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The Yo'eme Language:
The Legacy of Our Ancestors,
More Than Just a Form of Communication.

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in American Indian Studies

by

Cesar Alfredo Barreras

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Master of Arts in American Indian Studies

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Professor Paul V. Kroskirty, Chair

In this thesis, I explore Yo'eme identity, culture, language, revitalization activities, and language ideological impacts accomplished in the early stages of the ongoing Yo'eme Language Projects. In section one, I provide background on Yo'eme communities, the language, and the scholarship devoted to the defense and documentation of Yo'eme Language and Culture. In section two, I look at the formation of the Yo'eme Language Project and the ongoing development of a Yo'eme language dictionary including the need for it, its content, and intended ideological impact. In section three, I examine the elaboration of a Yo'eme Language and Culture Board Game, its content, purpose, ideological implications, and ongoing application both in and outside of the classroom. In my conclusion, I discuss the importance of these two ongoing projects as ideological contributions to language preservation efforts and Yo'eme cultural sovereignty as well as further plans and developments for both these language revitalization projects.

The thesis of Cesar Barreras is approved.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my grandparents (Antonia and Isidoro, Cesar and Rosalva), my parents (Cesar and Maria), and my siblings (Jerry, Kazy, and Kendra). Thank you for loving, raising, and teaching me the culture and tradition of my people. Without your passion for storytelling, language advocacy, and resistance to adversity I would not exist today. Above all I would like to dedicate my ongoing work and future work to my *Havoi* (Grandfather), Cesar Katatu'i Barreras Quintanilla, who unfortunately lost his battle December 2, 2020. Our community has lost a traditional storyteller, language advocate, but most importantly a great man. My grandfather's teachings and legacy will remain with me and will continue to be a source of strength in the future.

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support allowed me to engage in field research and present my research at various conferences and meetings.

Literature Review: Language Ideologies

The work produced in this thesis is heavily influenced by research, scholarship and theoretical orientations in linguistic anthropology especially the school of thought known as language ideology (Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998) or language ideologies (Kroskrity 2000). This approach emerged in the last quarter of the 20th C. as a way to add elements that were lacking in both Linguistics and Linguistic Anthropology. Foundational notions of language ideology date back to linguistic anthropologist Michael Silverstein's description of linguistic ideology as "any sets of beliefs about language structure and use" (Silverstein 1979:193). He demonstrated the failure of Linguistics to recognize how speakers' awareness of their language had influenced actual language change and therefore needed to be seen as a new and necessary level of analysis.

In 1989, linguistic anthropologist Judith Irvine gave the term 'language ideology' a more sociocultural emphasis. She defined it as "the cultural (or subcultural) systems of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine 1989:255). Also, in 1989, linguistic anthropologist Susan Gal furthered research on 'language ideology' by theorizing the term as a set of ideas differentiated between speakers and their different political economy positionalities. These scholars were attempting to emphasize the long-neglected topic of the role of language and its value in political economic activities. Most scholarship on language had represented its connection to the thought worlds of speakers rather than to their material worlds. Linguistic anthropologists Kathryn Woolard and Bambi Schieffelin described the mediating function of language ideology as a "bridge between linguistic and social theory" (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994:72). Additionally, Woolard

described language ideology as "representations whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (Woolard 1998:3).

Extending language ideological theory to the complex situations of Native American language communities that were experiencing both language shift to English and movements to revitalize heritage languages, Kroskrity identified language ideologies as a cluster concept that was best studied by attending to the interaction and contestation of multiple ideologies (Kroskrity 2004). Language ideologies, as a cluster concept, included: 1) group or individual interests, 2) multiplicity of ideologies, 3) awareness of speakers, 4) mediating functions of ideologies, and 5) the role of language ideology in identity construction" (Kroskrity 2004:503). Kroskrity mentioned how sociocultural groups could assemble divergent perspectives, which manifest as indicators of group membership; hence language ideologies are grounded in social experience (2004:503). Additionally, Kroskrity articulated how language ideologies can be "embodied in communicative practice" (2004:496) and how they provide resources for the production of a national, ethnic, and other social identities (2004:509).

The Yo'eme community, like all Indigenous Nations, has experienced irreversible changes as a direct result of European contact. For the Yo'eme people, resistance to assimilation and the settler state's imposed policies have become vital elements of their sovereignty, both cultural and political. This thesis's title and content are designed to indicate the essential role the Yo'eme language carries as a cultural resource and genesis of Yo'eme identity. Thus, allowing its people to adapt, survive, and re-Indigenize themselves through the reflowering of cultural practices in response to the ever-evolving political and socioeconomic patterns.

Language Endangerment and Critical Language Documentation

Today represents the utmost critical time for Yo'eme communities to preserve and revitalize their heritage language (Hinton 2017). Unfortunately, for the Yo'eme communities living in the US, the disconnect between the older generation and the youth is reinforced by the average age of a Yo'eme language speaker soaring over 65 (Amour and Haley 2016). According to linguist Michael Krause's (1992) Typology of Endangered Languages, the Yo'eme language falls under the category of definitively endangered. In direct response to Indigenous languages' dire conditions, more attention has shifted to the crucial need for critical language documentation of endangered languages.

In the article, "Expert Rhetorics" in Advocacy for Endangered Languages: "Who Is Listening and What Do They Hear," Jane Hill assessed and critiqued three rhetorics (hyperbolic valorization, enumeration, and universal ownership) as obstacles facing linguistic and anthropological research of endangered languages. Hill identified the three rhetorics as problematic when researching and documenting endangered languages. She began by describing the rhetoric of 'universal ownership' as one which raises distrust in Indigenous communities. Hill argued that describing an Indigenous language as 'belonging' to the world can make communities feel threatened by the possibility that their language and knowledge appear to be for exportation outside of their Native community. She then went onto describe the language used in hyperbolic valorization as damaging rhetoric. The use of hyperbolic language such as 'priceless' and 'treasure' to describe an endangered language raises an ideology which implies that the usage and understanding of the language are reserved for 'elite' settings in which ordinary speakers get excluded. Furthermore, hyperbolic valorization tends to dismiss Indigenous communities understanding and appreciation for the language's connection to "intergenerational ties, cultural identity, community well-being, and linguistic rights" (Hinton

2017:24). Lastly, Hill described language enumeration as a potential dominant language ideology that asserts authority over local definitions of what a speaker is.

As an alternative to these potential damaging rhetorics, Hill mentioned, “It would be especially useful to work with speakers to show how these (linguistic) properties of (endangered languages) capture (the ‘genius’ of ordinary people described as) unique local understandings of the world that are deeply embedded in a way of life” (Hill 2002:129). By analyzing Hill’s assessment of endangered language rhetorics, we can use this awareness of these often overlooked themes to improve Yo’eme language research by including local language ideologies of Yo’eme people expressed as beliefs and feelings towards the language.

As an endangered language, Yo’eme, like all other Indigenous languages, has been neglected by researchers for quite some time. A clear example of neglect is noticeable by the continued dismissal of the Indigenous community’s ‘beliefs and feelings’ about their language. Thus, prior to advances in linguistics and anthropology by the application of language ideological theory, many of these Indigenous beliefs and feelings were considered irrelevant data in a linguistic analysis (Field and Kroskrity 2009). Such neglect has furthered the language shift experienced by Yo’eme people. One of the resources most needed by Indigenous communities to breach the gap between language shift and language revitalization is successful critical language documentation manifested through the designing and making of dictionaries (Frawley, Hill, and Munro 2002).

Therefore, successful critical language documentation practices require a renegotiation of notions about language documentation and hence the creation of ideologically informed dictionaries (Kroskrity 2015). As Kroskrity has suggested, these practices require attention to both the researcher and the community members’ language ideologies to expand Native

lexicographical material and honor indigenous notions of cultural knowledge (Kroskrity 2015:142). For critical language documentation to successfully take into account community language ideologies and protocols, it must take into account whether there is an influence of both internal and external secrecy and exclusion from both Indigenous and non-indigenous publics as two factors fundamentally essential for the upkeep of cultural and religious structures within an indigenous community (Debenport 2015 and 2010).

Language Revitalization as a Decolonial Project

Complementing these research advances in anthropology and linguistics are enduring interest in American Indian studies on decolonization, indigenization, self-determination, and cultural sovereignty. By examining works that focus on language renewal and decolonization, a path to combat undermining and historically oppressive dominant language ideologies is paved. Thus, they highlight what Native American anthropologist Tiffany Lee has identified as ‘critical Indigenous consciousness’ (Lee 2014:145). Critical Indigenous consciousness as an ideological intervention attempts to instill in heritage language learners a responsibility and awareness of colonial intrusion’s historical relevance (Lee 2014).

Given the level of severity with which language shift has impacted most Indigenous communities, the situation for Yoeme, and most other Native American languages is critically in need of an intervention. As a result, combating language shift has become a vital necessity of language advocacy. American Indian scholar and linguist Wesley Leonard argues that language advocacy should be described as “language reclamation” (Leonard, 2008). ‘Language reclamation’ is a direct effort to relinquish the unfavorable stigma surrounding the status placed on Native American languages (Myaamia language) by language shift. Labels such as “disappearing,” “vanishing,” or “becoming extinct” have taken away agency and authority from

language advocacy efforts. Furthermore, Myaamia language advocate Daryl Baldwin describes ‘language reclamation’ as a community-wide effort to achieve “community-building and healing from the past” (Baldwin 2003:15). Thus, using language “reclamation” (Leonard, 2008) as a source of empowerment can help reverse what Maliseet Native scholar Bernard Perley has described as a “pattern of neglect” towards heritage languages (Perley, 2011: 4). By adding decolonization methodologies to ideologically informed language revitalization efforts, ‘language reclamation’ practices become anti-colonial projects, and, in essence, these practices pioneered indigenization methodologies essential for cultural sovereignty.

