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Mayit Maam Nak Mayik'rrar [Where Are We Going, What Can I Do?]: Ideological

Assemblages in Kumiay Language and Cultural Revitalization."

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts

in

Anthropology

by

Michael Hillyer

Committee in charge:

Professor Rihan Yeh, Chair
Professor Keolu Fox
Professor David Pedersen

2023

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University of California San Diego

2023

DEDICATION

Por Doña Julia y Don Rogelio

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Mayit Maam Nak Mayik'rrar [Where Are We Going, What Can I Do?]: Ideological Assemblages in Kumiay Language and Cultural Revitalization."

by

Michael Hillyer

Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California San Diego, 2023

Professor Rihan Yeh, Chair

In this thesis I explore the Sociocultural aspects of Kumiay language revitalization through the concept of language ideology. The Kumiay people are Indigenous to the borderlands of the United States and Mexico of the California/ Baja California region. According to common parameters of language endangerment analysis, their language is considered to be at the extreme end of language endangerment with around 30 speakers of the language, mostly in the 60+ years age bracket. By focusing on situated moments of discourse

about the language, I analyze ideological underpinnings that individuals express about the language that reveal larger social and cultural processes influencing the loss and revitalization of the language. From this I argue that in order to perform the work of indigenous language revitalization, a major part of this work is to contextualize the work on the language in a wider perspective of historic, social and cultural currents of language loss.

DEAD: A prelude

"¿Un lingüista?"

[A linguist?]

he asked.

I responded that I was a linguistic anthropologist, and I was told by a community elder that he taught the Kumiay language in the village school. To this, he dismissively responded,

"Ya no enseño Kumiay en la escuela. No quieren saberlo y pues no puedo enseñar algunos que no quieren aprender"

[I don't teach Kumiay in the school anymore. They don't want to know it and well, I can't teach those who don't want to learn.]

I tried to redirect his pessimism towards the topic of language revitalization, to which he cut me off.

"Ya trabajé con varios investigadores."

[I have already worked with researchers.]

A look of pain crossed his face as he ran his hand over his forehead, took a deep breath, and explained,

"Pasé más de veinte años trabajando con lingüistas, antropólogos, educadores ... no más vienen a investigar y se van. Nada cambia, no apoyan con el trabajo, sólo dejan algunos libros y se van."

[I have spent more than 20 years working on this. Linguists, anthropologists, educators… they only come to investigate and then they go. Nothing changes, they don't help with this work, they just make some books and go.]

He paused shaking his head and looking out the door with a furrowed brow, continuing,

"Nada cambió. Mire, los jóvenes están pobres aquí; quieren aprender para conseguir trabajo. Ya no quieren aprender Kumiay, quieren aprender inglés o español, ¡hasta mandarín! Kumiay no les interesa"	[Nothing has changed. Look, the kids are poor here; they want to learn to get jobs. They don't want to learn Kumiay, they want to learn English or Spanish, even Mandarin! … Kumiay doesn't interest them.

After considering his words, I mirrored his message,

"Kumiay no tiene una economía."	[Kumiay doesn't have an economy]

He nodded his head and stood up straight to say,

"Exactamente."	[Exactly.]

While attempting to maintain my focus for the conversation, language revitalization, I countered,

"Pues es importante a salvar el idioma, ¿no?"	[But it's important to save the language, no?]

He set down what he was doing to look directly at me and said,

"No. ya se acabó."	[No, it is finished]

setting the end to both the conversation and the language. I started to counter him,

"¿Cómo? Están hablantes, no es-"	[How? There are speakers, it isn't…]

To which he abruptly ended the conversation,

"Mire, si no hablan el idioma, no existe. Aquí los hablantes no lo hablan y pues es muerto la, es extinto, es DEAD."	[Look, if no one speaks the language, it doesn't exist. Here the speakers don't speak it and then it is dead, it is extinct, it is DEAD.]

he said, slowly enunciating ‘DEAD’, setting a discursive nail into the coffin of our conversation. His eyes flashed a look of anguish, the creases of his face deepened as he stood up straight rubbing his face with his open palms. I thanked him for his time and quietly left with the tatters of my research plan and the feeling of being an intrusive anthropologist.

This conversation was my first lead for someone from a traditional community working on the revitalization of the Indigenous Kumiay language (Tipay aa) in Baja California Norte in Mexico. I was surprised to receive this response from a teacher[1] and one of few remaining speakers of the language. This contradicted the sense of urgency and veneration broadcast by language revitalization literature (EDC 2017; Krauss 1992; Nettle and Romaine 2000; Crystal 2000; UNESCO 2020). I begin with this conversation because it moves past the linguistic and pedagogical concerns of this body of literature to the lived experiences of communities facing language shift. I had approached this conversation (and the short-lived initial phase of this research) intending to answer the classic diagnostic question of language revitalization: “What is the language situation?” It is clear in this exchange that this question and its answers had been heard countless times in his decades long efforts to revitalize the language.

[1] Naming conventions are according to individual preferences.

Introduction

In this thesis, I unfurl the assemblage of linguistic and social ideologies circulating among discourses surrounding the Kumiay language within Indigenous Kumiay communities in Baja California. For clarification, in this paper I use the spelling *Kumiay* to signify the Mexican population of the bi-national Kumeyaay/Kumiay peoples of the US/Mexico border region in what is now southern California, and Baja California Norte (Baja Norte). This designation is significant for the individuals and communities included in this research in that it recognizes their distinct identity and history within an overarching bi-national Kumeyaay/ Kumiay identity. Currently, the Kumiay/Kumeyaay language (Tipey/ Tipai) is one of few remaining Indigenous languages in the region and has been labeled moribund by language researchers. From this labeling and warnings of impending language death, discourses of death entered most conversations about the language. These discussions offered insights into wider social discourses of loss and change. Individual responses to this linguistic label, such as the one above, influenced a shift of focus from "the language situation" to a sociocultural dimension. I engage this shift by asking: "What is the wider sociolinguistic environment of the language?" (Meek 2007). More specifically: "What are the social and material conditions of the speech communities and how do these conditions influence thoughts and feelings, or *ideologies* held towards the language?" (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994). Only in answering these questions could I begin to understand answers to: "what is the language situation?"

To answer these questions, I accompanied Kumiay individuals working on personal and community language revitalization efforts in a variety of contexts that included traditional rural ranchos and urban families. Through a methodological framework of participant observation within several field sites that included, online language classes, community gatherings, and

traditional ceremonies. I gathered notes and recordings of discussions about the Kumiay Language and ideas of identity that connected to wider themes of Sociopolitical situations. In order to organize the various strands of dialog that converge on the topic of language from this broad perspective, I engage Kroskrity's (2018) framework *of Language Ideological Assemblage* (LIA). This provides a view of the "larger complex of relevant beliefs and feelings, both indigenous and imposed, that may complement contest, or otherwise dynamically interact with each other" (2).

