Ambivalence and Ideology Among Mexicano Youth in Tlaxcala, Mexico

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Youth in Mexicano-speaking communities in the state of Tlaxcala, Mexico, have multiple ideologies of language and local identities. Young adulthood is a crucial time in which ideological positions on Indigenous language and identity can be in flux, thus having important consequences for understanding language shift and revitalization. Drawing on ethnographic observation and interviews, I focus on youth and young adults' ideologies characterized by ambivalence about Native language use and identity. These data show how youth are caught up in a nexus of multiple ideologies influenced by globalizing forces and racialized societal discourses that denigrate Indigenous identities. To the outside observer, ambivalence is at the center of youth ideologies, yet ideologies governing language shift can change over time. Reflective teacher narratives offer evidence of changing ideologies and hope for language revitalization. Ambivalence needs to be studied further as a sociohistorical response to minoritized status and intrapersonal conflicts about authenticity.

Key words: indigenous youth, language shift, identity, language ideology, Indigenous teacher, Mexico, linguistic anthropology

INTRODUCTION: YOUTH AND LANGUAGE SHIFT

Youth in historically Mexicano-speaking communities in the state of Tlaxcala, Mexico, have multiple ideologies toward language use and local identities. They are socialized to actively use Spanish, while their socialization in the Indigenous language is often passive. My research has shown that ideological positions vary and can change over time, with young adulthood being a particularly crucial time in which ideological positions on Indigenous language and identity can change (Messing, 2003, 2007). These shifting ideologies have important consequences for language use, language shift (the break in the transmission of the local language) (cf. Dorian, 1989; Gal, 1979; Grenoble & Whaley, 1998; Mufwene, 2004), and language revitalization (Hornberger, 1996; McCarty & Zepeda, 2006; Wilson, 1998). This article focuses on Mexicano youth and young adults' ideologies, which are characterized by ambivalence about Native language use and identity.

Although ambivalence is rarely stated by youth, it is observable through ethnography and is explicit in the reflective narratives of young adults, mostly teachers interviewed in their 20s and

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30s, looking back on their changing perspectives over time. These reflective narratives are more instructive than comparable data from focus groups with youth, as interviewees comment on their own process of consciousness-raising and shifting ideologies over the recent years since their early youth. The use of Mexicano in the region studied has been described as part of a sociolinguistic situation of great ideological complexity as well as ambivalence (Hill, 1993; Hill & Hill, 1986; Messing, 2007). The importance of ambivalent ideologies has not been specifically studied, although the importance and complications of ideology in language revitalization as "ideological paradox" has (Hornberger, 2000). Ambivalence is a slippery topic to study and this article suggests that, through ethnography and analysis of taped interviews, a researcher can gain great insight into ideologies of language and identity among youth that are the driving forces behind language shift and into potential for revitalization of Indigenous languages. Several of the young adults interviewed changed their perspectives over time, actively seeking to improve their Native language skills.

About the patterns of use of Mexicano (the local name for Tlaxcalan Nahuatl) and Spanish in Tlaxcala, Hill and Hill have written: "There are many ambivalences and complexities of this differentiation" (1986, p. 104). Since 1996, I have been conducting ethnographic and linguistic-anthropological research in the Malintzi volcano region of Tlaxcala (particularly in the large county of San Bernardino Contla, which is known for its textile industry) with comparisons drawn from a part of the region where language maintenance is stronger—San Isidro Buensuceso (Francis, 1997; Nava Nava, 2007). I have been studying how people in the Mexicano-speaking region (Hill & Hill, 1986; Nutini, 1968) of this central Mexican state form and express their identities in and through competing discourses of Indigenousness, national identity, and economics. My observations and interviews have included people in both regions, and two Indigenous bicultural schools sponsored by the Dirección General de Educación Indígena (DGEI) that were attempting to impart a bilingual component in their otherwise standardized, official SEP (Secretaria de Educación Pública) curriculum. I conducted most interviews in Spanish, some in Mexicano; translations of the data are my own.

