many parents in Tierra Colorada don't want their children to waste time learning how to read and write K'iche'. They think they know enough now and ask, "*What is the K'iche' class for? Now it's time to learn Spanish because at home we can't teach them Spanish*". Some parents don't even want their children to be educated much, because for them only primary education is sufficient.

Thus, the devaluing of bilingual education is not just about the value attached to Spanish as a "way to succeed," which is what it is commonly thought of; rather, the families' major subsistence relies on their children staying at home instead of attending school regularly. If bilingual education is imposed without considering these specific issues and demands, it will not be easy to implement it nationwide.

Another teacher at a private school in the town center said that some students from rural areas are sent there because the public school teachers do not really know K'iche'. In her class, many students do not speak K'iche' well, except for one boy who comes from an *aldea* far away from the town center. He walks about one hour to school. The teacher said that his mother sends him there because at the school in the town where the child lives, the teacher doesn't know K'iche' and does not really try to communicate in K'iche' with the students. In other words, teachers seem distanced from the rural area's culture and condition overall.

In addition, rural children are often seen as a "deficit" for formal education provided by public schools. In general, structural problems such as poverty seem to explain why they do not perform well academically;

other times, the children and their parents are seen as responsible for their learning impediments. For example, in one case, the children were asked by their teacher to bring old newspapers to school. However, no one brought any, which made the teacher frustrated. The reason was that rural children do not have any newspapers. Rural children's home-literacy practice is not the same as what the teachers of urban area expects. Likewise, the limitation of bilingual education comes from the conditions in which rural children live and also their parent's ideas of language education, which is commonly found in many rural areas in Guatemala (Ishihara-Brito 2013).

As we can see above, the resistance to bilingual education has two sides: one is simply the preference for Spanish as an important resource for attaining higher socioeconomic status, and the other is the idea, articulated in the discourse, that K'iche is not to be learned, whereas Spanish is. The great majority of rural parents express that they think their children should know both K'iche' and in Spanish, but the idea that knowing K'iche' is good is different from the idea that learning K'iche' is good, because for them K'iche is not a language to be learned in school. The home experience is more elaborately articulated in the discourses about language socialization at home, as we can see in the next section.

“K'iche is Naturally Learned”: K'iche' (un)Learning at Home

Another aspect to be paid attention to is parents' language ideology about language learning at home. In the sense that language socialization is learning not only how to speak, but also how to think of the language, language ideology is a large part of language socialization.

The process of language socialization is related to how to view children, moreover, humans in general. For example, in Samoan and Kaluli societies, adults do not take children into consideration when they are conversing (Ochs and Schieffelin 1984). Ochs and Schieffelin compared language socialization in three societies, including the American white middle class, Samoa, and Kaluli families. While American white middle class families consider babies to be meaningful members of society and include them in conversation, thereby actively engaging them in language learning, the latter two societies do not. Samoan society considers language socialization to be a process of learning hierarchical order, while Kaluli society is relatively egalitarian and emphasizes children's learning how to argue their rights clearly. They believe that this is a true role of language and a

goal of language acquisition. Thus, language ideologies (e.g., what the members of society think of language, ideas about who are competent speakers, language purism) influence the maintenance and shift of the local language.

Similarly, England (1996) describes that parents believe children “naturally” learn their own language because they are born with it (England 1996, 179). Pye (1986; 1991), in his study of K’iche’ Maya language and language use, points out that we need to pay attention to the local concept of what children’s stage is in the life cycle is and how they grow in order to understand children’s language acquisition. In Mayan society, children are not viewed as perfect beings, and it takes time for them to become true “humans”, after the ancestors’ spirit settles down inside them. Therefore, interactions between children and parents are fairly limited, and children are not usually included in conversation. They are not addressed with “baby talk” particularly developed only for babies because they are not seen as participants in a conversation. This perspective influences language socialization as well, because they do not think they need to make special efforts to communicate with children, and children learn by themselves, without much instruction.