Several ideological themes emerged from this engagement. Yet, a specific focus on language ideologies failed to address how conversation about language often offered entry points into wider institutionalized discourses of indigenous disappearance and identity. These entry points provided perspectives of the wider sociolinguistic and deeply political environment of the language and speakers. To begin, the three main language ideologies that I focus on are: (1) languages live and die, (2) there is a correct or 'real' form of the language, and (3) language and cultural performance are inseparable representation of a people. These three ideologies are common within linguistic anthropological literature and were expected considering that all interlocutors had experience interacting with linguistic and anthropological researchers. Moving past Kroskrity's specific focus on language ideologies, I found contrasting positions that revealed sociopolitical dialogs underlying these language ideologies. In these contrasts, ideas about language death either accepted and reproduced institutionalized discourses of indigenous disappearance or outright refused them. While tracing historical roots of these discourses to Mexican racial ideologies based on the idea of mestizaje that promote racial and cultural mixing, I found that this did not account for the narrative of Indigenous disappearance. Upon further consideration of the unique history of the region as the edge or frontier of both nations, I found

that American ideologies of the frontier hinged on the inevitable disappearance of Indigenous peoples. Thus, in the borderlands, a convergence of national ideologies regimenting Indigenous peoples emerge in discourses of the language. In this convergence, ideologies of mestizaje and later indigenismo influence the ideological binding of language and culture as representative of a people, while ideologies of a correct version of the language appeal to a sense of authenticity within this representation. Thus, the loss of language and culture are seen as a manifestation of the inevitable disappearance of Indigenous peoples prophesized by frontier ideologies. Returning to positions that contest and outright refuse these regimentations of Indigenous identity, local constructs of identity challenge the importance of language revitalization by foregrounding identities based in relatedness to kin networks and territory. Through these identities, individuals expressed local language ideologies that framed local constructs of identity as the only avenues of language revitalization. Thus, beginning from a base assemblage of language ideologies in circulation within conversations about Kumiay, I extend the framework of Kroskrity's LIA to an exploration of internal and external sociopolitical ideologies intersecting the issue of language loss/revitalization. From this exploration, I argue that this approach is a necessary intervention in language revitalization research.

I begin this exploration by grounding this discussion and introducing my interlocutors and their communities in the opening section *Somos Esta Tierra [We Are This Land]: An Overview of Kumiay Territory and History.* In this introduction, I provide a brief overview of Kumiay territory, history, and the struggles of contemporary communities. In the next section*, Es La Vida, Todo Se Muere [That is Life, Everything Dies]: Language Death and Indigenous Disappearance,* I present the current language situation along with language ideologies expressed in conversations about the language. For this, Jane Hill's (2002) critique on *expert*

rhetorics guides the discussion of internal and external influences on language ideologies. The overlaps between language ideologies and social discourses reveals a thematic thread of Indigenous disappearance. In the following section, *Nunca Avergonzaba Ser Kumiay [I Was Never Ashamed to Be Kumiay]: Racial Legacies of Mestizaje and The Fronter,* I trace the ideological underpinnings of the discourse of Indigenous disappearance to expert rhetorics found in anthropological and historical literature which have predicted this disappearance. I follow the ideological influences of these works to the confluence of U.S. frontier ideology and policies of assimilation based on the racial ideology of mestizaje in Mexico. I bring Shaylih Muehlemann's (2013) work with the neighboring Cucapá peoples of the Colorado river delta into conversation with experiences of Kumiay communities to illustrate the processes of erasure. Generations of cultural/linguistic oppression and assimilation have fulfilled the prophecy of Indigenous disappearance by rendering indigenous peoples of the region invisible. This invisibility is enforced by state regimentations of Indigenous identity that only recognize performances of indigeneity via traditional dress, customs and language. These regimentations are contested in the following section, *Esas cosas idios [those Indian things]:* Reconfiguration, Refusals and Renewals of Kumiay Identity. In this section I discuss local understandings of Kumiay identity centered on relationality that integrate lived experience with an assimilation with local beliefs. I engage Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui' (2010) concept of *ch'ixi* to discuss how traditions of adaptation and response to ongoing colonial incursions produce a co-inhabitance of contradictions through which continuation is made possible. In this continuation, Indigenous knowledge and experience produces a third sense of identity that refuses state regimentations of indigenous identity. Finally, this concludes with a discussion of how local ideologies based on experiences connect to the

maintenance of lands from which communities can foster an environment where the language is spoken.

<u>Somos Esta Tierra [We Are This Land]: An Overview of Kumiay Territory and History.</u>

"Me dijo que todo tiene un precio y voy a vender este terreno."

[He told me there is a price to everything and I will sell this land.]

said Willy, an elder of the Cañon de Los Encinos/ San Antonio Ñecua community as we looked north towards the encroaching vineyards of L.A. Cetto wines, whose property lies only a few meters to the north of his property. We had been discussing his lifelong fight against the winery's invasion of the communities' territory.

"Le dijo que se vete de la chingada! Esta tierra no tiene precio, lo dije. Nunca lo vendo, soy esta tierra, somos de esta tierra, mis antepasados son esta tierra. Cuando naces en estas comunidades ponen un puno de tierra en tu mano. Eso es la conexión que los mexicanos no entienden y no pueden romper."

[I told him to go screw himself! I told him, this land does not have a price. I will never sell, I am this land, we are of this land, my ancestors are this land. When you are born in these communities, they put a handful of dirt in your hand. That is the connection that the Mexicans do not understand, and it can't be broken.]

In his passionate proclamation, he expresses the inseparable connection between countless generations of Indigenous Kumiay/ Kumeyaay (or Tipay/Tapai) peoples of Southern California and Baja California to their ancestral territory. The Ancestral territories of the

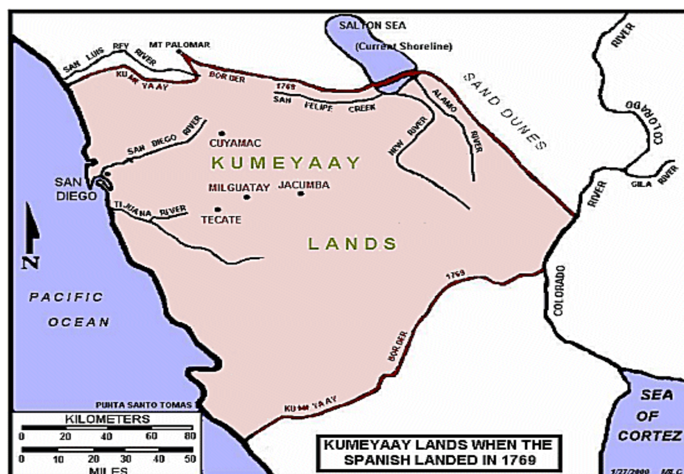

Figure 1. Ancestral Kumeyaay/ Kumiay lands (Connolly-Mishkwish 2006)

collective Kumiay/Kumeyaay encompass a vast region spanning, costal canyon ecosystem from the San Dieguito River to the north of San Diego in California, to the south of Ensenada in Baja California. From this north-south costal expanse this region reaches eastward into the mountainous region which opens into the Sonora desert of the east. Traditionally, the peoples of this territory lived seminomadic lives as they travelled this varied landscape in seasonal rounds. Their extensive knowledge of the environment allowed for highly adaptable lifeways that responded to the life cycles of resources (Connolly-Mishkwish 2006). The Kumiay/Kumeyaay are often cultural-linguistically grouped into the western branch of the greater Yuma Speaking peoples of the American southwest and northern Mexico, which comprises most of the indigenous peoples of the aridoamerican ecosystem (Wilken-Robertson 2018). Yet, this region of interaction is expanded through a theoretical reframing of traditional songs, or “birdsongs,” as Indigenous mapping (Rose-Redwood, et. al; 2020, 155). From this reframing of traditional song as a modality of mapping, the Kumiay/Kumeyaay are not only connected to the Yuman language speaking peoples to the east but also to the peoples of the pacific coast to the north. This highlights a vast territory of intertribal alliances that span indigenous geographies that modern nation-states have overlaid with borders. As Ken Hedges states in his 1975 paper, “Notes on the

Kumeyaay: A Problem of Identification," the peoples of this region have over a dozen names applied to them throughout historical literature[2]. This was often attributed to a reluctance to identify oneself beyond Shmulq (clan), which was the sole collective identity beyond the individual. More so, these names directly index the culture and language of the colonizer collecting data in these "cycles of conquest" rather than the peoples identified (Spicer 1962). This is apparent in the homophone of the Kumiay/Kumeyaay, which is loaded with sociopolitical meaning through diverging Spanish/English spelling standards that represent the dominant languages of the borderlands.