This article reports on the importance of observing and understanding ambivalence as a part of language shift. Data from interviews with Indigenous education teachers in their 20s and 30s suggest that ideological orientations are alterable over time in Native language-shift situations, and young adults sometimes choose to change their ambivalent or anti-Indigenous positions, activating passive knowledge of the language. I begin with a description of the ethnographic setting and ideological configuration of multilingualism in this Mexicano region of Tlaxcala, and follow it with a discussion of explicit and implicit ideologies of language (Philips, 1998a), identity, and modernity in the discourse of young adults, including excerpts from narratives taped during interviews and observations from general ethnography. Themes include linguistic respect, purism and authenticity, use of English, and ambivalence among youth. Finally, I give examples of young adults who shifted to a positive perspective on the Native language in their 20s, suggesting that language can shift in favor of Native languages.

MEXICANO IN TLAXCALAN COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS

Early in my fieldwork, I observed and was told about youth in some towns using Mexicano as a code language, although it was rare for them to communicate in the Native tongue when anyone

outside of their social group could overhear them. I overheard a conversation between 2 teenagers on a local bus in Tlaxcala in which, after running into each other, these friends greeted each other and then one made some reference to Mexicano while the other replied, "I didn't know you knew it!" The ensuing conversation switched from Spanish to Mexicano.

The Mexican census reports that between 23 and 27 percent of the Tlaxcalan population over age 5 are speakers of an Indigenous language, but the accuracy of self-reporting is a perennial problem for census takers.[1] Mexicano language socialization does have certain predictable patterns (Hill & Hill, 1986; Messing, 2007). Active speakers of Mexicano are usually over age 40, but there are many cases of younger people who speak or understand much of the language, with many passive or semi-speakers (Dorian, 1977; Flores Farfán, 1999). Various factors influence the use of Mexicano and Spanish in Contla, in everyday speech. These are variable and dependent on the context, particularly with regard to who is talking to whom and when and where the conversation takes place. In sum, there is a greater likelihood that one will hear Mexicano in private, intimate contexts, in which the speakers feel a great degree of trust (*confianza)* (Messing, 2003, 2007).

In Tlaxcalan public elementary schools with a bilingual component, speakers mainly use Spanish to communicate, and Mexicano plays a symbolic role. In Mexican elementary schools the curriculum is standardized across the country and the official textbooks are in Spanish. There has been a move to offer textbooks in Indigenous languages such as Nahuatl, but these have been primarily to "Castilianize"—to serve as a bridge to a Spanish-only curriculum for Native-language dominant children in regions with high degrees of Indigenous language maintenance. Myriad constraints on teacher practices exist in bilingual schools such as those in the Spanish-dominant, bilingual region I studied, when teachers in the Indigenous education system try to create bilingual teaching modules for which they must produce their own curricular materials. Spanish literacy has traditionally been taught in a way that is discordant with the oral tradition of speaking Mexicano (and other Native languages in Mexico), thus creating another disjuncture when Native language education is modeled on the teaching of Spanish (for a review of orality and literacy in rural Mexico based on fieldwork in the same region, see Rockwell, 2001). Mexicano conversations do take place occasionally among individuals; however, no "official" conversations are held in Mexicano. The disjuncture between school language and community language reflects some of the identity politics discussed here for youth, in general, and the more general linguistic conflicts (Flores Farfán 1999; Hamel 1997) in other Mexican schools and communities (Messing, forthcoming).

Language revitalization efforts have been ongoing in 3 contexts: (a) on a very small scale through local DGEI schools, (b) on a slightly larger scale through town cultural centers—community organizations, often called *casas de cultura* (houses of culture), and (c) as institutionally independent efforts (teachers producing textbooks with their own time and resources). I documented these efforts during fieldwork and was involved in community organizing efforts by fostering connections between local language promoters and scholars from Mexico City (Messing, 2003).[2] The first task of *Mahtitlatohcan Mexicano* (Let's speak in Mexicano) was to organize language revitalization workshops in 1999 and 2000 that were loosely modeled on

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[1]This is the case because there is a widespread local reticence to admitting Native language use.

[2]Technology for language documentation and revitalization is an emerging field of study that has received much attention in recent years (see, e.g., Landzelius, 2007; Penfield, Cash Cash, & Roberts, 2004).

Hinton's language camps in California (Hinton 1994; Hinton & Hale 2001; cf. Sims, 1998). Linguistic anthropologist José Antonio Flores Farfán led the workshop, with support from Elsie Rockwell and local schoolteachers that I identified (Messing & Rockwell, 2006).