In order to confirm if this language ideology is prevalent, I asked several parents why they do not make extra efforts to teach K’iche’ to their children. The parents responded that they think that the home environment is sufficient for their children to be exposed to K’iche’. One parent said, “why do we teach K’iche’? We already speak K’iche’ everyday. They can just *naturally* speak as they grow up” For language socialization, school is not the only institution available for children. Home is another important place where they learn everyday K’iche’. However, at home, because of this idea of ‘naturally learning’; actual learning and usage of K’iche’ was not visible in some cases of families who have younger children. However, teachers despise this view constructed by Mayan parents and believe that home has a very important role in language learning. The following excerpt is from an interview with a teacher in Momostenango, who thinks home language practice is very important for language maintenance.

R: Do you think it’d be good if parents teach K’iche’ at home, too?

T: I do. Parents tend to speak Spanish at home. But now children need to hear and use K’iche’ at home. They ask their parents questions. In fact, in some cases, parents don’t know much K’iche’ but their children want to know more. I think bilingual education can change Mayan communities. The more our interest and support we have for K’iche,

the more help we can give, because then people's pride and confidence will grow. We even use some words that we don't know the meaning of, but why not K'iche' Maya? We still feel ashamed of using this language, and we don't identify with it. We feel that we might be regarded as "low class" if we speak it.

This teacher believes that bilingual education requires language socialization at home. However, parents feel that it is the responsibility of the school, rather than the home, to teach children. In addition to conducting interviews with parents, I was able to see how language use at home does not necessarily reflect the idea that home is a K'iche'-use environment for children. The following excerpt illustrates an intergenerational encounter where code switching from K'iche' to Spanish occurred depending on the interlocutor. In this intergenerational encounter, we can see that a grandmother who often speaks K'iche' switches to Spanish to address her grandchild. Parents believe that they use enough K'iche' at home with their family members because "it is the language to be used with familiar people" (a female informant in her 50s). The following excerpt illustrates the way in which K'iche' is not necessarily used at home just because the speaker is a K'iche' speaker and K'iche' is in general used as a language to an interlocutor who has intimate relationship. The following presents an excerpt from an interaction in which A is an old lady who responds to her grandson's request in Spanish.

Excerpt 1] A is an old woman who is washing dishes after the family dinner, and B is a housemaid who is helping A to finish washing the dishes. C is A's grandson who is 5 years old.

A: *K'o na?* (Is there more?)

B: *Je, k'olik, nan.* (Yes, there is, Ma'am.)

[One grandchild enters the kitchen]

C: *Quiero comida.* (I want food.)

A: *Pero tiene que lavar tu mano bien, bien, bien, oiste?*

(But you need to wash your hands really well, OK?)

C: (nods his head)

As we can see here, A chooses Spanish to communicate with her grandchild. Contrary to the general pattern of diglossia mentioned earlier, in this case, Spanish is the "familiarity" or "intimacy" code utilized between grandmother and her grandchild. This might not give us a sufficient picture of how speakers use language in a particular space, and what meanings the language choice might have for them. However, as Heinze Balcazar (2008) demonstrates the pattern of communication among family members

by using indicators such as “speaking with siblings”, this example shows that the vernacular language is not always used among family members in Mayan communities, and, in fact, older people even make efforts to speak Spanish to younger generation.

Like this example, in many homes that I observed, parents tend to use Spanish more often to their children than K'iche'. Although school-based efforts can go a long way toward raising the symbolic and social capital of indigenous languages, they are unlikely to “save” indigenous languages (Hornberger 2008) because they are not producing fluent indigenous language speakers. After all, if homes cannot provide bilingual conditions, the school system might be the answer to teaching Mayan language and culture to the next generation of Mayan people. In the study of Gapun, New Guinea, Kulick (1992) describes that speaking the vernacular, Taiap, was intimately linked to female and depreciated old ways, whereas Tok Pisin was linked to modernity. Therefore, the vernacular tends to be used as a code among family or friends. In the case of Mayans in Momostenango, although K'iche' is normally perceived as an intimacy code, Spanish is used as an intimacy code between a grandmother and her grandchild in this excerpt. Thus, the idea that the home environment promotes the use of K'iche' since K'iche' is used more often at home does not apply here.