Figure 2. The U.S. / Mexico Border on Traditional Kumiay Territories. (Connolly- Mishkwish 2006)

The US/ Mexico border or *la frontera* [The frontier] as it is referred to in Mexico, bisects traditional Kumiay/ Kumeyaay lands. (Fig. 2). The bisection of Kumiay/Kumeyaay ancestral territories was initially ratified in 1848 in article V of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that was

[2] As this thesis is focused on contemporary communities, I provide a brief summary of Kumeyaay/ Kumiay history. For detailed reviews of Kumeyaay/Kumiay history from an indigenous perspective, see: (Connolly-Mishkwish 2007; Cuero & Shipek 1991; Toler 2015)

agreed upon by the neighboring nation-states following the Mexican American war. This officially expanded US territory to the Pacific Ocean by setting the border on a straight line following the 33°N parallel, which begins approximately 3 miles south of the southern end of San Diego Bay and continues eastward to meet the confluence of the Gila and Colorado river. This joined the US/Mexico border from the pacific to create the territories that would become the U.S. states of California, Texas, Arizona and New Mexico to the east (St. John, 2011). This arbitrary border setting, based on settler-colonial agreements, completely overlooked preexisting Indigenous territories and sovereignty of the peoples in the region, consequently setting the now binational peoples on diverging historical trajectories.

In the Mexican state of Baja California Norte, traditional Kumiay communities have been reduced to a handful of sparsely populated remote rural villages in the arid mountainous interior of the peninsula. As expressed by Willy in the opening of this section, land defense and preservation are a common struggle shared across all the traditional communities that I visited. In La Valle de Guadalupe (the Guadalupe valley), home to a now burgeoning wine and boutique tourism industry, the communities of San José de la Zorra and Cañon de los Encinos/ San Antonio Ñecua have both faced situations such as Willy's or worse at the hands of the wine industry in the region. Fausto (Ángel) Diaz-Ojeda, the youngest speaker of the language that I met, has dealt with this for much of his life. During our first meeting, we watched short documentaries on the land struggles of his community, San José de La Zorra (Défossé 2007; Verrechia 2014). These documentaries follow the story of a series of territorial invasions of San José de La Zorra that at one point forcefully evicted the town on the claim that the Kumiay of San José de la Zorra were squatting on private property. As many in this documentary claimed, the issue was not just land, but water rights. In the arid region that these communities inhabit,

water is a scarce resource that has become a point of contestation between Indigenous communities and the growing wine industry of the region.

In the community of Las Juntas de Nejí to the south of Tecate, Yolanda (Yoli) Meza-Calles strives to maintain her community along multiple fronts from her home in rancho Mishkwish. Yoli is a native speaker of the language and my teacher of the language in her bi-weekly online classes that she offers with the support of el Centro Cultural Tijuana (CECUT) [The Cultural Center of Tijuana]. In addition to her language classes, she serves as the traditional leader of the community. In the initial months of this research, students from the class were invited to assist in a traditional *lloro* ceremony, which marks the end of a year cycle of a person's death. The reality of the struggle for land and resources hung heavy over the ceremony for Óscar Eyraud Adams, the most recent community activist killed in recent years. He was described as a person fighting, "against the constant assault of the corporations. He was always on the lookout to prevent wineries, foreigners, or avaricious locals, (he called them "vivillos" [opportunists]), from taking land away from the community" (Oropeza 2020). In his fight, as with Willy's, L.A. Cetto wineries along with other multinational corporations were cited as the main perpetrator of land and water dispossession. These struggles, along with the lack of economic opportunity in the region, have led many to leave the traditional communities for city centers.

Shifting from rural communities to urban centers, I introduce my main collaborators and introduction into this research which are my extended family via my stepfather. Eduardo Valle Luna and his family from the Kumiay communities of San José de Tecate and Peña Blanca introduced me to this topic. It is important to establish that I am not Kumiay, nor do I claim Kumiay descendance. We simply found a shared ground in conversation about my research

interests in language revitalization. From this shared ground, Eduardo and his family have offered insight and direction in the development of this project which in turn supports their process of reconnection to their heritage and language. The branch of the Meza-Valle kin network, which they say I am “politically” related to, lives in the urban centers of Ensenada, Rosarito, Tijuana and Tecate. Their traditional lands are in an area of urban expansion that is quickly becoming an industrial area to the east of the border city of Tecate at San José de Tecate and the mostly abandoned rancho next to the community of las juntas de Nejí, rancho Peña Blanca. Currently, Eduardo’s family members are in a legal battle against land invaders and are working to restore rancho San José de Tecate as a future community hub for the region.

Thus far, this overview has maintained a focus on territory to foreground that territorial dispossession is intimately related to language loss. For the Kumiay, their shared and ongoing condition of territorial dispossession and defense is deeper than a discrepancy of property or land. As stated by Willy, it is a defense of the relationships that constitute identity, relationships that extend through, knowledge, stories and kinship situated in place. All of which have, until recently, been the domain of the Kumiay language. Ángel illustrates this in recounting his personal process of language reclamation,

“Tenían clases de Kumiay la escuela, pero no aprendí nada. Quería aprender, pero no funciona así”	[They had Kumiay classes in school, but I did not learn anything. I wanted to learn, but it does not work like that.”]

I asked how he learned.

“aquí.” [here.]

He gestured to the mountains and trees around us.

"Aprendí nombres de todo preguntando a los mayores cómo se decían las cosas o cuáles eran los nombres de las plantas y los pájaros. Hay un nombre, una forma de hablar de todo lo que ya está aquí".	[I learned the names for everything by asking my elders how to say this or what the names of plants and the birds. There is a name a way to talk about everything that is already here.]

In his explanation Ángel offers insight into local linguistic ideology based in relationality. By engaging in the relationships of place and within community in the place that he lives, he managed to return the language and to those domains that foster the language.

His story is unique in consideration of the history of dispossession and elimination that this brief overview has presented. As foregrounded in the opening conversation, material dispossession in the form of ongoing land theft and enclosure have disrupted traditional Kumiay lifeways. This has forced entrance into wage labor and private property-based economies of the region, which ruptured traditional family structures, gender relations and land tenure that facilitated cultural/linguistic transmission. In the next section, I discuss how these struggles interact with the language ideologies in circulation throughout discourses surrounding the Kumiay language.

Es la Vida, Todo Se Muere [That's Life, Everything Dies]: Language Ideologies, Death and Indigenous Disappearance

"¿Tienes alguien a enseñar todo de este conocimiento?"	[Do you have someone to teach all this knowledge?]

I asked Agustín Dominguez, the elder ceremonial leader of the rancho town of San Antonio Ñecua/ Cañon de Los Encinos. We had been discussing plant and place names from a patio with a viewpoint of the canyon in which the town is situated.

"No."

he said with an exhale looking off into the mountains that rose into the deep blue dome of the sky.

"Ka'ak."	[Raven/crow in Kumiay]

he said, pointing to a raven gliding in place on a thermal up draft over a nearby ridge. I repeated after him and scribbled it in my journal and asked,

"ningún joven?"	[Not a single young person?]

He responded,

"Ningún, no interesan en estas cosas. Todos están como esto..."	[Not one, they are not interested in these things. They are all like this…]

and then mimed someone on a touch screen phone. In his commentary on the youth, he recognizes a connection between a disinterest in tradition with the growing availability and use of cell phones. To get a better understanding of the language situation, I asked,

"Pero, el idioma ¿cuántos hablantes están?"	[But the language, how many speakers are here?]