In preparing this article, I have thought about the ambivalence of youth that surfaced in my research and have asked myself what are the implications of placing youth at the center of our research agendas when working in ethnographic settings where shift is already advanced? When I was in the field, I did not place youth at the center of my study because of the ambivalence I observed. Rather, I engaged with teachers and local language promoters, as well as families who expressed interest in my research. Some made a point to tell students that an American anthropologist had traveled a long way to study their culture and language, when so many of them were (seemingly) more interested in learning the North American language; this seemed to be an attempt to lend global validation to their goals of teaching Mexicano and of inspiring interest. For language revitalization, my role has been to establish connections between people in centers of academic power in Mexico City and the organic intellectuals of Tlaxcala—the very talented and motivated language promoters—several of whom have been taping their elders' narratives for years and who have written their own Mexicano curriculum on their own time.

MULTIPLE IDEOLOGIES OF LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND MODERNITY

Ideological stances determine whether one will speak in Mexicano and actively inform language socialization of children, and the choice or whether to use the language in their presence. I want to emphasize that children take active roles in their socialization of Mexicano based on whether they are interested in learning the language. A young person might be the single member of their family to learn Mexicano, seeking out conversation with a Mexicano-dominant older relative (Messing, 2007). The ideological stance or orientation is likely to be either *pro-Indígena* (pro-Indigenous) or one of *menosprecio* (denigration), or a combination of the two. These ideologies surface in discourses I label with these same terms and are a response to the broadly circulating metadiscourse of modernity—*salir adelante* (forging ahead, or making a better future).

In Tlaxcala, local residents take up their ideological struggles of identity, language, and economics in everyday speech, which is organized through these 3 dominant discourses. All speakers of Spanish in Mexico (and much of developing Latin America) tap into the hegemonic *salir adelante* discourse in one form or another. Locals call upon the metadiscourse of *salir adelante* through 2 discourses of language, identity, and economics: *menosprecio* (denigration) or pro-Indigenous (*pro-indígena*) discourse. These 2 ideological orientations compete for dominance in Malintzi residents' conversations (Messing, 2003, 2007).

The multiple ideologies of language, identity, and economics that surface in the 3 discourses discussed above reflect local ways of thinking about the "self" and the "other." Children are raised hearing and learning about these local views of Indigenousness, modernity, and economics within the context of being citizens in a developing nation. These ideologies govern children's and their families' choices regarding who learns Mexicano and who speaks it, when and to whom. For most youth, particularly semi-speakers (Dorian, 1977), linguistic insecurity in the Native tongue is common, and the desire to orient toward identities external to the community is strongly influenced by national and international media messages and local racism. Commentary about Indigenous identity surfaced in my ethnographic research within a larger context of

discussing local and national racism against Native people. Many interviewees, particularly teachers within the bilingual-bicultural system, explained that anti-Indigenous racism has been internalized in their communities, thus negatively affecting people's attitudes toward the main symbol of Indigenous identity: language. Youth are confronted with these ideologies of identity and language, which ultimately has consequences for advancing language shift as the needed impetus for maintaining Native language is interrupted.

My understanding of the relationship between language and identity is informed by sociolinguistic and linguistic-anthropological theories of language as a symbol of identity (Fishman 2001; Greymorning, 2004; Kroskrity, 2000; McCarty & Zepeda, 2006; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998), ethnic boundary marking (Barth, 1969), and speech/conversation as an activity through which identities can be created and projected (Hymes, 1972; Mannheim & Tedlock, 1995). The "repertoire of identities" proposed by Kroskrity (1993) in his description of Arizona Tewa identity advances a multifaceted conceptualization of alternating identities, aspects of which surface in certain contexts. The complexity of the Tlaxcalan contemporary Indigenous sociolinguistic situation is captured by Kroskrity's discussion of identity as being a communicated, interactive, and primarily situational phenomenon, yet also a reflection of historical circumstances. For González (1992, 2001), historical, socioeconomic, and political factors combine with affective factors. To understand how experiences with *menosprecio* or denigrative attitudes ultimately affect language use and ideology through identity, we must focus attention on "the emotion of minority status" (González, 1992):

> Because of a history of economic deprivation and second class citizenship, *the child is a receptacle for a greater number of ambivalent messages from a greater number of caregivers.* (pp. 145–146; emphasis added)

Thus, experiences with multiple languages, identities, and "second class citizenship" in the U.S. borderlands described by González bear a strong resemblance to the linguistic-ideological world of contemporary Indigenous Mexico in which ambivalence has also been observed. González's notion of the "emotion of minority status" suggests that there are cross-cultural dimensions to the affective experiences of children who are socialized as members of societies that have gone through a historical process of being "minoritized" (McCarty, 2002), with identities that are also marked linguistically. Interviewees spoke of the emotional process Tlaxcalan children go through to rid themselves of the "complex of being Indian," as one of my interviewees described (Messing, 2003).