Part One:

Introduction: *Hume Yo'eme* (Those Who Follow the Ancestral Path)

In 1969, American Indian scholar Vine Deloria Jr. gave prominence to the term “Tribal Sovereignty.” Deloria emphasized, “to the degree that a tribal nation loses its sense of cultural identity, to that degree it suffers a loss of sovereignty” (Deloria 1969). This is consistent with what Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Native scholar Duane Champagne has described as Indigenous sovereignty. Champagne reasoned that an emphasis on the continuation of Indigenous languages is essential to the renewal of culture, community, identity, and political autonomy while maintaining a holistic interrelation of “social, environmental, and cultural ways of life” (Champagne 2015:6). Deloria’s and Champagne’s words thus highlight how the power of Yo’eme political sovereignty lies in its cultural sovereignty (Coffey and Tsosie 2001) including linguistic sovereignty. Linguistic and Cultural sovereignty for Yo’eme is a truth as ancient as time, which predates the Spanish and later the Mexican colonization of *Yo'em Bwian* (Yo’eme homeland). The territory stretches across the Sonoran Desert in Southern Arizona and Northern Sonora Mexico (Spicer 1980). Linguistic and Cultural sovereignty, defined for us Yo’eme, is the inalienable right to use and access our traditions, values, cosmology, and language to honor the past, secure the present, and protect the future. It by far supersedes legal sovereignty, because it is a decision to be Yo’eme, to live Yo’eme, and to protect the Yo’eme way of life through our everyday actions.

In the following thesis, based on my experiences as a member of the Yo’eme community, I will describe the progress achieved in my work on the Yo’eme Language Project (YLP). The YLP is an effort to reclaim the Yo’eme Language through a bilingual Yo’eme dictionary and a cultural board game. I hope that these two Yo’eme language revitalization products will be used

by Yo'eme people anywhere while keeping in mind the Yo'eme communities in Arizona: Barrio Libre, Eskotel-Scottsdale, Eloy, Guadalupe, New Pascua, Nogales, Old Pascua, Pascua-Pueblo, Penhamo, Phoenix, Red Rock, Se Chophoi, Somerton, Tucson, Yo'eme Pueblo-Marana, and Yuma. As well as the Yo'eme communities in Fresno, California and those in Lubbock, Texas.

Although the language materials are designed for English-speaking Yo'eme, Spanish-speaking Yo'eme living in the Eight Pueblo/Ocho Pueblos (*Go'i-Naiki Pueplom*) and nearby villages of the *Hiak Vatwe* (Rio Yaqui) Sonoran communities can also benefit from the linguistic and cultural content found within the two projects. With this in mind, there is much work to be done, but for the near future, trilingual material will be designed to better assess the needs of Yo'eme people both in the United States and in Mexico. Essentially, the aim of the YLP is to create linguistic and cultural documentation and revitalization resources for generations to come in order to assist Yo'eme in their defense of Tribal, political and cultural sovereignty.

Grassroot foundations: The Yo'eme Language Project

My interest in the Yo'eme language and culture began at an early age. From infancy, I grew up in the lap of my grandparents hearing traditional stories and fascinating anecdotes in the heritage language. My grandparents emphasized that speaking and teaching Yo'eme language is a part of asserting our existence as Native to the land. Among the many things I learned from my grandparents and parents, the love and responsibility to my culture, language, and people have endured in my character. These teachings have influenced my education, my aspirations, and my sense of responsibility. My childhood foundations gave rise to the formation of the Yo'eme language project.

The Yo'eme Language Project's formation came as a result of language shift in my community and home. The project roots date back to my childhood. However, the official

working collaboration of the project did not begin until 2015. By 2013, I had started teaching the Yo'eme language online via Facebook and YouTube platforms. By 2016, my father and I started developing a culture and language board game to assess the linguistic needs of our family. After testing the under-construction product at our family table, we decided to implement it in my language classes taught at the Tribal TANF in Monterrey Park, CA. The beta-testing findings revealed the need for a comprehensive and easy to use Yo'eme language dictionary. Thus, in 2018 my sister and I began a collaboration to consult and verify lexicographic materials to create a Yo'eme bilingual dictionary. I have worked and continue to work with Elder Guadalupe Valenzuela (Fresno, California) and language advocate Domitila Molina (Potam, Rio Yaqui, Sonora), with whom I share the passion for language advocacy. Elder Guadalupe has been the authority of Yo'eme language revitalization in Fresno, California, for the past three decades. Language and cultural expert Domi Molina has been the lead teacher of language and culture at Potam's Centros de Cultura Yaqui for the past decade. I am humbled to follow in the footsteps of *Yo'eme Maalam* (matriarchs) like Guadalupe and Domi.

Yo'em Noki (the Yo'eme Language)

Yo'eme is a language spoken by the Yo'eme people of Southern Arizona and Northern Sonora, Mexico. In Sonora, Mexico there are approximately 10,000 Yo'eme heritage language speakers. The number of active speakers in the Arizona region numbers less than a hundred (Amour and Harley 2016; INAH 2015). As a result, linguistic anthropologist Michael Krauss's (1992) "*typology of endangered languages*", categorizes the Yo'eme language as "definitively endangered."

The word 'Yo'eme': properly pronounced with a glottal stop and phonologically spelled (Yo'eme), is the word by which the autochthonous *Hiak Vatwe* people (Rio Yaqui) name and

recognize themselves. The origin of the word Yo'eme, stems from the roots Yo'o (ancient) and eme'e (the ones): indicating the ones who follow the ancestral path. It is appropriate that the word Yo'eme is phonologically spelled in order to display the morphology that reveal its cultural meaning and to serve as a phonological guide for heritage language learners. Anthropologist Edward Spicer best stated this by emphasizing how the significance of the word "Yo'eme" as explained to him by Yo'eme people, meant more than just an implied reference to 'the people.' Spicer mentioned, "The use of the term Yo'eme implied as intertwined elements of meaning the inclusion of all who understood it fully, the exclusion of all who did not, and the attribution of a special, most-valued quality to those included" (Spicer 1980: 306).

This definition is consistent with the connotation of exclusion shown towards Yo'eme people who aren't able to speak the heritage language. As a result, meaning and cultural association of the name Yo'eme has historically been hidden from non-speakers and used only by language speakers while speaking the Yo'eme language with other speakers (Spicer 1980). These Yo'eme ideals of compartmentalization, are indicative of an exclusion of knowledge which has historically been necessary to preserve the maintenance of religious continuity and defense of territory as undertaken by Yo'eme: those protecting and 'following the ancestral path' (Barreras unpublished).

These language ideologies have been historically reinforced by community members as a reflection of what linguistic anthropologist Erin Debenport has described as secrecy. Debenport has determined that secrecy is dependent on a "measure of shared knowledge to communicate the significance of limited information" (Debenport 2015:7). Essentially, as the title of this thesis indicates, the significance of the word Yo'eme expands beyond the definition "the people" or the name for the language. It is by significance more than just a form of communication, it is the

legacy of our ancestors and how we uphold that legacy is an indication of our being Yo'eme by living Yo'eme.

In modern times, the shift in Arizona Yo'eme to self-identify as Yaqui instead of Yo'eme is indicative of language shift (Spicer 1980). Additionally, it represents a historically reinforced language ideology of purism by exclusion. Debenport characterizes this exclusion as a community protocol to regulate audience participation in the maintenance of the New Mexican Indigenous language she was studying, Keiwa, where language is asserted to be secret to correctly uphold cultural and religious structure (Debenport 2017:131). Historically, Yo'eme language learners and non-speakers have been limited to minimal inclusion of Yo'eme cultural practices and understanding of traditional knowledge, furthering the gap between Yo'eme language and culture acquisition. It is of primary importance to allow for all Yo'eme people to come to an understanding of the meaning and responsibility that comes with carrying the name Yo'eme. Understanding and acknowledging these underlining principles will allow for Yo'eme people to reclaim the Yo'eme language not just as a birthright but as a responsibility needed to fulfill the obligation of being Yo'eme. As a result, I have deemed appropriate to include in this thesis and in the ongoing language revitalization products (dictionary and board game), the definition and spelling of the word and name Yo'eme as based on its original root formation and pronunciation (Yo'o—eme'e).

Furthermore, it is important to analyze the term Yaqui or *Hiaki* meaning “powerful sound and or those who speak with authority” (Barreras unpublished), as existing prior to the arrival of Spanish explorers. Yaqui has historically been utilized by neighboring nations to name and describe the Yo'eme. This historical term used by neighboring tribal nations was later adopted by Spanish authorities as a formal way of identifying the Yo'eme (Spicer 1980). Another name

by which the Yo’eme have been associated is *Cahita* meaning ‘there is none.’ Such term is historically used to differentiate the Yo’eme from its immediate neighbors as being completely different both culturally and linguistically (Perez de Ribas 1944; Buelna 1890). *Yo’em Lutu’uria* and or *Hi’ak Lutu’uria* is the term Yo’eme people use when they want to account for experiences which are encoded in their cultural knowledge (cultural/ancestral and contemporary). The term also relates to the knowledge accumulated in unchanging linguistic and cultural state as passed down from Creator (*Itom Acha’I Taa’a*) and the Ancestors (*Itom Yo’owem*.) Understanding this binomial relationship will allow for a proper illustration of how the Yo’eme language and culture have become two of the essential axes for understanding the Yo’eme World View.

Despite the vast territory which Uto-Aztecan languages occupy, it is relatively easy to observe similarities between the lexical items of other Uto-Aztecan languages and Yo’eme. A prime example of shared cognate vocabulary occurs among the languages of the Kitanemuk, Hopi, Shoshone, Tarahumara, and Yo’eme. For speakers of any of these five languages, the similarities are obvious (See Figure 1 on page 23).

Figure 1. Some Cognates in Uto-Aztecan Languages (after Fernandez 2010).

Word	Kitanemuk	Hopi	Shoshone	Tarahumara	Yoeme
Uncle	taha	taha’at	atapu	raté	taat (youngest uncle)
Teeth	tama:c	tama’at	taman	ramé	Tamim
Molar	tuh	tos-	Tusu’’	rusú	Tuuse
Urinate	ši’	sisiwku	sii’’	--	Siise

Cold, to cool	šip-ik	susungwa	si'' 'cold'	sipí	seve
Peal	šipk	sihpa	-sipeh	sipá	siiva

Apart from this brief illustration, a more detailed analysis of similarities among Uto-Aztecan languages and Yo'eme is outside the scope of this thesis. In order to gain a better understanding of the similarities between the lexicons of Uto-Aztecan languages and Yo'eme, interested readers should, consult dictionaries of Uto-Aztecan languages such as the *Hopi Dictionary* produced by The Hopi Dictionary Project (Emory Sekaquaptewa 1998) and *The Tarahumara-Castellano Dictionary* by David Brambila (1976).