He stopped a moment and said,

"Cuatro."	[Four.]

He took his hat off to count again quietly.

"Qué crees que la comunidad necesita para tener más hablantes?"	[What do you believe the community needs to have more speakers?]

I asked leaning forward with my pen ready to write down the answer. He sat up in his chair and said,

"Los hablantes necesitan hablar. Ahora no hablan con nadie y hay muchos que entienden mucho, pero si no hablan qué importa lo que entienden."

[The speakers need to speak. Now they don't speak with anyone and there are many who understand a lot, but if they don't speak what does it matter who understands it.]

A car rumbled by to which he yelled "Auka!" [Kumiay greeting] and then laughed when they responded with a honk of the horn. Returning to the conversation, I asked:

"Pues, si no tienes alguien a ensenar el conocimiento que tienes, todo vaya a ir contigo. ¿Qué pienses de esto?"

[Then, if you do not have some to teach the knowledge that you, then everything will go with you. What do you think of this?]

To which he responded,

"Me lo llevo."

[I will take it.]

Locking eyes with me. His face was calm yet serious as the blue of the sky reflected in the cataracts of his eyes.

"Se muere. Es la vida, todo muere."

[It dies. That is life, everything dies.]

He said sitting back and looking up the valley towards the small patch of trees that he indicated earlier was his birthplace. The specter of death had returned to discussion about the language as he continued,

Todo el mundo está muriendo. Mi padre me dijo que el mundo se acaba cuándo los vientos cambian y el agua va a un otro lugar. Antes, siempre estaba agua en el arroyo, por todo el año, todo el año… ahora es pura arena."

[The whole world is dying. My father told me that the world ends when the wind changes and the water goes elsewhere. In the past, there was always water in the creek, all year long, all year long... Now it's just sand.]

He said pausing to grind his boot in the dust on the deck. Continuing,

"Es muy seco y caluroso. Este cañón debería ser verde durante el gran parte del año. Todo está cambiando."	[It's very dry and hot, this canyon is supposed to be green during most of the year. Everything is changing.]

He said, looking to me and slightly nodding. A quiver in his eyebrow and a softening of his gaze conveyed a sad, yet grave seriousness of someone who has been watching the world end for much of his life.

I open this section with this conversation because Agustín offers a perspective on the language situation that a recitation of statistics would fail to communicate. The progression of his narrative expresses an overwhelming sense of doom projecting an immanent horizon of finality. For Agustín, the projected death of the language is a symptom of a greater process functioning at a level beyond the intervention of humans. Yet, as I discuss in this section, others recognize their agency to engage the current language situation. It is also a useful introduction to key features within this discussion that lead to a discussion of the language ideological assemblage of the Kumiay language. First, his echoing of the definition of language death as outlined by the teacher in the introduction, signifies a familiarity with academic discourses and rhetoric of language revitalization. In this section, I engage Jane Hill through her critique of *expert rhetorics* to discuss the uptake and articulations of language *death* and *endangerment* in conversations (2002). From this grounding, I explore how these expert rhetorics are translated through local beliefs surrounding death, as exemplified by Agustín, that influence discourses of language death. I then turn to criticism of varieties of language use to explore how discourses of language death influence a sense of scarcity signified by purist language ideologies. First, it is important to consider Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism to present an interactive framework for multiple competing discourses. In Bakhtin's conceptual framework, dialogism

occurs within utterances throughout multiple conversations. Within these utterances, speakers can be understood to taking positions, making claims, and responding to past conversations and utterances that comprise multiple competing discourses (Bakhtin 1993). Thus, within this framework dialogism and discourses exist outside of the structure of language. Instead, utterances of speakers are in direct relation to the speaker who gives one voice among a multitude of voices or *polyphony.* In exploring this dialogic construct, I find that conversations engage multiple linguistic ideologies assembled in the LIA, but also Ideologies underlying social discourses of Indigenous erasure in the region.

In her 2002 article, "Expert Rhetorics' in Advocacy for Endangered Languages: Who is Listening and What Do They Hear?" Jane Hill critiques common rhetoric used in language revitalization research. More importantly, she urges researchers to consider the possible effects that their rhetoric from their positionality has on communities that they intend to help. One possible negative outcome of expert rhetorics is exemplified in the introductory conversation with the schoolteacher and Agustín. In these conversations, ideological frameworks of language revitalization are taken on in their final judgements of the local language situation. These frameworks in turn were referenced to spotlight the futility of my revitalization focused approach. This is because as the situation embodies the symptoms of language death; when "nobody speaks it [the language] anymore," then it is dead and thus a fruitless endeavor (Crystal 2001, 1).

Yet, the language continues to be spoken. The majority of reported Kumiay speakers are elderly (aged 60+) fluent Kumiay/Spanish bilingual speakers (in some cases trilingual with the addition of English), with no reports of monolingualism. For these speakers, which local estimates number to be around thirty, Kumiay was their native language and often the only

language spoken by their elders. Accompanying these fluent bilingual speakers are what Farfán and Olko (2021) define as *insecure* or *dormant speakers*. These individuals learned and used the language as children, yet do not use it on a regular basis and usually only in specific contexts within limited domains. Receptive or latent speakers, who can only understand the language, represent the largest group. This group includes most ages with have varying degrees of comprehension. In this assemblage of speakers and possible speakers, there is an intensified process of language shift towards Spanish language monolingualism occurring over the course of one to two generations. While I drove with Ángel's uncle to the rancho we discussed his experience of this process,

"Yo no hablo Kumiay, pero mi mamá lo habla."	[I don't speak Kumiay, my mom speaks it.]

I asked why he did not speak Kumiay, to which he responded,

"Tenía vergüenza! Me burlaban para decir cosas malas y si no los entendí me castigaban. Empecé hablar español con todos y me hablaban en el dialecto. Dicen que Kumiay está desapareciendo…siento mal por no hablarlo, pero entiendo todo."	[I was embarrassed! I would be made fun of for saying things wrong and if I didn't understand, they would shame me. I started to speak Spanish with everyone, and they spoke to me in the dialect. They say that Kumiay is disappearing… I feel bad for not speaking it, but I understand everything.]

His experience of shaming for both speaking incorrectly and not knowing the language was a common response. Notions of correct were not only judgments of novice speakers, but

also of other fluent speakers. This is exemplified in an elder's comment on Yoli's dialect in discussion of my experience in Yoli's language classes,

"Usan palabras nuevas allá, como "carro" en Kumiay. Mi mamá nunca habló de eso. No hablan Kumiay real allá."	[They use new words over there like "car." My mother never spoke of these things. They don't speak real Kumiay there.]

In this statement, the elder indexes a language ideology of purism that sets up a contrast between the "not real" *over there* that assumes a "real*" here* based on the use of neologisms. This judgement of "realness" or correctness was common in assessing inter-community dialects in conversations about the language. The basis of this critique often indexed ideologies of authenticity connected to language use. As exemplified above, authentic registers were often attributed to past speakers, or dialect spoken in the critic's village. In this example, the speaker, an elder fluent in Kumiay, bypasses her own authoritative position as one of around thirty speakers by appealing to the authority of her mother's register of use. This expresses to tradition or continuation via reference to lineage from which the language is an inherited essence (Hill 2002, 126). Thus, the language is treated as an inherited artifact fit for preservation, rather than everyday use within ever-expanding contexts.