DISCOURSES OF LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

To understand the relationships between language, identity, and ambivalence among Tlaxcalan youth, it is necessary to have a sense of the larger discourses that circulate within and surrounding these youth's linguistic environment. As an example of the linguistic racism I encountered in Mexico City, a business owner with a college degree, with whom I had been acquainted for about a decade, asked me upon finding out what my research was about, "Is Nahuatl really a language? I thought it was just a bunch of sounds."[3] Such *menosprecio* discourse is based on

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[3]Mexican Spanish contains many Nahuatl loan words, which are likely used by this person.

ignorance of what constitutes a language, and is an example of the historical degradation under-gone by that which is Indigenous and thus considered inferior by Mestizo Mexico (Alonso, 2004; Bonfil Batalla, 1994). Much writing on language shift and identity in Indigenous commu-nities has focused on the concept of *stigma*, whereby the Indigenous language becomes viewed as stigmatized due to internalization of outside racism into local perspectives. At stake is the ideological question of what constitutes an "authentic Mexican" identity. In Tlaxcalan Mexicano communities, the question becomes, what is an "authentic Mexicano-Malintzi region identity?" Thus, discrimination leads to issues of authenticity. Hill (2004) has suggested that Indigenous languages such as Mexicano are becoming "disauthenticated": While Aztec ruins may be lauded by the mestizo public, the tourism bureau and others and Nahuatl be proudly inscribed on historical buildings in Mexico City (Alonso, 2004), many actual speakers of the language are locked in a "struggle for authenticity, which is actively denied to subaltern groups" (Hill, 2004, p. 4; see also Hinton & Ahlers, 1999). The experience of idealizing an Indigenous past while marginalizing present-day Indigenous realities is a phenomenon experienced by Indigenous peoples throughout North America (Brayboy, 2005; Deloria, 1970; Vizenor, 1998). These similarities suggest that there are parallels in the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in a post-colonial world, regardless of how colonialism has manifested in individual nation-states.

Ideologies of Respect, Purism, and Authenticity

Among speakers of Mexicano, ideologies of "good speakers" and "proper Mexicano" dominate the discourse. Ideologies of respect and purism sometimes include, for example, the ideology of *legítimo Mexicano* (legitimate/true Mexicano), in which speakers' purist attitudes encourage Mexicano speech completely, without a trace of its syncretic elements the source of which is the Spanish language—note that the salient elements are not necessarily the same for speakers as for linguists (Hill & Hill, 1986; see also Flores Farfán, 1999). *Legítimo Mexicano* can best be under-stood as "unmixed" speech.

Today's generations of speakers feel that the language spoken today is inferior to that which was spoken in the past because Spanish has been mixed in. Ideologies regulating the use of the *o:me tlahto:l* (2 languages) through the association of Spanish with power, social distance, and rudeness and the association of Mexicano with intimacy and politeness still exist today, but to a lesser extent among semi-speakers. Educators and language activists inside and outside the state educational system promote Native language simultaneously with ideological shift, calling upon the *pro-Indígena* discourse to reauthenticate Indigenous identity by interrogating the racism directed at Indigenousness in *menosprecio* discourses. In doing so, they successfully refocus local ideology of Malintzi identity as a marker of prestige.

Salir Adelante: English, Social Class, and the Commodities of Modernity

In Tlaxcala, global influences that affect the desire for modernity, and its related cultural and lin-guistic icons, and material commodities are coupled with a fear that Mexicano has no place in such a "modern" world. Locals respond to circulating discourses of modernity and socioeco-nomic development—*salir adelante* (Messing, 2007). The large county of Contla has seen indus-trialization of its artisan-based textile industry, and a desire for "modern" goods has accompanied the surge of factory employment, while in the San Isidro region most heads-of-household migrate

to Puebla for wage labor as a primary source of income. To achieve desired personal and eco-
nomic progress, many Indigenous peoples in Tlaxcala believe that the Indigenous remnants of
the past should be replaced by more global identities.