Yo'eme Language in the Age of Colonial Contact

The Yo'eme people have been in a long struggle to preserve their traditional territory and ways of life ever since the arrival of Spanish colonizers to the *Hiak Vatwe* (Rio Yaqui.) As it is documented in both oral and written accounts, the first Spanish expedition arrived at the banks of the mighty Rio Yaqui in 1533 (Spicer, 1980). They were met by a Yo'eme Coyote warrior: (a member of a Yo'eme warrior society in charge of protecting the homeland), who accompanied by other warriors, proceeded to draw a line with his bow of war. Thus, setting the tone for the encounter and warning the Europeans that if they crossed the line they would be repelled with maximum force. As soon as the Spanish expedition ignored the warning, a battle began in which the Europeans were defeated (Spicer, 1980). This historical defeat resulted in nearly one-hundred years before the next Europeans attempted to set foot in Yo'eme territory.

The next time around, it was not with weapons that the Europeans attempted to penetrate Yo'eme territory, but through the Christian faith imparted by the order of Jesuit missionaries de la Compañía de Jesus. At the turnaround of the 16th century, according to estimates made by

missionaries, the Yoeme numbered three hundred thousand (Perez de Ribas 1944; Buelna 1890). As previously mentioned, the Yo'eme language first came in contact with the Spanish and Latin languages through the teachings of the Catholic faith, taught by Spanish Jesuit Missionaries of the Compañia de Jesus. After a century of resisting any foreign influence over their territory, the Yo'eme allowed Jesuits to settle in their homeland regions from southern Arizona to the Rio Yaqui in Sonora around 1617 (Spicer 1980). It is during the first half of the 16th century that the evangelical work of the friars of the Compañia de Jesus arrived in the Sonoran Desert guided by the goal of proselytizing the Yo'eme and other neighboring indigenous people.

The source of insight into Yo'eme culture, as Jesuit preachers discovered, was the Yo'eme language. Jesuit preachers of the Company of Jesus entered Yo'eme territory in 1617, after peaceful negotiations between them and the Yo'eme took place (Spicer, 1980). The Jesuits brought with them an approach different to that of Franciscan preachers. Instead of proselytizing only by force, they focused on establishing similarities between Yo'eme cosmovision and the Christian faith (Spicer 1980). Some of these teachings are still part of the traditions seen today in *Pahkom* (festivities) in celebration of Saints and Patrons. As a result, the earliest description of the Yo'eme language is given in *El Arte de la Lengua Cahita por un Padre de la Compañia de Jesus* (*The Art of the Cahitan Language by a Father of the Company of Jesus*) written at the end of the 16th century (Buelna 1890, edited). Becoming the first-ever lexicographical documentation of the Yo'eme language. *El Arte de la Lengua Cahita por un Padre de la Compañia de Jesus*, roots its existence in settler-colonial led efforts to proselytize Christianity at all costs even going as far as subjugating Yo'eme people (Spicer 1980).

A clear example of this colonizing effort appears in the complete lack of documentation of Yo'eme words accounting for indigenous Yo'eme cosmology and religion. These Yo'eme

words and cultural and conceptual knowledge they carry were erased from the first language documentation efforts by the Jesuits as witnessed in *El Arte de la Lengua Cahita por un Padre de la Compañia de Jesus* (Moctezuma 2014). This erasure constituted a missionary effort to disrupt and eliminate any trace of Yo'eme identity, which could interfere with evangelization. For that reason, *El Arte de la Lengua Cahita por un Padre de la Compañia de Jesus*, as first the published Yo'eme language documentation effort in the form of a bilingual dictionary, should be viewed a tool of colonial subjugation and assimilation and not as a reliable representation of indigenous Yoeme language and cultural concepts at the time of contact.

Yo'eme under the Porfiriato

The Yo'eme phrase *Itom Hiak Bwan* (*Our Earth is weeping tears of pain*) stems from the genocide suffered by Yo'eme people during the Porfiriato's "Wars of extermination." The use of the term "wars of extermination" has led scholars to apply the word "genocidal" to analyze the Yaqui massacres, enslavements, and deportations. Sonoran state, Mexican, and US policies played an instrumental role in the near extermination of Yo'eme people during the Diaz regime of 1876 to 1909. During this time, the Yo'eme population totaled some 30,000 people inhabiting an area of land from Guaymas' present-day port in Mexico to present-day Southern Arizona (Spicer, 1980:160). From 1876 to 1909, battles, colonization policies, massive deportations, diseases, executions, homicides, massacres, and slaved labor contributed to the reduction of the Yo'eme population in Sonora and Arizona by at least 82 percent from an estimated 30,000 to 5,500 (Ramos 2009:171; Taibo 2013:85). Following 33 years of the Diaz regime, living and existing as Yo'eme became a crime. The Sonoran state, the Mexican Government, and the US Government's added support had nearly succeeded in eradicating the Yo'eme people. The need for a more detailed report providing data that would establish intent, causes, and crimes of the

Yo'eme genocide in Mexico remains outside this thesis's scope. However, Yo'eme survival is a testament to the strength and resilience of the Yo'eme people who defied all the odds by the genocidal machine initiated and operated by the Diaz regime.

Yo'eme language in the age of contact

Since colonial intrusion, the Yo'eme people have had continuous contact with the Spanish and Latin languages. Yo'eme did not come in touch with the English language until the eighteen-hundreds when Arizona officially became a territory of the United States. As a result of the continuous contact with Spanish, for over four hundred years, Yo'eme language has experienced linguistic change in both its grammar and lexicon. Many Spanish loan words are scattered throughout Yo'eme, with many becoming phonologically integrated into the language (Dedrick and Casad 1999).

A prime example of such is borrowing a Spanish word and attaching a Yo'eme suffix to it. Take a look at the phrase *vantareo*, which comes from the Spanish word *abanderado*, and used in the context of *Pahkom* (festivities). The word *abanderado* describes the Yo'eme person who carries the flag during festivities. *Abanderado* is Yo'emified by the addition of the Yo'eme root *reo*, which indicates expertise in the matter, alluding to the one who carries the flag, and the elimination of *derado* (in possession of) and replaced with the Yo'eme phonological sound of *vantea* — resulting in the final transformation of *vanareo*.

The Yo'eme language is conventionally known as a verb-final language in which the unmarked word order is a subject-object-verb (Dedrick and Casad 1999). Though the verb is usually the final major constituent, Yo'eme sentences may have sentence-final postpositions and suffixes that mark aspect, modality, and tense (Dedrick and Casad 1999). It is important to note that Yo'eme also employs reduplication, as a morphological process on the root or stem to

express a plurality of action, object, and person, most simply observed in the straightforward reduplication of the initial CV- in a stem (ex: koche-sleep, kokoche sleeping (Dedrick and Casad 1999:119). There has yet to be a full exploration of the extent to which the Yo'eme language has used Spanish borrowing to the phonology and grammar of the language. This work awaits research in the future; meanwhile, I will confine my discussion to a description of the Yo'eme Language Project's language revitalization efforts.

Previous Linguistic Research on Yo'eme Language

I am neither the first nor the last Yo'eme person to have conducted linguistic research on the language. I owe that credit to Dr. Fernando Escalante as the first Yo'eme native speaker to pioneer the linguistic field of study for the Yo'eme language. But the earliest research dates to 1939 when Jean Johnson's unpublished manuscript "El Yaqui" was the earliest phonemic analysis of Sonoran Yo'eme. Johnson's piece represented a crucial step in documenting and defining phonemes in the Yo'eme language. Before his work on Yo'eme resistance, colonial and cultural contact, anthropologist Edward Spicer first co-wrote a grammatical analysis of the Yo'eme language with anthropologist William Karuth, titled, A Brief Introduction to Yaqui (1947). The piece builds on foundational notions of Yo'eme sentence structure. In its chapter titled, "Yaqui Sentence Structure," the authors emphasize the importance of "order of words in the sentence as (The actor)(the object, result, or condition of the action)(the action)" (Spicer and Karuth 1947:15).

Additionally, the authors call for the fundamental need of consulting with community members, among whom they thank Refugio Savala, Lucas Chaves, and Jesus Juan Ujllolimea as their collaborators. Additionally, the piece is known as the first linguistic contribution to serve as a

decolonization tool. It indicated the tumultuous experiences of Yo'eme people to keep their culture and language alive (Spicer and Karuth 1947:34).

The first published description of Yo'eme phonology is credited to Gerd Fraenkel's (1959) "Yaqui Phonemics. Fraenkel's piece correctly shows a phonemic inventory of 19 consonants and five vowels (Fraenkel 1959:11). However, a few of Fraenkel's contributions contradict themselves. He claims, "all bi-consonantal clusters are possible in Yaqui" but he later goes on to say that "there are no word-initial...or word-final clusters" (Fraenkel 1959:12). Fraenkel's contradictions are closely associated with a lack of community informed collaboration. A second, more detailed grammar compilation of Yo'eme phonology is that of Lynn S. Crumrine's (1961), "The Phonology of Arizona Yaqui with Texts." Crumrine's (1958) M.A. thesis represents the foundational work for her future (1961) phonology treatment, which closely collaborated with Arizona Yo'eme language speakers Refugio Savala and Fernando Suarez of Pascua Pueblo, Arizona (1958:1). Crumrine goes on to describe the process behind her ethnography and collection of data, which for the time in American history (termination era), emphasized the need for collaboration with (Yo'eme) community members to document the language (1958:4) properly.

In 1973 Jacqueline Lindenfeld published *Yaqui Syntax* to apply the framework of Transformational Generative Grammar to the Yo'eme language. In her attempt, Lindenfeld builds upon Yo'eme relative clauses, nominalizations, subordinate clauses, and sentence structure in Yo'eme language (Lindenfel 1973; Dedrick and Casad 1999).

Linguist Eloise Jelinek from the University of Arizona published multiple articles on Yo'eme grammar, most of which were co-written with Yo'eme scholar Fernando Escalante. Their (1988) paper titled "Verbeless,' Possessive Sentences in Yaqui," represented a formal analysis of the

perfective suffix -k and the possessor suffix -ek (Jelinek and Escalante 1988:416). This published paper made Escalante the first person of Yo'eme heritage to publish a linguistic contribution towards the documentation of Yo'eme language. Furthermore, Escalante's (1990) *Voice and Argument Structure in Yaqui*, a University of Arizona Ph.D. dissertation, represented the first Yo'eme linguistics doctoral dissertation written by a Yo'eme native speaker. Among the piece's contributions were sentence structure and formation and a brief section on the need for pitch and accent in Yo'eme language (Escalante 1991).