This language ideology represents a type of "localist" stance, which resists innovation such as neologisms. As exemplified here, this stance is utilized to establish group inclusion/ exclusion via linguistic markers (Field 2012, 562). Hill (2001) attributes this stance to localized lifestyles, with limited contact to neighboring groups, which runs counter to highly adaptable traditional Kumiay lifestyles and language attitudes. In 2012, linguist Margaret Field summarized language attitudes among Kumiay as highly variable and accommodating to

variation. Traditionally, language variation was linked to clan (Shmulq) centered group identity, in which dialect variety represents very localized identities, rather than a broad Kumiay/Kumeyaay identity. Yet, as evidenced in contrasts between current ideologies towards language variation and those observed by Field, there has been a shift in language ideology in correlation with language loss. Returning to Hill's model, Hill proposes a reason for this difference in stance in its connection to access of scarce resources. In the preceding sections, it is evident that colonial dispossession and marginalization have impoverished Kumiay communities. Yet, there remains a question about how this links to language ideologies connected to discourses of authenticity or realness.

Returning to the language ideological assemblage thus far, language ideologies underpinning language revitalization discourses and purist language ideologies have entered local conversations about the Kumiay language. Language revitalization discourses influence language ideologies through the rhetoric of language life and death. As Agustín illustrates, this rhetoric can easily lend itself to catastrophism and abandonment of efforts to continue language use. Accompanying this are purist language ideologies, which have led to disuse via heightened attention to an imagined standard form. As recently as 2012, this language ideology has not been customary and can be indicative of a perceived scarcity of resources. As signified above in the judgement of authenticity of Yoli's language use (that includes neologisms), the language itself and/or claims to authenticity appear to be the scare resource. This is understandable, considering the observed effects that the concept of language death has had on discourses of revitalization and the bleak projection of the language into the future. A question that arises from this assemblage thus far is, considering the limited number of speakers, why appeal to a sense of realness or authenticity grounded in the past rather than in use of language in general?

Meek (2011) offers an insight into this question, which is the problem of enumeration. She argues that metrics of quantification that first seek fluent speakers, overlooking semi fluent speakers and more importantly, impose the idea of a single language. Thus, in this case, one consideration that creates a sense of scarcity is framing highly variable indigenous languages in framework applied to dominant (national), standard and homogenous languages. Returning to local experiences, Yoli offered another insight into the answer to this question one afternoon. as we drove down the winding dirt roads of Nejí, we discussed the various ranches and families that comprise las juntas de Nejí.

"Me enoja tanto cuando dicen que ya no están gentes indígenas in Baja California. Cuando me dijeron que el idioma estaba muriendo, empecé hablar con gentes de eso. Con más personas con que hablé me di cuenta de que estamos las mismas gentes. Creo que, si tuviéramos una gran reunión de todos los Kumiai, tendríamos miles de personas. Sería todo Tecate y muchos de Ensenada, Rosarito…Tijuana y del otro lado. Hay pocos hablantes, pero soy una y mientras que estoy viva seré activista y maestra."

[It makes me so angry when they say that there are not any more indigenous people in Baja California. When I heard the language was dying, I started to talk to people, the more people I talked to the more I realized that we were the same people. It would be all Tecate and many of Ensenada, Rosarito…Tijuana and the other side. There are few speakers, but I am one and as long as I am here, I will continue to be an activist and a teacher.]

There are several important features in her statement. First, she engages similar metaphorical literalization as Agustín, in which their lives are the life of the language, and it can

exist if they live. In her literalization, she is the protector and cultivator of the language. This contrasts with purist perspectives that express a relationship that separates the speaker from the language. Second, and more important for this discussion, is her reference to a discourse of disappearance to which her activism and expanded inclusivity of Kumiay identity is a response.

In speaking to individuals in their 30's, most recall learning in school that the Indigenous people in the region no longer existed. The effects of this narrative became clear in conversation with Eduardo about Hohenthal's extensive documentation of Kumiay communities from 1948, *Tipai ethnographic notes: A Baja California Indian community at Mid-century* (Hohenthal et.al, 2001)

"En este libro está todo, mis bisabuelos y sus padres estaban ahí, sus vidas… si no fuera por este libro, no sabría tanto como sé sobre los Kumiay y esta genealogía. En la escuela me enseñaron que ya no había indígenas en baja y los Kumiay ya no estaban."	[In this book there is everything, my great grandparents and their parents were in there, their lives…if it weren't for this book, I wouldn't know as much as I do about the Kumiay and this genealogy. I was taught in school that there weren't any more indigenous people in Baja and that the Kumiay weren't there anymore.]

He stated as he flipped through the book to find ancestors featured on his family tree. Eduardo's experience is part of an ongoing program of assimilation and erasure that has worked in tandem with histories of material dispossession and enclosure covered in the previous section. In addition to these settler colonial tactics, institutionalized discourses of indigenous disappearance sever lines of memory that are fading into the backfill of society as elders, such as Agustín, take their knowledge with them. The LIA in this section presents ideologies about the

language that are responses to these institutionalized discourses of language and identity. In the next section, I take a step back to explore the historical foundations of these discourses. This provides a foundation for a concluding discussion of contemporary expressions of Kumiay identity that challenge, revise and refuse colonial constraints of Indigeneity.

Nunca Avergonzaba Ser Kumiay [I Was Never Was Ashamed to Be Kumiay]: Progress Meets The Cosmic Race at The Frontier

"Ooo sí, yo hablaba Kumiay cuando era niña, gentes se enojaba con nosotros por hablar Kumiay en el pueblo, nos acosaban por ser inditos. Mi tía me enviaba a las tiendas porque ella no más hablaba Kumiay y yo hablo los dos. Había mucha discriminación antes, la gente no quería darnos trabajo si pensaban que éramos inditos tontos o rateros. Nunca me he avergonzaba de ser Kumiay. Es que las cosas eran diferentes en esos tiempos."	[I used to speak Kumiay when I was a little girl, people would get mad at us for speaking Kumiay in town, they would harass us for being backwards inditos (little Indians, a slur for Indigenous people). My aunt would send me into stores because she only spoke Kumiay, and I spoke both. There was a lot of discrimination back then, people did not want to give us jobs if they thought we were dumb or thieving inditos. I have never been ashamed of being Kumiay. Just things were different back then.]

Concluded Tía Chata, Eduardo's aunt who was raised in San José de Tecate, as she joined Eduardo and me in discussion about a picture of Kumiay women (Fig. 3) featured at the

beginning of *Delfina Cuero: Her Autobiography - An Account of Her Last Years and Her Ethnobotanic Contributions* by Florence Connolly Shipek (1991).