Indigenous Tlaxcalans are immersed in ideological struggles of identity and economics that
emerge in everyday conversation and symbolic representation among youth. Evidence of self-
presentation emerges in choices of clothing, hairstyle, and music. Girls of secondary school age,
12 to 15, begin to wear their hair long and loose rather than braided. Wearing 2 braids, they
explain, makes you "look Indian." At 11, one girl I knew tried to avoid "looking Indian" by
begging her mother to buy her brand-name clothing for graduation. Here, for the parents, the
ability to acquire a commodity for their children such as name-brand shoes (from the city) has
come to symbolize access to wage-labor and "progress."

English has also become a commodity with great symbolic capital, one whose icons can be
acquired or displayed, thus making the bearers into citizens of a transnational world that is more
global and less local—and somehow less Indigenous and "lower class." In a 2006 interview,
2 teenage sisters told me that for them and their classmates, the Native language was seen as
being "of a low category"—*de baja categoria*—a euphemism for crassness and low social class.
Youth of their age listen to music from the United States and its bilingual borderlands, espe-
cially Reggaeton, (Spanish/English bilingual hip-hop). Youth are reconfiguring local identities
through interaction with pop culture and foreign/globalized styles. Locally produced clothing is
modeled on foreign patterns (e.g., low-waisted bell-bottom pants and T-shirts with English
words on them). Over the past dozen years, English increasingly appears on T-shirts worn by
youth in Tlaxcala. More recently English has appeared on storefronts, such as the encroaching
urban chain of coffee shops called "The Italian Coffee Company," a Mexican company with
franchises emerging in the semi-urban border towns of the Malintzi Indigenous region. While it
is likely that only the textile industry elite can afford a drink there, the storefront signs remain an
icon of the globalized world that has recently reached this region.

"*Se Libre—Aprenda Inglés*" ("Be Free, Learn English")

This slogan advertises a school that combines English language teaching with computing; these
professional schools target youth with or without a high school education. It is not clear from
what the future English student will be "freed" if he or she acquires the language; however, it is
certain that young people are being challenged to see the importance of acquiring skills in both
technology and English in order to advance—part of the discourse of modernity (*salir
adelante*). In my interviews, while asking about bilingual education, several young parents of
elementary-age students expressed the view that the acquisition of English in a bilingual
program would be "practical," a potentially lucrative skill, whereas increasing knowledge of
Mexicano was viewed almost as a luxury, with greater symbolic capital than potential for
future economic capital.

Example 1: Valeria.   Shortly after a recent trip to Tlaxcala, I received the following email
from the daughter of a teacher involved in Contla language revitalization. Her parents are fluent
in Mexicano and are dedicated educators in monolingual Spanish schools; they were thrilled to
be part of efforts to revitalize Mexicano in their community. The e-mail from Valeria is in
excellent English.

Subject: HI, KIND REGARDS FROM MEXICO (TLAXCALA)

Hi, I am teacher X X[4] and teacher X X's daughter [. . .] We live near to the [M]alinche, in Tlaxcala. You were working with my parents, some work about [N]ahuatl. First of all, I am sending this message because my parents and me want to know news from you [. . .] Secondly, I am writing because I would like to keep in contact with you, if you do not mind, and send you some messages, because I want to practice my English. I am studying it and that is why I would prefer practice it with somebody who I know. This is a special favor I beg you to help me. Teacher X gave me your e-mail address, because I asked for it. I hope this message will not bother you, and if you have enough time to answer me I will be thankful.

Kind regards, V.

Valeria was 20 years old when she sent this e-mail, while studying English, French, and linguistics at a university in a nearby city. She was 13 and 14 during our workshops. The implicit ideology expressed here is one that is related to *salir adelante*, evidenced by the use of English. Knowing Valeria's family and hometown, I suspect she has a passive understanding of Mexicano, if not an active one. The implicit ideology in her e-mail is one of value being placed on the languages foreign to the region—on a globalized identity. The use of a particular language over another, in a bilingual community, can be an indicator of an implicit language ideology—a topic I take up in greater detail in the sections that follow.