Can Schools Save K'iche'?: Teaching the K'iche' Mayan Language as a Second Language and Teaching Mayan Culture

This section describes educational practices and teachers' discourses, and discusses some possible directions to take in response to the dilemma that has resulted from the current language planning. During a visit to one of the bilingual schools in Momostenango, I observed classroom activities. Excerpt 2 is from a classroom activity about learning “new” words in K'iche'. A main finding resulted from observation of classrooms of different schools is that teachers' application of ‘bilingual education’ was diverse. For example, one emphasizes heavily learning K'iche' vocabularies whereas other emphasizes learning Maya culture, or others ‘immersing students more deeply to K'iche' language’ by just using the language as much as possible in many subjects. Therefore, there is no single standardized curriculum used in different schools in Momostenango.

In the excerpt, Angelica, a teacher at a private school in urban

Momostenango, is teaching K'iche' to her first-year primary school students. To teach the vocabulary words, she is using cards that have pictures starting with certain letters. Each student is supposed to show the picture and say the name in K'iche' to his or her classmates. In this class, in order to teach K'iche' vocabularies, the teacher had to use Spanish.

Excerpt 2]

A: *Por ejemplo, en K'iche', "tzoj tzoj," y en español "ching ching."*

[point to a picture that a student is holding in front of class]

Esta figura, mira, repiten ustedes. Tzoj tzoj, y en español 'ching ching' (Students repeat this)

Ponen atención a su compañero.

For example, in K'iche', "tzoj tzoj", and in Spanish 'ching ching'.

This figure, look, repeat after me, "tzoj tzoj", and in Spanish 'ching ching'

Pay attention to your classmates.

(Most the students were too shy to say the names in K'iche' or to show the class their picture)

In another classroom at a public school, the teacher put the Mayan calendar on the classroom walls. Reintroducing the Mayan calendar is not simply about teaching new vocabulary terms, but also about teaching the meaning of the traditional Mayan calendar. Although in many cases, teachers would not be as knowledgeable as Mayan shamans regarding the calendar, they were trying to include the calendar as part of traditional Mayan culture.

Although I was not able to gather data from every single classroom of each school, the examples describe here do not deviate from what has been reported in other studies. For instance, Lopez (2008) reports that Maya-language instruction in schools tends to be methodologically limited to rote memorization tasks, with an overall tendency toward limited bilingualism, as this form of bilingual instruction limits opportunities for fostering productive speech. Maxwell (2011) reports that Spanish is still dominantly used in bilingual classes and students from rural areas are often accused of not being prepared for school.

Guatemalan teachers face many challenges in the classroom, and bilingual teachers have an even more difficult job, especially because many of them are language students themselves. "The kids are learning K'iche' as a second language, and school is limited as it is," said one teacher in Momostenango. Another teacher mentioned that compared to before, today's educational infrastructure has improved because all the textbooks and other materials are provided by the government. Yet another teacher

mentioned that an issue is ideas about bilingual education. His command of K'iche' is limited, so he signed up for a K'iche' course provided by the government. Thus, he found a new opportunity to communicate with mono/bilingual Maya speakers by learning K'iche'.

Researcher: What is the most difficult task for you as a bilingual program coordinator?

T: *It's hard to change how people think.* They often resist any change. In my case, I signed up for a K'iche' course last year, and it wasn't easy for me at first. I got to know the language because of that opportunity, and it allowed me to have solidarity with my family members. Now that I talk to them in K'iche' more often, they understand me better. Many people in my town speak K'iche' (emphasis mine).

Another challenge teachers face is related to how students perceive K'iche': K'iche' is a second language for many urban Momostecos. While bilingual schooling is mandatory for youth under the current policy, with the purposes of conserving K'iche' and promoting Mayan culture among the next generation, the problem for many students in Momostenango is that K'iche' is not their first language. This may mean that, in order to teach K'iche', teachers need to use different pedagogical strategies, such as those employed in teaching a second or foreign language.