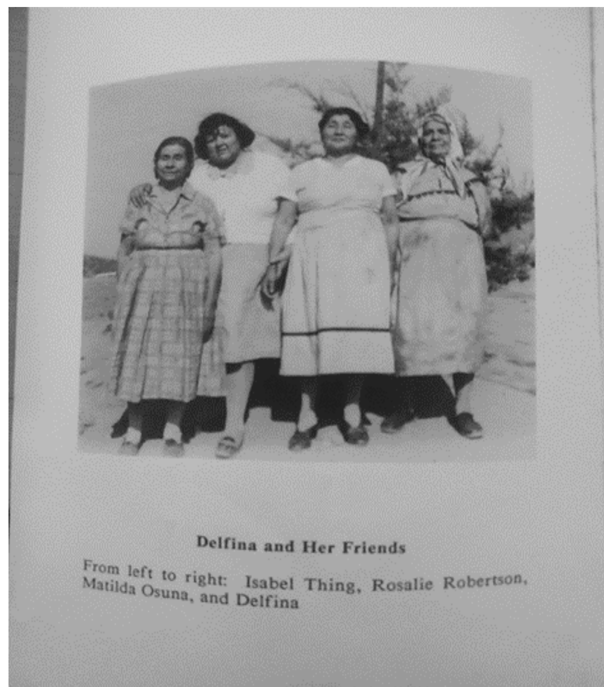

Figure 3. "Delfina and her friends" (Cuero & Shipek 1991)

Her narrative provides a firsthand experience of negative ideologies held against Indigenous people and language in the region. As exemplified in her narrative, public stigma led to practices of concealment, which pushed the domain of Kumiay language use into private domains. In this section I explore historical and sociocultural dimensions of negative language ideologies that influenced rapid language shift. I begin this exploration by discussing narratives of Indigenous disappearance. First, I present examples of these discourses of Indigenous disappearance in Baja featured in authoritative texts which expands critiques of expert rhetorics to sociopolitical contexts. This links to narratives that characterize the region as uninhabited, remote and primitive, echoing ideologies of the U.S. frontier; thus, highlighting the unique sociocultural environment of the region which is influenced by both the US and Mexico. From the narrative of Indigenous disappearance in the isolated frontier of Baja California, I rejoin the

topic of negative language ideologies and public stigma in a discussion of the ideology of mestizaje and national polices of integration in Mexico. I argue that the convergence of these historical processes of statecraft have, until recently, discursively erased the indigenous peoples of Baja Norte. To provide a greater context of this process, I engage Shaylih Muehlemann's work with the neighboring Indigenous Cucapá peoples of the Colorado river delta in the border region of the Mexican state of Sonora, which documents their contemporary struggles for recognition. In these struggles, recognition is dependent on state regimentations of Indigenous identity based on the performance of indigeneity indexed by speaking Indigenous languages or what is considered to be traditional customs. Yet, the majority of contemporary Kumiay and Cucapá do not qualify as Indigenous within these regimentations. This returns the discussion to discourses of identity and language ideologies within state regimentations of Indigeneity that Yoli's above response countered.

Narratives of disappearance and decline have been imposed on the indigenous peoples of Baja Norte for over a century. In 1908, Arthur W. North proclaimed in an article for American Anthropology: "The end of the Baja California Indians is near at hand" (241). In this statement, he refers to a biological end from the "imported evils" of warfare, diseases introduced by European invaders and a lack of "pure-blood Indians" (241). In addition, North based his estimates of decimation on the writings of early explorers and later mission records, which he compared to his estimate of thousands of "remnants." This prophetic tradition is continued in the 1994 authoritative anthropological text on Indigenous groups in the region, *En Donde Mete El Sol…* [Where the Sun Sets] by Everardo Garduño. As alluded to in the allegorical title, Garduño's thesis is the documentation of the "process of extinction" of the Indigenous people of Baja norte (21). Much of this work approaches Indigenous peoples of the region from a historical

perspective, documenting eras of colonization, genocide, and integration in a hypothesized process of extinction. Like North, much of the early histories included in his approach is based on the documentation of early explores and missionaries, which leads Garduño to echo the deficit-focused perspectives of North as he traces the metaphorical light of the peoples as it fades into darkness of non-existence.

This perspective echoes frontier ideologies that inspired U.S. expansionism at the turn of the 19th century. In his 1892 *Significance of the Frontier in American History*, Frederick Jackson Turner centered the frontier as "a distinguishing feature of American Life" (Turner 1893, 1). For Turner, the frontier represented the vanguard of societal evolution, "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" in which "European germs" become "a new product that is American" (3). As this newly evolved American crossed the landscape, Indigenous savagery was slated to disintegrate as it met civilization. This personifies the myth of "the vanishing Indian" which theorized an inevitable vanishing of Indigenous populations due to natural evolutionary law (Dippie 1982, 229). This social evolutionary framework positioned European civilization as the pinnacle of an evolutionary hierarchy from savagery to civilization. It was into this hierarchy that the architects of the emerging U.S. and Mexican nation-states narratively inserted themselves by creating national historiographies. These mytho-histories served to naturalize land theft and Indigenous genocide as part civilizational evolution that it was believed the emergent modern nations represented. Contrasting the legitimization of genocide in the American mytho-histories, post-revolutionary Mexican intelligentsia set forth on a project of genetic and cultural hybridization as a means to reach the civilizational vanguard.

In Mexico, social evolutionary theory inspired the racial construct of Mestizaje as the center piece of the emerging ideal of nationhood. In the post-revolution era of statecraft, leaders

sought ways to unite the factionalized populous by offering members of intellectuals of the time powerful platforms to push social engineering agendas. A strong voice to emerge from this era was the Columbia University educated Anthropologist and founder of the *Dirección de Anthropología* (Bureau of Anthropology), Manuel Gamio. From his position Gamio called for the cultivation of a national culture that promoted a homogenized ethnic identity (Lopez 2010). In his 1916 book, *Forjando patria,* Gamio urged for a break from Europhilia, which focused on ideals of ethnonational purism to embrace the Mestizo cultural composition of the country. A main component of his *Indigenista* position which, "celebrated the ancient Indian past as the source of the Mexican nation, but also connected living Indians to that past, and acclaimed them for the first time as an integral part of the modern nation" (Dawson 1998, 280). Yet, according to Gamio, Indigenous peoples of the time were in a deformed state of cultural evolution due to a history of resistance to Spanish colonialism (Lopez 2010, 132). Thus, the task of institutionalized intellectuals became the goal of *Indigenismo,* which aimed to accelerate the evolution of these cultures to achieve the modernization of Western culture in order for Indigenous inclusion into the modern Mexican nation (Lopez 2010, 132). Indigenismo positioned Indigenous cultures outside of modernity, yet recognized a potential that required a process acculturation through popular education into western ideals, while the state curated which aspects of local cultures were to be preserved and promoted. The institutionalization of indigenismo was entrusted to the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (Ministry of Public Education) or SEP under the leadership of José Vasconcelos. Vasconcelos' vision of Indigenismo radically differed from Gamio's cultural focus towards a racist vision that continued a perspective of retrograded Indigenous peoples in the promotion of Mestizaje as a fifth "cosmic" race. According to Vasconcelos, the spread of education would uplift the native out of their "wretched" state and lead to the desire of western

lifestyles and procreation between races. This produces the mestizo, positioned to inherit the "third period" of civilization, represented by the Mexican nation, as the expression the positive biological qualities of both the Native and the European (Vasconcelos 1997). From this view Vasconcelos outlined a process of spiritual acculturation that would enable social mobility towards an inevitable modern mestizo endpoint. Through this ideology, Vasconcelos oversaw the creation of a network of rural schools whose main objective was the assimilation of Indigenous communities. This network was later integrated into developmentalist policies of the mid to late 1930's that under the guidance of President Cardenas, sought to proletarianize Indigenous populations by "Mexicanizing the Indian" (Lewis 2018, 6). This initiated a material approach to assimilation that aimed to fix the environmental and cultural problems that created the "Indian problem." Under this directive, The *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (National Indigenist Institute) or INI was created to "manage cultural change related to agriculture, education, health care and the like" (Lewis 2018, 7). As part of their education programs, INI emphasized the importance of Spanish language literacy in programs of assimilation and development. To enact this, indigenous *promotores culturales* (cultural promoters) were hired and trained to introduce modernity to their communities and aid teachers of transitional bilingual courses that transitioned students from their native languages to Spanish (Lewis 2018). This led to the exponential decline in the use indigenous languages and cultural practices within a few generations. It was not until the 1970s that critical anthropologists denounced INI policies as "cultural oppression" which shifted INIs policies towards cultural recognition (Jung 2009). Yet, within these policies of recognition, definition of Indigenous peoples hinges on the articulations of markers of indigeneity, mainly indigenous language use and traditional customs.