IMPLICIT LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND AMBIVALENCE AMONG YOUTH

Linguistic ideology has been defined by Irvine (1989, p. 255) as "the cultural . . . system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests." Language ideologies are ideas about languages and talk, often expressed in speech about speech produced by speakers in particular interested positions (Woolard, 1998). The focus on studying "ideology" implies attention to the historical, political, and economic factors that shape power in social life. Recent linguistic-anthropological work is particularly instructive in understanding implicit language ideologies (Irvine & Gal, 2000; Philips, 1998a, 1998b, 2000) because the analysis of levels of implicitness and explicitness of language ideologies is encouraged (Philips, 1998b) and the ideological perspectives of both Native speakers and scholars are on equal ground.

Key to my analysis here is a view of language, identity, and ideology as fundamentally interconnected. My work builds on Gal and Irvine's research on semiotic processes in linguistic ideology (Gal, 1998; Irvine & Gal, 2000). The ideas that Gal and Irvine have jointly developed help us understand the interconnectedness of boundaries between speakers of various languages and dialects, their identities and ideologies (Irvine & Gal, 2000, pp. 37). Their conceptualization has advanced the idea of seeing ideologies of language as emergent through the well-recognized link between language and identity, and encourages the articulatins of local, nation-state, and global processes. A focus on the semiotic dimension of identity highlights the ways in which individuals use language every day to mark boundaries between their social identities and others' identities, suggesting that to understand language shift we must understand the ways in which local people's ideologies of language and identity are organized in their discourses. A study of

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[4]In this extract, Xs are used in lieu of names to respect the confidentiality of the individuals.

implicit and ambivalent ideologies is especially useful in examining the politics of bilingual education. Teachers in the bilingual education programs in Tlaxcala schools run by the DGEI and local language promoters officially espouse an explicitly *pro-Indígena* ideology in which Mexicano is something to be valued, at the same time that they recognize the prevailing local attitude that the use of Mexicano is one of *menosprecio*. Yet, some of them at home struggle with their language socialization choices for their own children. Philips (2000) points out that many researchers, in their writing on the *content* of the ideologies (e.g., speakers saying that Nahuatl is a beautiful language), view language ideologies as *implicit*; therefore the researchers see themselves as fulfilling the role of providing metapragmatic commentary (Silverstein, 1979) by deciphering these ideologies for their readers. However, little attention is paid to speakers' "process of ideologizing in language use" (Philips, 2000, p. 255)—how their very language use is part of a process of creating ideologies of language.

Philips (1991) suggests that there is "theory in [language] use" (p. 372) among Native speakers. In other words, speakers are taking ideological positions with regard to their languages through their *use* or *non-use* of those languages in specific situations (implicit ideology). For example, when a bilingual education teacher fluent in the Native language espouses a *pro-Indígena* stance and then does not speak Mexicano to her own children, this can be seen as an instance of dual language ideology and ambivalence, or lack of decisiveness, in the words of *Maestro* (Teacher) Miguel, as we shall see in the data below. The ideology implicit in their language use is that Spanish is the important, dominant language of the household.[5]

Indigenous Education Teachers in Their 20s and 30s as "Key Informants"

Teachers in the DGEI schools from 2 Indigenous communities made wonderful interviewees because explicit language ideologies are particularly salient for them and they have reflected upon this since becoming teachers. As mentioned previously, teachers' reflective narratives are particularly insightful, more so than the data I have from observations or focus groups with youth, on the topic of consciousness-raising and shifting ideologies in favor of Indigenous identity and language. I argue that ambivalence should be studied where it surfaces, and in this case the information about youth emerges, rather explicitly, in the narratives of post-youth interviewees, when they reflect on their own changes in perspectives over time. The catalyst for these changes often was their training to be teachers in the Indigenous education system.

I focused on the multiple constraints on teachers within the school system, both ideological and structural. Several decades after Hill & Hill's (1986) study, I found that Mexicano is still heard in private, intimate contexts in which there is a great degree of mutual trust, such as within families, fictive kin relationships, and occasional town meetings. For Mexicano to be forced into the non-intimate sphere of the school creates an awkward social situation that violates local language ideologies that are largely implicit. Yet, despite myriad structural constraints, some teachers write their own textbooks and curriculums.[6]

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[5]My data collection was in both Spanish and Mexicano. The discussion of implicit linguistic ideologies is informed more now by analysis of speech in Spanish than in Mexicano.