Finally, in 1999, linguists John Dedrick and Eugene Casad's collaborated to document the most extensive documentation of Yo'eme grammar and language structure. Among its many contributions, it provides contributions to Yo'eme phonology (25), ongoing treatment of sentence formation and structure (37-116), and it opened up the discussion for further research on suffixes used to derive verb stems from other parts of speech (Dedrick and Casad 1999). Altogether, these works represent the linguistic and anthropological research for Yo'eme language during the 20th Century.

Itom Yo'em Noki, Itom Yo'em Lu'uturia: Our language is our truth

To be Yo'eme is to recognize oneself as a member of an ancestral people who, since time immemorial inhabited geographical regions of present-day Northern Mexico to Southern Arizona. Being Yo'eme carries as a legacy the fundamental tie between language, culture, and territory all bound together to community understood identity. Essentially, it is symbolic within the cultural views which identify water, land, and all living organism to compose the Yo'eme worldview. Collectively, it represents a universe having an arrangement of meanings that since time immemorial was given by Creator (Itom Acha'I Taa'a) to the ancestors (itom yo'owe) to

live and thrive within. The most outstanding feature of unification in the community is the language, Yo'em Noki (Yo'eme language.)

The Yo'eme community has experienced in flesh and bone wars of extermination, imposed diasporas, and dominant language ideologies of subordination through policy intended to dissipate Yo'eme culture and language. A prime example is how members of the Yo'eme community, who found themselves in exile as slaves during the Porfiriato, also known as the Yaqui Wars of extermination from 1876 to 1911 (Spicer 1980; Hu-DeHart 1984), returned to their ancestral territory in both Sonora and Arizona guided by their ancestral knowledge and obligation. Without language preservation and cultural values instilled and transmitted to Yo'eme people through their language, when liberated from captivity, freed Yo'eme decided to make the journey by foot of more than two-thousand miles from the slave plantation henequen fields in the Yucatan peninsula to *Yo'em Bwia* (the homeland) in Sonora and Southern Arizona (Spicer 1980).

I now turn to a consideration of the application and usage of the Yo'eme bilingual dictionary and cultural board game. I argue that it is imperative to mention the new functions that these cultural projects entail. One explicitly referring to its role as a bilingual pedagogical tool and instrument to transmit Yo'eme cultural values and norms for Yo'eme tribal members' benefit. In the present day, the erasure and stigmatization of Yo'eme lexicography accounting for cosmology, religion, and cultural norms manifested the first bilingual dictionary, *El Arte de la Lengua Cahita por un Padre de la Compañia de Jesus*, demands an unprecedented functionality: to serve as a substantive testimony of Yo'eme strength and cultural knowledge accounting for knowing the past but also speaking the present and securing the future. I, alongside the collaborators of the Yo'eme Language Project, seek to make both the dictionary and the cultural

board game an achievement within its contents, meanings, and judgments as elements collected from ancestral Yo'eme tradition and culture for the defense of Yo'eme cultural and political sovereignty.

Part Two:

The Yo'eme dictionary as an ideological production

As a community member and language advocate, I have come to realize the importance of changing beliefs, and decolonizing firmly entrenched ideologies resulting from colonial dictionaries of Yo'eme. In my distrust of these colonial works, I have chosen to create a work that more accurately reflects Yo'eme discernment in which language ideologies of community members, along with cultural knowledge, are acknowledged and perceived.

In the ongoing elaboration of *An Everyday Yo'eme Language Dictionary*, one of the noted resources needed by Yo'eme speakers is a dictionary providing practical examples of everyday language usage alluding to culture, territory, cosmology while maintaining a connection to quotidian life. For the dictionary to be successful at providing didactic cultural examples, it is necessary to take into consideration the language ideologies of the Indigenous community.

As a mode to combat the problematic and prevalent documentary practice of relegating dictionaries to word lists (words for things) the YLP has set forth the task to create a bilingual dictionary containing both cultural discourses and discursive resources as experienced in Yo'eme worldview (Kroskrity, 2015). In addition to discursive resources, language as represented in storytelling registers must also be displayed. This relationship will allow for a better understanding of daily practices and rituals that support significant emblems and identity markers of Yo'eme identity. Thus, allowing for the dictionary to serve as a tool of language documentation and vehicle of cultural conductivity.

Although *An Everyday Usage Yo'eme Language Dictionary* is a work in progress, its content is designed for both novice and advanced speakers in the Yo'eme language community.

It is a product of cultural and linguistic renewal and not just a document intended for professional linguistic audiences. The Yo'eme dictionary thus transcends notions of being "merely a project of linguistic documentation designed for academic elites." (Kroskrity, 2015). Using Kroskrity's representation of language renewal activities as "sites" of ideological clarification (Kroskrity, 2009), the Yo'eme dictionary as a project of language renewal, is in fact, an ideological production that enhances "the process of identifying and raising consciousness about linguistic and discursive issues."

The recognition of community beliefs, practices, and feelings about language and their contending views enables what Kroskrity calls "clarifying discourses" amongst community members and where necessary across community members and school authorities, government workers, and academic linguists (Kroskrity, 2015:143). Kroskrity explains clarifying discourses as part of language ideological clarification which he defines as,

"The process of identifying issues of language ideological contestation, including both beliefs and feelings that are indigenous to that community and those introduced by outsiders (such as linguists and government officials), that can impact—either positively or negatively—community efforts to successfully engage in language maintenance and renewal," (Kroskrity, 2009).

Analyzing these theoretical frameworks is helpful to identify and combat through the usage of ideological clarification beliefs and feelings expressed surrounding the Yo'eme language as static, limited and useful only for talking about the language and culture of the past (Trujillo, 1997). Therefore, the awareness of language ideological clarification provides "an appropriate and useful tool for avoiding and resolving some of the problems that can be anticipated, not just

in language renewal activities in general, but on the basis of actual experience in developing dictionaries" (Kroskrity, 2015:143).

The theoretical application of language ideologies has profoundly influenced the works of the YLP. Language ideologies have been very useful to understand the interrelation between language and its cultural practice as a dynamic phenomenon (Woolard, 1992). Yo'eme speakers form these conceptualizations, both consciously and unconsciously. This process originates through a socio-historical process that involves the configuration of ancestral knowledge and praxis in the context of correlations between language and culture. Therefore, the catalyst behind the Yo'eme bilingual dictionary's design is a profound focus on linguistic elements involving worldview and cosmology as foundational notions of Yo'eme identity.

When undertaking language revitalization efforts in response to language shift, it is necessary to understand the social aspects of languages as closely related to the linguistic aspects as it is the case with learning words, grammar, correct pronunciation, and the socio-cultural value of the language used. Kroskrity emphasizes that in order to accomplish this, cultural, economic, historical, ideological, and political aspects need to be taken into account (Kroskrity 2009). Therefore, language ideologies are reflected in daily communications using language and cultural knowledge production. Ethnographic research is required to give an account of local ideologies to interpret processes of language shift, which are very complex and contested (Hill 1995:1). When analyzing Yo'eme language social interactions, contradictions emerge as substantial generational splits between the elderly generation that speak the heritage language within specific social network segments and young people and children who only speak English in every context (Hill, 1993:79). Unfortunately for some Yo'eme community members, learning the heritage language brings the dilemma of learning a language that might hinder the ability to

speak English properly. Historically within Yo'eme communities, English has been the language associated with better living standards as imposed by the nation-state (Barber, 1952, Trujillo, 1991).

Dictionary making guided by community and scholarship

As linguistic anthropologist John Haviland observes, dictionaries are the most familiar linguistic genre to the general public (Haviland, 2006). For the Yo'eme language, its general public consists of both indigenous and non-indigenous people interested in the representation of the heritage language. The primary audience for a Yo'eme dictionary will be community members both language learners and those who devote their lives to the preservation and strengthening of Yo'eme language, as well as non-native scholars and allies aiding in the process of language revitalization. The importance of having Yo'eme community members invested in the processes of language renewal is that it leads to the promoting of a heritage language dictionary that is recognized and valued by the community.

Building upon language ideological theory, a precise emphasis can be placed to identify beliefs surrounding the Yo'eme language as “static” and a limiting factor for success in the present and future. By doing so, the collaborators of the Yo'eme Language Project seek to be in line with the mission statement as stated in the *Pascua Yaqui Tribal Language Police* of September 1984. The core of this policy states:

“The Yaqui Language is a gift from *Itom Achai*, the Creator, to our people and, therefore, shall be treated with respect. Our ancient language is the foundation of our cultural and spiritual heritage, without which we could not exist in the manner that our Creator intended. Education is the transmission of culture and values, therefore, we declare that Yaqui education shall be the means for the transmission of the Yaqui language and spiritual and

cultural heritage. We further declare that all aspects of the educational process shall reflect the beauty of our Yaqui language, culture, and values” (Pascua Yaqui Tribe 1984).

The writing of the 1984 document was inspired by linguistic discrimination faced by Yo’eme people at the hands of the State of Arizona’s linguistically racist practices of placing Yo’eme children in special education classes if their English proficiency was not “a la par” with those of other children (Trujillo 1997). Therefore, in 1984 the tribal council adopted a language policy affirming the Yo’eme language as an integral part of Yo’eme education and existence.

Amongst the many barriers to dictionary-making lies one of the biggest concerns for language advocates: community approval of the project. Some of these tensions arise from interactions between elitist academic priorities and non-academic functions of bilingual dictionaries. This tension can impact language communities and their interest in readability and accessibility. It is worth noting that Hinton and Weigel’s scholarship on indigenous language dictionary-making stresses the importance of designing lexicons for indigenous communities as cultural resources in the service of language revitalization and renewal (Hinton and Weigel 2002). As a result, the Yo’eme Language Project remains committed to uphold the Yo’eme community’s linguistic and cultural well-being as priority by producing a dictionary for the community and approved by the community.

Yo’eme values and cultural practices in lexical entries: A mirror of social norms

Before the task of compiling Yo’eme language lexical entries into a dictionary, I set forth the task of compiling language documentation materials through careful planning, verifying, and transcribing texts. During this process, I consulted with heritage language speakers, elders of the tribe, in order to verify and correct language examples. An objective that remained constant was designing linguistic material that represent the Yo’eme language in a way that reflected cultural

values and norms. Producing linguistic material that mirrors Yo’eme values is a labor-intensive process that requires considerable collaboration. As a result, the objective as a dictionary maker is to earn approval of the community while keeping the Yo’eme cultural and linguistic needs of community members in mind.