This contention is the central focus of Shaylih Muehlemann's 2013 work, *Where the River Ends*, with neighbors of the Kumiay, the Cucapá peoples of the Colorado River Delta. In this work, Muehlemann explores Cucapá struggles for state recognition. Like the Kumiay, the Cucapá are the southern population of the bi-national Cucapá/Cocopah peoples, whose ancestral lands span across the border along the Colorado river. In the sociocultural environment of the California/Baja shared by the Kumiay the Cucapá have abandoned practices that the state would recognize as Indigenous. This has rendered them invisible in their struggle to secure fishing rights in their ancestral waters as state recognition of Indigenous status hinges on the performance of traditional language and culture. Thus, from the legacy of Indigenismo based policies in Mexico, the Cucapá are delegitimized in governmental constructs of indigenous recognition due to previous policies of assimilation. This legislative shift contributes to further erasure of contemporary Indigenous peoples through legal regimentations of Indigeneity based in an ideology of traditionalism. Thus, linking language ideological shifts towards stances based in scarcity surrounding discourses of authenticity. In that the maintenance and control of what is perceived to be traditional is the maintenance of access to recognition.

Mulhemann's example of the Cucapá illustrates the appearance of indigenous disappearance via history of assimilation in conjunction with parameters of state recognition that erases a history of cultural oppression. This returns the discussion to the main point of Yoli's statement, in which the issue is not the disappearance of Kumiay people but rather the state's inability to recognize those who do not fit into a modern/traditional model of indigenous. This fits into the model of indigenous extinction that Garduño sought to document. Yet, in the closing section of his book, he ends with questions based on statistical anomalies in census data. These anomalies document a drastic decline in Indigenous population of Baja the past 50 years.

According to census data, populations of indigenous communities in Baja declined by more than 50% during this period (341). In reviewing birth/death records and interviews, he comes to the conclusion that this may not be a biological "extinction," but a social issue of recognition and internal migration (351). Thus, as Yolí points out and Garduño realizes, there are countless Kumiay individuals and potential speakers in the region that have largely gone unaccounted for or included in the category of Indigenous.

In this section I explored the sociocultural underpinnings of language loss that contribute to the language ideologies assembled in the preceding section. In addition to these language ideologies are negative public ideologies of indigenous peoples and their language, which drove Kumiay language use into private domains. Following this to national racial ideologies based in social evolution, I have foregrounded the narrative justification of the colonization of the continent. With the change of social consciousness, polices have been enacted to grant rights to indigenous groups. Yet, decades of institutional assimilation have rendered a vast majority of Indigenous peoples in the region invisible as they have been stripped of their language and culture. In the next section, I explore Kumiay modes of identification that challenge state regimentations of Indigeneity, as well as responses to these regimentations that promote inclusive reconnection.

Esas Cosa Indios [Those Indian things]: Reconfiguration, Refusals and Renewals of Kumiay Identity

"Antes trabajamos desde joven, he trabajado toda mi vida en estas montañas. Cuando era muy joven, siempre trabajaba con mi abuelo en la montaña, era un buen vaquero y un Kumiay muy tradicional. Me enseñó todo, la lengua, las plantas, las historias ..."

[In the past we worked for when we were young, I have worked my whole life in these mountains. When I was very young, I always worked with my grandfather, he was a good cowboy and a very traditional Kumiay. He taught me everything, the language (tongue), the plants, the stories (or history)

recounted Augustín as we reviewed place names of Cañon de los Encinos/ San Antonio Ñecua from our viewpoint. In his narration, he fuses Kumiay identity to both acculturated profession and traditional knowledge. At the age of 73 he is still a vaquero [cowboy] from a lineage of vaqueros and is one of few male fluent bilingual speakers of total speakers and one of an estimated 3 speakers in town. From his perspective, life as a vaquero, apprenticing under his grandfather is his link to traditional Kumiay language and culture. Even though this expression of traditional identity is valid in that the Kumiay have a vaquero tradition from the introduction of ranching to the area, which, for Agustín has served as a mode of cultural/linguistic transmission, it does not fit into state regimentations of Indigenous practices. This introduces the focus of this section, which discusses local modes of identity formation that contradict, contest and outright refuse state-imposed regimentations of Indigenous identity. I begin this by returning to Agustín's above statement to engage Rivera-Cusicanqui's concept of *ch'ixi* (2010). Ch'ixi

recognizes fluid constructs of Indigeneity that reflect an ongoing process of Indigenous adaptation to colonial conditions. In this process, alternative discursive modalities of identification replace state models of Indigenous identity locally. From this engagement of *chi'ixi,* I then return to discourses of authenticity presented in the LIA to discuss Kumiay practices of identity formation based on relationship to kin network and land. This moves the discussion to Kumiay language ideologies that reframe repairing these relationships as a major component of language revitalization. I conclude with a discussion of the work beginning at San José de Tecate that fosters reconnection and inclusion to Kumiay identity via a territoriality of kinship.

Agustín's statement confounds stereotypical wild-west social roles, in which the cowboy and the Indian were archenemies. Rather, his understanding of Kumiay identity embodies Riveria-Cusicanqui's concept of *chi'ixi,* which "combines the Indian world and its opposite without ever mixing them" (2010,105). More importantly, emphasizing a dialectical interplay between seemingly opposing forces by "assum[ing] a double and contentious ancestry" (106). Thus, in this expression of identity, traditional modes of knowledge/language transmission adapt to imposed colonial structures, which for Agustín holds no contradiction. Yet, in the modern/traditional binary of state recognition this holds little authentic value.

For some, this binary and heightened interest in traditional practices contradicts their lived experience as Kumiay individuals in traditional Kumiay communities on ancestral lands. This came to my attention in conversation with one of Yoli's nephews from Juntas de Nejí as we unloaded wood for the all-night bonfire ceremony for Oscar and talked about Mount Peña Blanca.

"Es lejos para escalar la peña?"

[Is it far to climb the [Mount Peña Blanca]?

I asked looking towards Peña Blanca to the north. He stopped to sip his beer and look up towards the peak that was now glowing in the last rays of sunlight before responding,

"No parece lejos, pero si caminas desde este lado, hay un cañón que cruzas sólo para llegar a la montaña. Pero si vas del otro lado es…. No es lejos, unas horas, medio día."

[It doesn't look far, but if you walk from this side, there is a canyon that you cross just to go to the mountain. But if you go to the other side, it's…it's not far, a couple of hours, a half day.]

He said tracing he route with his index finger.

"¿Has acampado allí?"

[Have you camped there?]

I asked pointing towards the rocky crest of light granite, for which the mountain was named, to which he responded,

"Yo no, pero gente suben a la peña para hacer ceremonias que duran toda la noche. Antes mi nana llevaba algunos a buscar visiones allí."

[I haven't, but people go up the mountain to do ceremonies that go all night. My grandmother used to take some to vision quest there.]

With piqued interest, I asked,

"ha hecho eso?"

[Have you done that?]

"No. Sólo me gusta subir a las montañas. No necesito hacer esas cosas de indios. Ya soy Kumiay, vivo aquí."

[No, I just like to climb the mountains. I don't need to do those Indian things. I'm already Kumiay, I live here.]

he responded and lit a cigarette.

“Nunca quisiste?”

[You never wanted to?]

I asked.

“Esas son las cosas antiguas. Esas cosas no nos hacen Kumiay. Esta tierra nos hace Kumiay, la familia nos hace Kumiay. Dicen que estamos desapareciendo, pero yo sigo aquí, mi familia sigue aquí, ¿cómo no vamos a ser Kumiay?”