[6]Funds of Knowledge in the United States works to strengthen the connection between home and school cultures (Messing, 2005), something which is not needed in rural Mexico, although teachers do not always speak the same Native language (or dialect) as the students.

Teachers face a large ideological task in bilingual/Indigenous education programs because teaching in these programs challenges them to put the Native language in the public sphere to be used among people who don't know each other (at first). Their labor identities, as teachers, and in particular as teachers in national bilingual-bicultural schools, offered them experiences that tend to make them more attuned to and interested in issues of language than the average townsperson. It is important to bear these identities in mind—both labor *and* residential/family identities—and not to privilege one over the other. What follows are excerpts from 3 such interviews.

Example 2: Miguel and Ana.   Miguel is a teacher from San Felipe Cuahutenco who teaches in the bilingual school in San Isidro where all the children are socialized in both languages (cf. Nava Nava, 2007). He was 33 years old when this interview was conducted in 1999. By high school he had decided to become a teacher and entered the teacher's "Normal" high school and college. When he went to study in the state capital, classmates teased him because of his Nahuatl family names, which, he explained, indicated his Indigenousness; people asked him about them and then would ask if he spoke the Native language. In the interview excerpt that follows, ambivalent language ideologies are apparent, surfacing in examples of *menosprecio* and *pro-Indígena* discourses.

As with most of my interviewees, Miguel and I had spoken many times before the formal interview about language and education issues; he believes that people in public positions in Contla county speak 95 percent Spanish, and 5 percent Nahuatl. Within this excerpt, Miguel states and restates his thoughts about his and his family's language abilities. These statements are variable, indicating that Miguel has multiple opinions about language use and language socialization. I offer an excerpt below, with my English translation from the Spanish. (The Spanish is omitted due to space limitations.)

> M: Ah, on one occasion I had an elected duty, I had a duty there in the Church, well there's also a bit of everything, since the majority we were all young people [men], but we would also talk in Nahuatl. Also to give thanks . . . For example the other day we went to a gathering, we went to offer a statue of baby Jesus, the one who went ahead of us, the *mayordomo* [one in charge] is a young man who speaks it perfectly, that is the version in Nahuatl, and we—also, the little that we could do because they are some words a bit more, um, more uncommon, yes it was spoken a bit.

This young *mayordomo* was about 32 years old, according to Miguel's calculation. About his town of San Felipe, Miguel explains that few speak Mexicano to their families and that most youth age 15 to 20 don't speak it but that Mexicano is spoken in a few families, including among children. Miguel's self-description of language use and ability is flavored by a linguistic insecurity that he describes as "get[ting] tongue-tied." This insecurity is common for second languages acquired in the home, including in heritage-language households elsewhere (King, 2000), and is related to an emotion of minority status resulting from the discrimination so many speakers have felt. Here Miguel talks about the importance of trust, of *confianza*, for him to speak Mexicano. The purism Hill and Hill (1986) documented also surfaces here.

When asked if he would like his children to learn Mexicano, Miguel replied that there is interest but a lack of "decisiveness"—not enough of a conscious "push" in his family—and some shame that also stands in the way; this is an illustration of *menosprecio* discourse and related ambivalence about promoting Mexicano in the home.

> M: Well yes I would like it, what happens is that it's—we can't rid ourselves of that—how to put it? that—how to say it? Um, this shame that we feel maybe as we speak to each other, almost

> no. What happens is that sometimes I feel sometimes that although I and my wife we speak to each other in Spanish, eh that if it be said in Nahuatl they [his children] would also hear speaking in Nahuatl and then, they would learn it, who knows. Yes, it would be better, that is, yes there is the desire, what happens is that there is not decisiveness.