It is necessary to understand a culture in order to get the sense and power of its language. For example, for the Yo’eme people, language, tradition, and territory are the fundamental core of their culture and their collective existence. Since culture is woven into the fabric of Yo’eme society, the usage of Yo’eme language provides a resource for storing and constructing social norms and values. Yo’eme linguistic representation is viewed as a critical site for the affirmation and production of Yo’eme identity. Therefore, a Yo’eme dictionary must be designed to adequately represent the morals and values associated with Yo’eme identity.

Designing Yo’eme Lexical Entries

In the following paragraphs an examination of some representative lexical entries taken directly from the ongoing bilingual dictionary project will be displayed and analyzed. We can begin by analyzing the lexical entry for the word *noki* (language). In Yo’eme society, language proficiency is a hallmark of wisdom. In example 3, below, I chose to include a short dialogue entry for the word *noki* (language) in order to showcase the wisdom as seen through community language ideologies captured in the below Yo’eme proverbial saying:

Example 3

Noki n. Language

*Hu’u Yoeme nokimmaa hiapsa, inimet cha’atuka huka aniata vetana ta’ewamta yee
tehwa.*

Yoeme Language is the stronghold for Yoeme people to exist; it is through language that

Yoeme people can pass on the truths and teachings of the elders.

Aapo kaa Yoem nokita ta'aa Empo Su?

He/She does not know the Yoeme language. Do you?

Hewi, Inepo Yoem nokita ta'aa

Yes, I know the Yoeme language

The value of forethought is vividly expressed in Yo'eme proverbial sayings that emphasize practical wisdom. Instances of practical wisdom are routinely found in the dictionary entries. In example 4, below, I chose to examine the root *-raa* (in relation with, possessive), in order to display Yo'eme community values and morals as closely intertwined within the language.

Example 4

Raa pos. Belonging to the community, in relation to

Yo'em Pueplom te ho'ak, inim te ya'ura intok ho'araka'po

We live in the Yo'eme homelands a place where we share a communal authority and home.

Thus, example 4 demonstrates how Yo'eme worldview sees people as in relation to things and never in ownership of them. This is a foundational notion to the way community space is navigated and how relationships are fostered.

In *An Everyday Usage Yo'eme Dictionary*, lexical entries aim to display the vernacular language in a way which mirrors daily interactions while also promoting Yo'eme morals, values and worldview. However, the vernacular speech does not limit itself to solely addressing staples of elementary language teaching but more importantly vernacular use as part of interactions leading to the production of Yo'eme identity (Gomez de Garcia, 2009). Take for example, among the Yo'eme, killing a frog is considered to be an ungrateful act as well as a violation of a cultural taboo. In example 4, below, this rule of etiquette is alluded to in the origin story U'u Hiak Vatwe (The Rio Yaqui) and included in *An Everyday Usage Yo'eme Dictionary*:

“Ian vea itepo te kaa vovo ’okoim susua.” “It is told, we do not kill frogs. To them, we owe the rain and water, keeping us in existence.”

A fitting Yo’eme story promotes cultural practices, stimulates thinking, imparts understanding through the use of customs and traditions within the language, and motivates the audience to do what is right. As displayed in example 4, above, the underlying message is unmistakable: gratitude is not something to be taken for granted. As shown in the story as a token of gratitude to Creator and Vovok (Frog), Yo’eme people promised to look after the inherited ecosystem composed of the Rio Yaqui and all its living organisms. In exchange, Yo’eme received the blessing of rain and the river, allowing them to continue to exist. As with any story in Yo’eme, when and how the story appears depends on the audience and occasion. The incorrect use of language can mar the underlying cultural and moral message of a story. In Yo’eme language ideologies and cultural practices, any misuse of language as part of cultural etiquette influences people’s perceptions of the speaker in a negative way.

Among the many examples considered for this section were those which are indispensable to use in Yo’eme diplomatic discourse and formal speech. It is known among Yo’eme people that an emissary of the culture often resorts to the skillful use of storytelling and language to teach and or make a point. When and how a Yo’eme story should be used depends on both the situation and the audience. By including this type of cultural information in the design of most entries, I hope to transmit to language learner’s relevant cultural knowledge in which the language is embedded.

A final emphasis of this descriptive account of the Yo’eme bilingual dictionary would set forth the task of addressing the lexical entries of the dictionary. Guided by linguistic scholarship, a question that calls for action on my behalf as a maker of a dictionary of an endangered

language was whether or not to include bound-form, grammatical morphemes, such as roots and affixes that are unpronounceable in isolation (Munro, 2002). Although my ultimate goal—one which extends beyond the ongoing work of the first edition—is to provide resources for a living, growing language, *The Everyday Usage Yo'eme Dictionary* strives to document as many grammatical details as possible so that language learners will be better served.

To illustrate, we can observe that the Yo'eme language forms reduced complement nominals (Dedrick and Casad 1999). In example 5, below, consider the imperfective participle -ka, which indicates absence or non-existence. Since the semantics of the verbs govern compliments in such cases, the Dictionary needs to represent this. Following from example 5, below, consider how 'aa (knowledge of, power of) and hiiak (sound or speech act, having the capacity of producing such fully demonstrate such complexities:

Aa v. Knowledge of, power of.

Aapo ka hiiak nokita ta'aa.

He does not know how to speak Yo'eme.

Therefore, by addressing categories of polysynthetic Yo'eme verbs, the dictionary seeks to treat the interface of grammar and lexicon by illustrating how features of lexical items influence their grammatical behavior (Munro, 2002). Additionally, it includes the basic morphology of Yo'eme language parts of speech while describing suffixes used to derive verb stems from other parts of speech. It is thus allowing for cultural, cosmological, and ethnohistorical Yo'eme information to be accessed.

The Yo'eme language has lexical variation depending on the gender of the speech act participant. That is, the gender of the speaker and/or the addressee is often the determining factor regarding lexical choices and morphological alternations in the language. Linguistic

anthropologist Michael Silverstein labels this phenomenon as gender indexicality (Silverstein 1985), saying “Particular language usages are said to belong to the realms of men’s vs. women’s speech, appropriate variations in saying otherwise ‘the same thing’ indexing gender identities in the speech situation” (Silverstein 1985:223). More often than not, in Yo’eme language usage, it is the gender of the speaker that is indexed in what Silverstein calls ‘male or female speech’ (Silverstein 1985).

Yo’eme language indexicality functions at the pragmatic level, which highlights how context contributes to meaning. As it is common with other forms of social indexicality, “the indexical forms mark something about the context in which they are used,” (Silverstein 1985:223). Therefore, Yo’eme gender indexicality refers to a Yo’eme word that can have its denotation and furthermore an association that indexes the gender of one or several speech act participants. Speech act participants could be the speaker, the addressee, or both. However, the speech act participants don’t necessarily need to be involved as participants in the event or situation referred to in the utterance.

In the Shaul, Molina, and Valenzuela *Yoeme English-English Yoeme Standard Dictionary* (1999), lexicographical as well as cultural information about the usage and importance of ‘male and female’ speech is very limited. Take for example the Yoeme word entry for *asu* (female maternal grandmother) as found in the Shaul, Molina, and Valenzuela dictionary:

asu n. grandmother (maternal) (Shaul, Molina, Valenzuela 1999).

As you can see, the authors dictionary does not mention that ‘asu’ should only be said by Yo’eme women. It does however accurately display the denotation in reference one’s maternal grandmother. However, it fails to note its indexical properties. On the other hand, ‘female and male speech’ is more closely attended to in *An Everyday Usage Yo’eme Language Dictionary*

(Barreras unpublished). This statement has validation because proper language usage is not just valued in the Yo'eme community, but it is seen as the respectful etiquette to follow in order to be Yo'eme and to speak Yo'eme. Take for example, “*asu*” as explained in my bilingual dictionary.

Asu n. Maternal grandmother, (only said by women.)

In *asu avachitamak Goi-naiki Pueplom weevae*

My grandmother is going to go with my older brother to the

Eight Pueblos. (woman speaking)

Two features of gender indexicality that should be assessed in the definition provided in my dictionary are as follows. First, *Asu* is a term used to name the maternal grandmother of a female. Its gender indexicality presupposes that it is able to be said only by Yo'eme women. Secondly, *avachitamak* is the “female speech” form to denote the older brother of a Yo'eme woman. Shaul, Molina, and Valenzuela defined *Avachi* as follows,

avachi n. brother (older; fem.)

In this particular dictionary entry, the authors identify the term correctly in both definition and indexical usage. Yet, they fail to do so for the term, “*asu*,” --an important term that describes the matriarch of the family. Also important to emphasize, the Yo'eme language does have a gender-neutral form to say grandmother. My dictionary defines the entry as *ae*:

Ae n. Grandmother, matriarchal figure, maternal figure, mother.

In Ae nee yo'ore.

I respect my grandmother.

U'u yorita kaa aewa yo'ore.

The colonizer does not respect his grandmother.

In Ae pahkoau siika.

My mother went to the traditional fiesta.

However, Shaul, Molina, and Valenzuela's dictionary for gender neutral grandmother is non-existent. The authors define grandmother, (Ae,) as follows,

ae2 n. mother (var. aye); Itom Ae, the Virgin Mary

Aside from the different interpretations for 'ae' other differences rise when it comes to 'male and female speech' as observed in the two dictionaries.

To continue this comparison let's take for example the paternal form of grandmother, *haaka*. The authors Shaul, Molina, and Valenzuela define *haaka* as follows,

haaka n. grandmother (paternal), aunt (paternal)

haakam n. mucus, phlegm

The authors do correctly capture the gender indexicality for the word *haaka*. In this case, *haaka* is a term to describe the paternal grandmother for both males and females. In my Yo'eme dictionary the example provided for *haaka* is as follows,

Haaka (*haáka*.) n. Paternal grandmother, eldest paternal aunt.

(As said by either male or female)

In haaka si nee nake.

My grandmother loves me very much.

In haaka haivu yo'owe.

My oldest paternal aunt is an elder.

As opposed to *haakam* which is displayed below,

Haakam (*haakam*.) n. Phlegm.

U ili uusi haakam you chikwattek.

The little child spit out a phlegm.

Inepo ousi haakam hippue.

I have a bunch of phlegms.