[Those are the old things; those things don’t make us Kumiay. This land makes us Kumiay, family makes us Kumiay. They say that we are disappearing, but I continue here, my family continues. How are we not going to be Kumiay?]

He asked, pulling up his baseball cap. In his understanding of what it means to be Kumiay, he refuses dominant regimentations of Indigenous identity. In his refusal, he challenges dominant regimentations of Indigeneity with his lived experience. By discursively separating Kumiayness from, “esas cosas indios” [those Indian things], he signifies an understanding of the ideological construct of “indigenous” and its expected performance. Yet, his stance foregrounds relationships to kin and place as Kumiayness rather than the imagined “traditional” Kumiay.

This returns the conversation to Ángel’s process of language reclamation based on community and land featured in section two. As taught in Yoli’s class, traditional greetings in Kumiay consisted of a highly structured presentation of oneself, that begin by naming the speaker’s clan, which is followed by where the speaker has arrived from and finished with their clan’s home. In the loss of this structure via current trends of language loss, discourses of identification perform similar functions of identification. This is evident in current discursive practices of identification that initiated with the question of “what family do you come from?”, which usually begins an exchange of the names of relatives, living and dead, paired with places

of origin or habitation. Once a connection is made between shared kin network, this conversation often opens the floor to stories relating to the person or place that signifies the mutual recognition of discussants relation to each other. In this cross section of naming, shared knowledge of kin-network establishes one's identity. Over time, the repetition of this practice accumulates a deep knowledge of this assemblage of identities, which was displayed by elders who could often recall people and their associated places across multiple generations in specific places across times.

Along with transmission of the language, the transmission of kinship knowledge has been disrupted by land dispossession. Previous generational migration out of communities has stripped much of the younger generation's relationships to, and knowledge of kin networks and ancestral territories. In an effort to repair this relationship, Eduardo started a project to visually map out his kin network in the form of a family tree. In his construction of this genealogy, he has gathered stories from both relatives and ethnographic texts, such as Hohenthal's, to entextualize his relationality to an extended kin network and their historical origins (Hohenthal, et. al 2001). From this work, he has gained a form of knowledge that would have been acquired in discursive repetition of self-identification. In this process, he reconnected to his extended kin/clan network of the Mishkwish/ Meza lineage that includes Yoli and her family, as well as the growing community of San José de Tecate.

At the time of this writing, the community of San José de Tecate is beginning the process of renewal, following the loss of the matriarch of the family. Doña Julia was the sole title holder of the land and one of two remaining regular residents and following her death, surrounding landowners emerged with documents alleging legal ownership of the land. Unbeknownst to them, she had anticipated their transgressions, as it had been a constant pressure that she held

back by occupying the land for much of her life, with her daughter, Thelma. On her death bed, she transferred the land from single ownership to community ownership. In this move, she also set a traditional mode of leadership by appointing her daughter, Thelma, as the *Kwasiai* or traditional leader and her niece Diana, a resident of Tijuana, as the *Kwaipai or* political/clan leader (Conolly-Mishkwish 2006). During her final days, Doña Julia gave them her vision for the community, in which the people returned to the land where family, language and traditional knowledge would join them. With this vision meticulously laid out for them, the newly appointed leaders invited family members, from across a vast kin network, to return to live on the land to caretake parcels offered to them. In this return there is a framework of language revitalization that hinges on maintaining a land base for community.

The case of San José de Tecate once again returns to Yoli's inclusive perspective of Indigenous identity, as kinship-based modes of identity represent individuals' rights to the land. This also returns to this discussion of the shared struggle against land dispossession experienced across Kumiay communities in Baja. Regarding this last point, Doña Julia's vision initiated an intervention to this condition through land occupation and tenure. The invitation to return extended throughout her kin network and attracted individuals living in the cities of the region. The majority of those gathered for the initial meeting following the invitation were the children of parents who had grown up in San José de Tecate and elders of that generation who had left the area long ago. All individuals in the first group are parents, who have found in the invitation a possibility of escaping the uncertainties of raising children and constant economic struggle in cities. In a sense, this opportunity has offered an escape from the conditions that earlier generations sought in their moves to escape the poverty of traditional communities. In this moment of return, four generations gathered under the massive oak trees under which

generations had gathered throughout time. Central to this return is not necessarily the return to a revitalization of 'esas cosas indio', as few elders have knowledge of such things due to spending much of their life away from traditional communites. Rather, the land is the space for reconnecting kin relationships across generations. Future plans for the community, as outlined by Doña Julia, includes the construction of a community center to provide space for ceremonies and cultural gatherings. More importantly, a place where Thelma, who is a native speaker of the language and Spanish/English trilingual, can offer language classes to the gathering generations. It is in this reconnection and community building that language and cultural revitalization is a sustainable possibility.

Recogiendo su Cabello y Uñas [Recollecting Its Hair and Nails]: Conlusions, Tradition and Futurity

"Juntamos para llamar la vuelta del espíritu del joven que falleció. Creemos que por más de un ano el espíritu ha estado viajando por la tierra, visitando a la familia y sus lugares favoritos, recogiendo su cabello y uñas. Ahora estamos llamando ese espíritu aquí con familia y conocidos, para que se vaya de este mundo y ir a su nueva forma."

[We are gathered to call back the spirit of the youth that died. We believe that for more than a year the spirit has been travelling the land, visiting family and its favorite places, collecting its hair and nails. Now we are calling the spirit here with faimily and those that they know, so it can leave this world and go to its new form.]

Yoli explained to the family and friends gathered for the ceremony of *el lloro*[3] for Oscar Eyraud Adams. Her explanation of the process of return, recollection, and reconstitution for the passage of the spirit resonated with the multiple voices that I had encountered during my first summer of fieldwork. Like the spirit returning to places of meaning to reconstitute self in preparation for its next phase, the people who have contributed to this research are following a similar process of recovery and transformation in language work and discourses of identity. Much of this work is in response to wider social discourses, based in colonial mytho-narratives, that have discursively erased the Indigenous peoples of the region. As part of this erasure, language ideologies introduced via expert rhetorics have shifted local language ideologies, which recognized and celebrated variation, towards an ideology of a single standard form of the language. In this process of recollection and reconstitution, local constructs of Kumiay identity have adapted to changing social conditions and has inspired a new understanding of Kumiayness based as relatedness to kin and territory. In this recognition, projects such as the renewal of San José de Tecate, foster further reconnection to kin networks in a manner that confronts cultural loss on the grounds of land defense and kinship. From these conclusions, I propose an intervention to the idea of language revitalization that begins with an assessment of sociocultural and political contexts in which communities of speakers are embedded. This would bring potential researchers to the understanding of a communities' lived experiences in a manner that foregrounds and reproduces local ideologies in language revitalization discourse. This, in turn, has the potential to develop programs on the communities' terms that move beyond a language-focused approach. This shifts the focus of research trajectories from a quantification of speakers to an inquiry into where potential speakers are and why they have become disconnected. From

Further description of this ceremony is not needed for the purposes of this work for detailed descriptions of this ceremony, see: (Davis, 1921; Woodward, 1968)

this intervention, the efforts of language revitalization can respond to social, historical, and economic conditions that drive language loss. The voiced acceptance of language death, as featured in this thesis, clearly state that language revitalization efforts can negatively affect the communities and outcomes of projects by projecting a local situation into a global phenomenon and are futile without first recognizing and responding to these conditions in the coproduction of projects. I am not proposing a complete shift from academic work to one of activism by researchers interacting with communities, but a collaborative approach in support of community work that is outside of the structures of language revitalization discourses.

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