Miguel's honest reflection about a complex situation is reminiscent of Hill and Hill's (1986) mention of linguistic ambivalence in this region. There is a locally common explicit ideology of which this Mexicano semi-speaker is quite aware and articulates—that he would like to increase his children's exposure to the Native language. Yet we also see that ambivalence about this mixed with memories of bad experiences with racism and with linguistic insecurity. This reinforces Hill and Hill's insightful assertion: The people of the Malinche are not naïve about these ambivalences and complexities (1986, pp. 53–54). My view, based on extensive observation and interviewing, is that the role of respect in social relations in the Malintzi region is so strong that speakers of Mexicano exhibit great respect for their languages and ancestors by not wanting the language to be "tainted." From this interview, I also learned that Miguel's young children understand a bit of Mexicano, although he has thought of taking them to San Isidro so that they could become as fluent as his students there are. Miguel's wife Ana came in during the interview and explained that she didn't think her parents spoke to her in Mexicano as a child. However, she added that her grandparents spoke it to her and her siblings as children. Language transmission from grandparents to grandchildren is an important factor that, in many families, has served to keep the language alive, even when parents of these children actively choose not to socialize their children in the language. I now turn to the reflections of 2 more teachers on their changing ideologies.

Example 3: Jimena.   In another representative example, an elementary school teacher finished her high school education while teaching and had a change of heart about her language after becoming a teacher under the Indigenous education system. She explained:

> If I couldn't learn it as a child it's because I negated myself always . . . Because that used to be my problem for me. "Me speaking that? No. What are my friends going to say?" I used to say that and I remember it because my parents always used to insist with me. "No, no. In some place they're going to hear me speaking, no." "I'm embarrassed," or "I'm ashamed of speaking it in front of other people who aren't my family." So that I took it that way and I want that they [her children] not take it that way.

Conscious of her former rejection of Mexicano, Jimena is now becoming a language promoter, challenging her students if they tap into the *menosprecio* discourse by telling them, "*No me hagas sentir vergüenza porque es una lengua muy bonita*" (Don't make me feel shame because it's a very pretty language). Her siblings have started coming to her for Mexicano translation assistance. These comments suggest that some young people may understand or speak Mexicano without anyone but their closest family members knowing, keeping this fact from their teachers, neighbors, and friends. Jimena's shift in perspectives is promising because it illustrates that culture change is not always unidirectional.

CONCLUSIONS

Much of my contact with youth was through schools in Tlaxcala. Knowing I was from the United States, students would often approach me in groups, asking me to teach them some

words in English and occasionally asking for translation. I had conducted a few focus groups among schoolchildren and interviewed youth who had been involved in the experimental language revitalization camps. I learned directly from students in these elementary schools, in the regions with greater language shift, that they learned and retained curse words in Mexicano more easily than anything else. A few did say they enjoyed spending time with their grandparents to hear stories. The most direct, explicit information came from the narratives of the teachers and townspeople, during interviews and subsequent analysis of interview transcripts conducted long after our conversations about language, identity, and social change had begun.

I have found that conducting ethnographic observations in communities and schools prior to interviewing individuals (or conducting focus groups) ensures more in-depth responses during taped formal interviews. Ethnography is particularly important when focusing on the cultures of youth, because their perspectives are in developmental stages of change. Young adult narratives show how youth are caught up in the nexus of multiple ideologies of Indigenousness and modernity influenced by globalizing forces. It is this very multitude of ideologies that most impacts youth at a time in which they are making decisions about their educational and employment possibilities, leading to explicitly ambivalent perspectives on their social identities and languages. Youth communicate both implicitly and explicitly the dominant role of Spanish and English and their views on Mexicano in their daily lives. To the outside observer, ambivalence is at the center of youth ideologies of language and identity, and yet ideologies governing language shift can change over time, as the teacher narratives have shown. Further attention needs to be paid to young adults and emerging adult language socialization practices and to the role of shifting individual language ideologies in this process. This knowledge is key for language revitalization, because if ideological orientations can change over time, then young adults may reactivate their passive linguistic knowledge.

The narratives illustrate that ambivalence is rarely stated, but is observable in practice; it is implicit in actions of speaking and explicit in reflective narratives of young people and young adults who look back on their youth. Ambivalence such as this should be seen as part of multifaceted post-conquest identities (Bhabha, 1994). An emotional and sociohistorical response, ambivalence is a response to the local ideological situation of minority/minoritized status (González, 1992; McCarty, 2002) and interpersonal conflicts about authenticity. More work on Indigenous post-conquest "structures of feeling" (Williams, 1977) among youth would be instructive in informing the development of culturally relevant, youth-focused, and technologically advanced language revitalization.

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