The above comparison aims to show the linguistic variation according to the gender of the speech act participants. Additionally, another objective of the comparison is to provide an informed typology of the sections for which revision to both the cultural and linguistic areas are necessary. Such will allow for more accurate linguistic and cultural examples to better serve the needs of Yo'eme heritage language learners and speakers.

Though correctly displaying gender indexicality in this example, Shaul, Molina, and Valenzuela fail to attend to high and low contrastive tones. Contrastive tone is important in Yo'eme as the use of pitch in the language is used as a distinctive feature capable of contributing to grammatical or lexical meaning. This is not always the case because for the word (Yóoko: tiger and Yoóko: tomorrow) the authors show high and low tone with an accent mark. As observable from both examples, tone is fundamental to communicate correctly and to represent the language accurately. This is particularly important when describing homographs in the Yo'eme language. Yo'eme contains many homographs some of which are fundamentally indexical to Yo'eme cosmivision and of extraordinary cultural significance.

Take for example the homograph *ania*: *ánia*- help, defend, protect and *anía*- cosmos, universe, world. Properly identifying and differentiating the two homographs allows for cultural and linguistic knowledge to be learned. *Ánia*- help, defend, protect, is an indexical element of Yo'eme everyday interaction as used in greetings and conversation. On the other hand, *anía*- cosmos, universe, world, is an indexical element of Yo'eme worldview. It is essential to defining and explaining Yo'eme religion, worldview, and culture as seen through the six Yo'eme cosmoses. The six *aníam* are: *Huya* -wilderness, *Bawe*- water, *Chokim*- the firmament, *Sewa*- flower, *Tenku*- dream world-experiences and visions. With this in mind, a proper translation and application of linguistic elements such as homographs, proves to be a needed function of the

Yo'eme bilingual dictionary.

The Yo'eme language has two contrastive tones: high pitch, marked by an accent (ex: á,é,í,ó,ú), and low pitch, which is unmarked. On vowel clusters such as the ones observed in *aníá* (cosmos/universe/world), *haáka* (paternal grandmother/eldest paternal aunt) and *yoóko* (tomorrow), high-low or low-high is heard as a down-glide or an up-glide (Dedrick and Casad 1999:25). There is a big difference between *yoóko* “tomorrow” and a *yóoko* “jaguar,” especially if the situation calls for immediate comprehension. However, by failing to accurately represent the phonology of *haáka* and *háakam*, the Shaul, Molina, and Valenzuela dictionary simply demonstrates that errors can occur, and lexical entries require multiple checks for accuracy.

Part Three:

A board game as an ideological intervention

As previously discussed, the efforts to compile the Yo'eme bilingual dictionary focused mainly on the documentation of Yo'eme traditional linguistic knowledge and the application of the language through everyday use. Though the need for a Yo'eme bilingual dictionary as useful resource for language learners is significant, there lies a potentially greater need posed by an ideological threat to the language. This danger comes in the form of a static image of the language held by many community members, both youth and adults alike (Trujillo, 1991). This “static image” sentiment described by a community member and Indigenous studies advocate Octaviana Trujillo touches on the critical barrier Yo’eme language revitalization efforts face. As Trujillo shared, the Yo’eme language is perceived as a “repository” and lacks a catalyst to bring usages of the language outside of a cultural context (Trujillo 1997). This view is beyond dangerous as it portrays the Yo’eme language as a language of the past, a relic, only useful within a cultural setting.

The urge to change these perceptions takes precedent in the design of the Yo'eme culture and language board game. The game is a community-based project which seeks to influence 'negative' beliefs and feelings about the language by introducing the language and culture in a dynamic context. Thus, the use of the Yo'eme language comes to life in a contemporary activity, one which reasserts and redefines cultural and linguistic identities as a way of speaking into the present while honoring the past (Nicholas 2014:87). As the Hopi scholar, Sheilah Nicholas mentions, positive language shift occurs through a “(re)focus” on the traditional collective ideologies found in the (Hopi)language (Nicholas 2014:72). Such “(re)focus” would allow for a means to “re-engage” the community by “re-connecting” the youth with the older generation,

and thus establishing an avenue for intergenerational communication to occur (Nicholas 2014). Consequently, the Yo'eme language gets reinvigorated in both a traditional and contemporary context, just like the words of the *Maaso Yoawa* (Elder deer dancer) as found in the board game which I developed and will discuss below:

Inepo vatnataka weeria: I am the past

Inepo ian weeria: I am the present

Ta ket ne vichau vicha: *But I am also the future.*

The Yo'eme L&C Board game: an ethnography of Yo'eme knowledge

In response to language shift in my household and community, I alongside my father, talked the idea of a Yo'eme language and culture board game into existence. The idea for the game began as an effort to help my family members, siblings, and tribal members learn Yo'eme (*Yo'em Noki*). The first attempts to share the Yo'eme language were facilitated through Facebook and YouTube platforms but evolved into the design of Cultural Board game to breach the gap in intergenerational communication among elders and the youth. The idea of the board game began with the intention to reunite whole families, classrooms, and anyone eager to learn Yo'eme by coming together in a dynamic and entertaining fashion to celebrate Yo'eme language, culture, and identity.

The center of Yo'eme social, cultural, and linguistic organization is the home. The Yo'eme home is the basis of unity of Yo'eme people (Spicer 1980). It is a space for the formation of primary emotional, cultural, and attachment bonds (Holden 1979:31). Furthermore, the Yo'eme home represents the foundational structure in the development and care of children along with promoting and securing cultural continuity. With this in mind, the initial approach in designing the board game was not about a closed and finished set of ideas and concepts, but

about an open process of resignifying the Yo'eme language by adding value through contexted use. The process of resignifying is postulated through a systematic set of cultural and linguistic Yo'eme community ideals. These ideals are not always explicit, but are expressed in stories, proverbs, and traditional discourse. Therefore, through the recovery, reconstruction, and reinvigoration of the Yo'eme discursive universe, the Yo'eme language can be seen and utilized as an ancestral guide for present and future community continuity.

In order to better understand the theoretical framework behind the application of the board game, a detailed analysis of the game's examples and performance features is useful. From the beginning, it was clear that my father and I wanted to create a game that did not culminate in an individual winner because it would detract from the purpose and spirit of the game. This however does not mean that the game lacks competitive drive. In the process, it pushes players to invest themselves in both learning and practicing Yo'eme culture, language, and history in order to successfully complete the game by "walking the ancestral path." This process culminates in the acquisition of all the ceremonial attire require by a Yo'eme Deer Dancer (*maaso yeye*) in a journey through traditional Yo'eme territories in which players learn aspects of Yo'eme language, culture, history, cosmovision, and traditional values. It concludes when the player reaches our Yo'eme sacred mountains and has a fully dressed Deer dancer. From there on, the player can assist or just watch other gamers who are trying to reach the same point. Once everyone has a fully dressed Yo'eme Deer dancer and has reached the Bacatete Mountains, all players can sing a traditional Yo'eme *maaso bwikam* (deer song) and take a ceremonial oath known in Yo'eme as *Tekia Mabetwame Yoo Lutu'uriapo* (accepting the responsibility of carrying the elder's legacy culture and traditions).

To better understand the impact of the board game, it is necessary to understand its usage and applicability. To do so, an explanation of how to play the board game deems essential. The board game's heart and soul comprised of the 70 squares found throughout the game depict its valuable content. Each square is divided into a distinct category conformed of: language learning, culture, storytelling, tribal history, and Indigenous resistance. Each square showcases an illustration depicting language and cultural knowledge through art.

The game design allows multiple players as many as a family or a classroom to come together and play. As for the ages of the players, the game's goal is to cater to school-age children, young adults, and adults. Upon recommendation from anthropologist, Paul Kroskrity, gameplay levels were incorporated. The established levels are: novice, intermediate, and advanced. The novice level provides the opportunity for a new language learner to receive foundational linguistic and cultural knowledge. The middle level allows potential growth for novice learners to advance to and a challenge for those who possess above novice language and cultural background. The content found in the advanced level allows for elders and or knowledgeable language speakers to take a role as teachers and storytellers for gamers alike.

Additionally, the advanced level allows intermediate level gamers to 'dip their toes' in the water by moving from mixed Yo'eme and English to full Yo'eme immersion. In this sense, the game provides players with the ability to experience learning and teaching at once. Thus, the advanced level offers the opportunity for intergenerational communication between the youth and elders, bridging the gap between knowledge bearers and learners. Therefore, regardless of age, the game's content is regulated by the linguistic and cultural understanding of the gamer. In essence, each player begins the game's quest with an un-outfitted deer dancer progressing across Yo'eme homeland until they reach the Bacatete mountains.

Each player is identified in the board game through a specific figurine as representative of Yo'eme culture. For example, and to name a few: a drum, a deer, a jaguar, a gourd. Only by answering questions of language, culture, and history found in the squares is that the gamer can advance through the gameboard and successfully dress the deer dancer. The gamer can advance up to six spaces at a time. However, if the player cannot answer a question correctly, he/she might be penalized. The gamer might also encounter imposed colonial oppressions, which will result in further delays and or penalties. The penalties will result in the gamer becoming unable to collect the needed regalia on their quest to reach the Bacatetes mountains. If the player gets to the Bacatete mountains without a fully dressed deer dancer, they will have to return the same way they came from until they collect the missing regalia.

It is essential to consider that the game does not promote the spirit of competition in which a clear winner rises above the rest. On the contrary, the game seeks to encourage school-age youth, young adults, and adults to invest themselves into learning more about their heritage language and culture as they progressed through the game. Eventually, after and only after all gamers fully acquire all ceremonial regalia for their deer dancer, they all complete the game by singing a song and taking an oath to defend the ancestral path.

The need for a language and cultural board game

This section will describe the ongoing effort led by myself and other members of the Yo'eme Language Project to create language and cultural content to preserve and foster the Yo'eme language. The result, a Yo'eme cultural board game designed to serve as an aid for advocacy in the recovery and revitalization of the Yo'eme heritage language. The board game's direct aim is to present cultural and linguistic Yo'eme language content to youth and their families by creating an alternative space in which both school-age youth and or adults can gather

in a classroom setting and or in the household.