For many students, *K'iche' is something new.* Nobody spoke K'iche' to me when I was a teenager, but now look at me. I have to relearn it to teach my students. I used to work in a remote village. I worked there for 16 years. I got to learn K'iche' there. I used to use K'iche' to teach Spanish to children, but now, I have to use Spanish to teach K'iche'. *It's different now* (emphasis mine).

Like the teacher who spoke the words above, some students I interviewed expressed the value of bilingualism for the purpose of communication. They said they need to maintain their K'iche' to communicate with their parents and family members but not to communicate with their friends. Some children also believe speaking K'iche' will help their employment prospects. The children also understand the need for social and economic mobility and daily functioning. Thus, the young generation recognizes the differential functions that each language has, that is, communicating with different kinds of people and working in various places. Those who feel the need to communicate tend to have a more positive attitude toward bilingual education than those who do not.

Then, what about secondary school? Bilingual programs in secondary

schools face another challenge because students are beginning to think seriously about their career paths. For this reason, many students are more interested in English than K'iche'. Currently the bilingual teachers are forced to treat K'iche' as a second language for the majority of students, working only on simple vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation, not developing proficiency or literacy in K'iche'. The following is an excerpt from an interview with a male teacher who teaches literacy at a secondary school in Momostenango.

The students in the secondary school do not know K'iche' well. For them, K'iche' is like a foreign language. They were learning how to say “*saqirik, xb'eq'ij'*” (good morning, good afternoon). I asked two students about this issue. They said they know some K'iche', but they can't speak it much because at home also they mostly speak Spanish. Some students say, “It is difficult to speak K'iche'.” We have to value our language; look how much the foreigners value our language, but we don't do that. It's a shame.

He compared the central and rural populations in terms of their interest in Mayan language and culture, lamenting the lack of interest among young people in Momostenango, as follows.

Right now, people in *aldeas* learn Spanish because they realize that it is important, but in the town center, on the other hand, people have begun to learn K'iche'.

This means the value of each language is different in the rural vs. urban areas. The teacher observed that, people in rural areas did not want to learn Spanish before, because it was believed unnecessary. However, now an increasing number of people know the importance and advantage of learning Spanish. As mentioned previously, rural residents do not believe it is necessary to study K'iche' because they already speak it, but they think it is necessary to learn Spanish. For them, K'iche' is not a language of literacy that will lead to social success, but Spanish is. For some urban residents, literacy in K'iche' is necessary because they can find employment as a “bilingual” worker in terms of literacy, not only speaking ability. Thus, in order for bilingual education to succeed in Mayan communities, the gap between rural and urban beliefs should also be considered.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I described and discussed the local language ideology about bilingual education and K'iche' learning in Momostenango, Guatemala. I argued that ideology is intervening in the process of language shift rather than only the other way around. The language ideology of K'iche' and language learning overall can be summarized as follows: 1) K'iche' is "naturally" learned without schooling; 2) home is not a place where language is learned; and 3) at school, teachers try to teach K'iche', but the students recognize it as a second language.

Although Mayan languages have gained legal and societal status in post-Peace Guatemala, there remain serious doubts as to the future of Mayan language revitalization. There is limited utilization of Mayan languages in public spheres other than primary school education, despite the provisions of the Language Law of 2003. In this study, I examined language ideology in relation to bilingual education, as doing so helps our understanding of another facet of language practice and language shift processes. Understanding how speakers perceive their own language and language learning may help us determine how to effectively inculcate the language as well as how to change the beliefs and ideas about ways to promote Mayan languages. In this paper, I argue that language ideology is a main intervening process to be considered in the assessment of language shift in Guatemala. Understanding the language ideology, may contribute to an appropriate language planning intended for language maintenance. Although recognizing language ideology as an important factor in language shift is valuable, this study may be complemented by more empirical studies that both quantitatively and qualitatively examine language shift over time along with ideological change.

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