The intent of the board game is for Yo'eme people to assemble and to speak, learn, and teach Yoeme language, culture, and history in order to serve as a means of intergenerational interaction among our *Yo'owe* (elders) and the *usim* (youth). Therefore, breaching the gap between the home and the school setting by presenting opportunities for *Yo'owam* (elders and grandparents) to interact with the *usim* (youth). Based on personal interactions with family, I have experienced first-hand what difference it makes to have intergenerational language communication with *Yo'owam* (elders and grandparents.) Such interactions provided a sanctuary for language usage—one which paved the way for my own learning of Yo'eme language and culture. I was fortunate to have been raised in a home in which the Yo'eme language was utilized and encouraged. Despite our vast family, it was my father and I who have continued with the tradition of speaking Yo'eme from birth. Out of my 4 siblings, only I have inherited the privilege of being a traditional speaker. My oldest sister, now 19, has remained an active advocate of the language and an emerging heritage language learner. This goes to show, that despite having traditional speakers in the home, without positive intergenerational interaction promoting interaction between elders and the youth, language shift will continue its coursed set-in motion by colonial intrusion.

Language loss in most Native American communities derives as a direct result of western colonial intrusion (Champagne 2000:7). Without a doubt, colonial legacies of oppression, assimilation, and genocide experienced by Yo'eme people have contributed to language and cultural loss. The impact brought about by systems of colonial subjugation has created a perpetual assault on Yo'eme cultural, linguistic, and political sovereignty, resulting in the ongoing loss of traditional speakers and their cultural practices. Attempting to understand similar

consequences in her own heritage linguistic community, Chickasaw citizen and linguist Jenny Davis, has emphasized the need for additional factors to be considered when defining a ‘speaker’ (Davis 2018).

Davis established a language ideological assessment that extends beyond preoccupation with traditional speakers. It attends to variation in Chickasaw language use by expanding the number of active speakers to include “language learners, passive bilinguals, and people participating in language revitalization activities” (Davis 2018:83). Thus, allowing for brighter and more positive outlook in order to better assess the needs of the community and to understand the vitality of the heritage language in community life (Davis 2018). Despite the alarming statistics surrounding the number of active language speakers in Arizona Yo’eme communities, it is of fundamental value to look past the fetishizing of numbers of traditional speakers in order to pave the way for language revitalization and “reclamation” efforts (Leonard, 2008) and to appreciate the “emergent vitalities” (Perley 2011) of current Yo’eme speakers.

There are multiple reasons why moving away from the enumeration of language speakers is beneficial. First, language census counts provide a suspect source to rely on given the multilayered complexity of classifying a language speaker (Krauss, 1998). This is particularly the case for the Yoeme language, in the United States, as there are less than one-hundred traditional language speakers according to sources (Amour and Harley, 2016). Additionally, enumeration of languages is problematic given the particular ‘speech-community dynamics of language contact and change,’ which can potentially obscure the dynamics and application of language usage (Moore, 2010: 2). Finally, an over-emphasis on language enumeration and fetishizing over the findings may result in what linguistic anthropologist Jane Hill described as the “inadvertently undermining” of the goals of language advocacy (Hill, 2002: 2).

For the Yo'eme community which has experienced severe language shift, the stakes are very high. Amongst these critical issues, linguistic anthropologist Paul Kroskrity identifies the greater role indigenous languages have as a key connection to the sociocultural lives of their speakers which include the fight for cultural, linguistic, and political sovereignty as well as connection to land (Kroskrity, 2011:180). The ideology of combating language shift through language advocacy can be best described through what American Indian scholar and linguist Wesley Leonard has called language "reclamation" (Leonard, 2008). 'Language reclamation' is a direct effort to relinquish the unfavorable stigma surrounding the status of Native American languages (Myaamia language) as "disappearing," "vanishing," or "becoming extinct" and thus granting agency and authority to language advocacy efforts. Thus, using language "reclamation" (Leonard, 2008) as a source of empowerment can help reverse what Maliseet Native scholar Bernard Perley has described as a "pattern of neglect," towards the heritage (Maliseet) language (Perley, 2011: 4). Perley argues that a re-assessment of trajectories from "death" and toward "life" is necessary to create 'new domains and ontologies' for language communities and their members (Perley 2011 and 2017). Such re-assessment can help fuel language advocacy efforts to help oppressed language communities by promoting efforts designed to fuel their respective "emergent vitalities" (Perley 2011). Thus, serving not only as anti-colonial projects but as essential practices of indigenization by promoting "self-determination and the restoration of personal and communal well being" (McCarty, 2013: xx).

The board game as an ideological production

The following sections will explore the Yo'eme Language and Cultural Board Game, which was designed to help Yo'eme communities as a much-needed language ideological intervention in an attempt to disrupt what has been described as the "static" image regarding the

usage of the Yo'eme language and to open up the possibility of intergenerational communication in and about Yo'eme language and culture. The cultural board game seeks to serve as a work in advocacy of the recovery and reclamation of the Yo'eme language and cultural knowledge. As previously mentioned, the Yo'eme language is perceived by some as having a set of fixed notions, as being a locus of knowledge relevant to the past. In this view, the Yo'eme language is incapable of transcending into the present. Working against this view, the implementation of the board game seeks to establish, through language and culture: a symbolic body that serves as a receptacle of Yo'eme knowledge usage and application which can promote the establishment of relationships with other people (both native and non-native), with animals and plants, and with other planes of the Yo'eme cosmos.

The language shift in Arizona Yo'eme communities has been so prevalent that the sentiments and feelings towards forms of Yo'eme language use have resulted in conflicting language ideologies regarding the Yo'eme language. Prominent Yo'eme Scholar Octaviana Trujillo Valenzuela describes the limiting effect of an ideology that locks an inert Yo'eme language in the past when she states (Trujillo 1997:62),

“The Yaqui language is perceived more as a repository for culture and heritage in a static sense rather than an equally valid and viable medium for intellectual and contemporary social development” (Trujillo 1997:62).

Given the rapid decline of Yo'eme heritage language speakers, a firmly entrenched “static” image surrounding the usage of Yo'eme language has developed over time. As a Yo'eme language speaker, community member, and heir to the culture of the elders, I wanted to acknowledge my language and cultural responsibility to my ancestors, both past and present, to reclaim the language and combat these undermining ideologies.

The Yo'eme Language, as found in the Cultural Game, was designed to create a dynamic occasion for using Yo'eme interactionally and in new contexts of use for a language that was being used in fewer domains of use as time progressed. In addition to these goals of influencing emergent youth ideologies for Yo'eme, I also designed the game content to foster what native scholar and anthropologist Tiffany Lee has called "*critical indigenous consciousness*" (Lee 2014:145). Lee describes this ideological intervention as an:

"an awareness of the historical and broad oppressive conditions that have influenced current realities of Indigenous people's lives. This awareness leads to acknowledging, respecting, and embracing one's role in contributing to and transforming their communities and families" (Lee 2014:145).

Thus, instilling in its users a responsibility and an awareness of historical relevance to the results of colonial intrusion. This ideology gives rise to the manifestation of a counter hegemonic effort to oppose U.S. policies of English monolingualism, and assimilation. The Yo'eme cultural board game not only serves as a symbol of Yo'eme culture, but it fosters the growth and development of "*positive emergent youth ideologies*" (Nicholas 2014.) The ability to positively shape "emergent youth ideologies" in the context of language learning can be correlated to Lee's "critical indigenous consciousness" (Lee 2014:145.)

As mentioned above, the board game is designed to positively impact youth language ideologies by combating the "static" view of their heritage language. This is accomplished by transmitting critical consciousness in the form of historical knowledge colonial oppression and Nation-state policies (enacted by both Mexico and the United States) of assimilation, diaspora, and linguistic discrimination. Although the younger generations know some of the histories of Yo'eme resistance, most have yet to truly grasp the details behind the survival of Yo'eme when

faced against extermination. Therefore, playing and interacting with the cultural board game will serve as an avenue to enlighten their indigenous consciousness and pave the way for change in perception and responsibility towards the Yo'eme language.

English language monolingualism in Arizona Yo'eme communities not only includes the youth and children but the vast majority of adults. As a result, many Yo'eme who have a sense of familiarity with the Yo'eme language have changed their communication habits and have started using English more frequently in their daily interactions with others (Trujillo, 1997). Therefore, the next generation of Yo'eme offspring become almost completely monolingual in English. Although the younger generations know some of the history of Yo'eme resistance, most have yet to truly grasp the details behind the survival of Yo'eme when faced against extermination. Therefore, playing and interacting with the cultural board game will serve as an avenue to enlighten their indigenous consciousness and pave the way for change in perception and responsibility towards the Yo'eme language.

Yo'eme in the face of linguistic racism: policy and education

As in many nation-states, U.S. language policy toward Indigenous languages has been fueled by an “ideology of contempt” for Indigenous languages (Dorian 1998) which has been reinforced through settler colonial schooling which was founded on what Native American Studies scholar Tsianina Lomawaima (2015) has called an “erase-and-replace assimilationist model” designed for the radical replacement of heritage languages with the English language (Lomawaima and McCarty 2006: 4). Linguistic contact among European languages and the Yo'eme language has been surrounded with a conflictive relationship centered around bilingualism. The historical result is the perpetual displacement of the Yo'eme language by Euro-American policy and racism.

The “erase-and-replace assimilationist model” was an essential instrument used during the U.S. government’s termination era. As observed in Ferne Nevitt’s 1951 published M.A. thesis titled, “Education implications derived from a survey of Pascua Village,” she sought to analyze Indigenous Education through a state and county sponsored field survey at the request of the state of Arizona. In her findings she went onto say,

The cultural environment of the Yaquis has retarded the children in school in the past and still does. The program of the school must be an enriching one. The teachers must assume the primary task of supplying experiences and opportunities which should have been the children's natural heritage in good homes (Nevitt 1951: 69).

Nevitt’s publication was sponsored by the Tucson Public School System, (known today as Tucson Unified School District.) In her publication, Nevitt elaborated on the deficit image of Indigenous cultures, she mentioned,

The cultural and language background of the Yaquis have been great handicaps. The educators of the school children should emphasize word-meaning and vocabulary-development. The children need many wide, direct experiences (Nevitt 1951:71).

This biased research was used in both policy formation and assessment of Yo’eme students in the Arizona school districts. These assessments were utilized as prime evidence to ban Yo’eme cultural and linguistic exchange in the classroom. All this was in the name of the betterment of Indian children and their futures at a time when Indian Policy in the US emphasized assimilation, termination, and relocation (Champagne 2010).

The 1960’s saw the rise of the Civil Rights movement and the enactment of official U.S. policy in support of Indigenous self-determination. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 aimed to strengthened Indigenous control over their own affairs (Grande

2004). However, the right to exercise cultural, linguistic, and political sovereignty through Indigenous self-determination has resulted in a conflicted terrain for Indigenous Nations (Combs and Nicholas 2012).

For Yo’eme parents and students, a clear contradiction to self-determination was described by the ethnography produced in the doctoral thesis of educator Karen Guilfoyle. Guilfoyle would go on to describe how parents emboldened to become more vocal, still experienced cultural discouragement. Guilfoyle would go onto describe this lack of encouragement as a “cultural and linguistic disparity between the community and school which continued to negatively affect the students” (Guilfoyle, 1988). These findings served as indicative of the harmful policies influencing the treatment of Yo’eme students in Arizona school districts (Trujillo 1997). These circumstances were described by Anthropologist Edward Spicer who most candidly assessed the assimilationist objectives of these educational institutions during the era by describing them as a “complete replacement of Yaqui cultural values” (Spicer 1980).

The passage of the Native American Language Acts of 1990 and 1992—acts designed to end discrimination against Native American languages, painted a much a waited panorama for Tribal nations. However, the 21st Century brought little evidence that this legislative change was nothing more than a rhetorical mirage for Yo’eme communities. In the year 2000, Proposition 203 hit the ballot in the State of Arizona. The initiative was designed to ban bilingual education in Arizona and to replace any second language offered with full on ‘sheltered English immersion’ (Proposition 203). The proposition passed with a sixty-three percent voting majority in the state legislature. In defiance of tribal sovereignty, dominant language ideologies featuring both a pejorative view of Indigenous culture and assimilationist values were overtly expressed in

public discourse. Co-chair of English for the Children and avid supporter of Prop 203, Maria Mendoza, was quoted saying: “I think tribal leaders should be focusing on getting their children to learn English. Why do they want to keep them as prisoners in their culture and their heritage?” (Gonzalez 2000).

As a result, all of the state of Arizona’s 22 tribal nations, including the Pascua Yaqui Tribe (Yo’eme Pueplom), opposed the measure and condemned her words. In addition, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona issued a resolution as a warning of the treat the Yo’eme language faced as a result of the passing of Proposition 203. In it, the tribe stated,

“WHEREAS, Pascua Yaqui children attend state funded public schools where Yaqui language enrichment is taught therefore providing the only source of formal bilingual instruction in the Yaqui language for our children; and

WHEREAS, Proposition 203 severely limits parental options by restricting a parent’s choice to have bilingual instruction in the Yaqui language for our children; and

WHEREAS, The Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona must protect their language and whatever resources are available to keep the language alive” (Pascua Yaqui Tribe 2000)

Shortly after, a formal request to consider the applicability of Proposition 203 was submitted to State Attorney General Janet Napolitano. She responded by issuing a tumultuous decision for Tribal sovereignty which exempted tribal and BIA schools from Proposition 203. However, she concluded that state public schools were “generally subject to proposition 203” (Attorney General 2001). In 2002, the passage of No Child Left Behind was signed into law. NCLB was run by a troubling system which was known as “adequate yearly progress.”

Adequately yearly progressed used English language standardize testing as its only indicator to determine satisfactory adequate progress which resulted in a direct undermining and underfunding of Native American language revitalization programs (McCarty 2009). As a result, the call for adequate yearly progress impaired the ability for Native students attending Arizona

schools to receive cultural and linguistic curriculum furthering language loss in Yo'eme communities. For Yo'eme people the need to promote, protect, and reclaim the Yo'eme language remains at the forefront of their endeavors. Given the circumstances, Yo'eme people, like other Native communities, cannot draw from other nation-states in order to protect the past and secure the present of their languages (Lomawaima and McCarty 2006). Therefore, it is imperative that tribal citizens, native and non-native people, as well as language advocates push forth the right of tribal nations to exercise their inherent cultural sovereignty, as Native nations (Coffey and Tsosie 2001). It is through the defense and assertion of cultural sovereignty that Yo'eme, like other tribal nations, will be able to protect and reclaim their heritage language by choosing to “remain Indian” on their own terms (Lomawaima and McCarty 2006).

Living Yo'eme through our language

The Yo'eme cultural and linguistic game design hopes to relay key conceptual communication while emphasizing reading and writing in the heritage language. Therefore, recreating elements of the Yo'eme language and culture as traditional and contemporary objectives. Given these circumstances, it is fundamental for the language spaces to play a more significant role in the game's influence on the players. To illustrate, I have chosen a square in which greetings are the focus of the language learning lesson. As a reader, you will be able to navigate the same space each player occupies while playing in the novice, intermediate, and advanced categories.

Briefly stated, the examples chosen are intended to showcase the board game's core values. There are lessons to be learned, taught, and shared among the game's categories of language, culture, storytelling, history, and resistance. These representative examples convey what the game is about: to preserve and enrich the Yo'eme language, knowledge, and all the

elements that make up Yo'eme culture and identity. The provided examples in this thesis are just a sample of what the game has to offer. The square's cultural and linguistic knowledge is displayed to encourage the applicability of Yo'eme knowledge and principles into the gamer's life. Thus, the examples chosen are ones that showcase Yo'eme of the past, present, and future fighting to preserve the legacy of the ancestors. With that in mind, the chosen square intends to reap the fruits of Yo'eme knowledge source: culture and language through storytelling, history, and resistance.

Yo'em Noki-Language (advanced category)

(See illustration 1, *Noki: Language*)

For the player to advance to each square, they have to roll the dice. Once the player lands in the respective square, he/she needs to roll the dice once again, and the number that comes from the roll of the dice will dictate the question they have to answer. Take for the example below, the player (advanced level) rolls a 2.

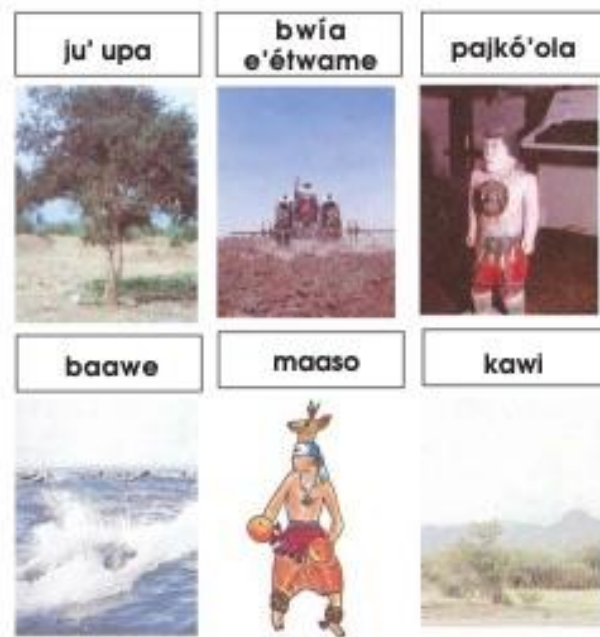


Figure 2 (Illustration 1: Yo'em Noki: Language)

Yo'em Noki-Language (advanced category)

Match and translate each image with its respective sentence: *Hitasa itou etehok?*

- 1) *Hu'u __ si'ime Yo'em bwiat aayuk.*
- 2) *Hu'u __ ye'e pahko'apo. A: Maaso, The deer dancer dances during our ceremonial festivities.*
- 3) *Hu'u __ tevesi vo'oka, kuchum si vu'u.*
- 4) *Hu'u __ tenevoim uhyolisi hitua.*
- 5) *Hu'u __ tevesi vo'oka mason ama aane.*
- 6) *Hu'u __ mo'itiwa, achaim ama aane.*



Figure 3 (Illustration 2: **Yo'em Noki: Language**)

Yo'em Noki-Language (advanced category)

1) Please provide a translation, response, and explanation for the use of the following greeting: *Haisa maisi eme ala'eaka yeu matchuk?* **Answer:** *Kaave ko'okoe; This greeting*

gets utilized when addressing a crowd of Yo'eme. It means: How did everyone awaken today? The response, *Kaave ko'okoe: in good health/still alive.*

Yo'em Noki-Language (intermediate category)

1) Provide the singular and plural response to Lioh enchi/m aniavu: Creator helps you/you all. **Answer:** *Lioh enchi(s)/enchim(pl) chiokoe:* Creator blesses you.

Yo'em Noki-Language (novice category)

1) The greeting, *Ketche-'em allea?* Are you doing good? Is used as both an informal greeting or as part of a formal greeting ex: *Lioh enchi aniavu ketche-'em allea?:* Creator helps you; are you doing good? What will be the response to *Ketch-'em allea?* **Answer:** *Ket tu'i:* everything is still well.

The above square is representative of the language used in traditional and quotidian instances. It is representative of an identity marker of past and present-day Yo'eme by utilizing the use of the language as an avenue of communication and identity marker.

Intergenerational learning in a dynamic environment

The learning objective of the game is to obtain as much Yo'eme cultural knowledge as possible each time the game is played. However, the cultural game is not designed with the intent to establish a hierarchy of winners and losers, but rather to show the multiple paths one can take to learn more about the Yo'eme heritage language and culture while promoting intergenerational communication. Therefore, an examination of the game's context is needed to give the audience a better understanding of the game as a language ideological intervention—one designed to influence and shape what Hopi scholar Sheilah Nicholas (2014) has termed “emergent ideologies.”

To begin the analysis, it is important to return to Yo'eme traditional discourse. Among the Yo'eme, the combination of *ania*(universe/cosmos) together with another noun expresses a particular term that not only denotes a symbolic and/or real space (Zamarron, 1998), but a connotation which refers

to a whole conception embedded in various representations of universes (religious and holistic) linked to Yo'eme worldview. As a result, the cultural board game focuses on Yo'eme cultural practices, which include discursive resources, to which cosmovision and worldview influence daily practices and rituals. These daily practices and rituals give sustenance and continuity to fundamental emblems of Yo'eme ethnic identity.

To give the audience some context I have included examples of the game. The following square, Yo'em Lu'uturia: Culture-*Huya Ania* (the wilderness world), is an example of one of the many sections dealing with culture and worldview gamers will come across while playing the game. This example was chosen among an array of cultural and linguistic examples to showcase the many ways in which discourse, storytelling, history, culture, and resistance intertwine together in Yo'eme use of language and cultural practice. To demonstrate, let's examine questions in the square of culture: Yo'em Lu'uturia

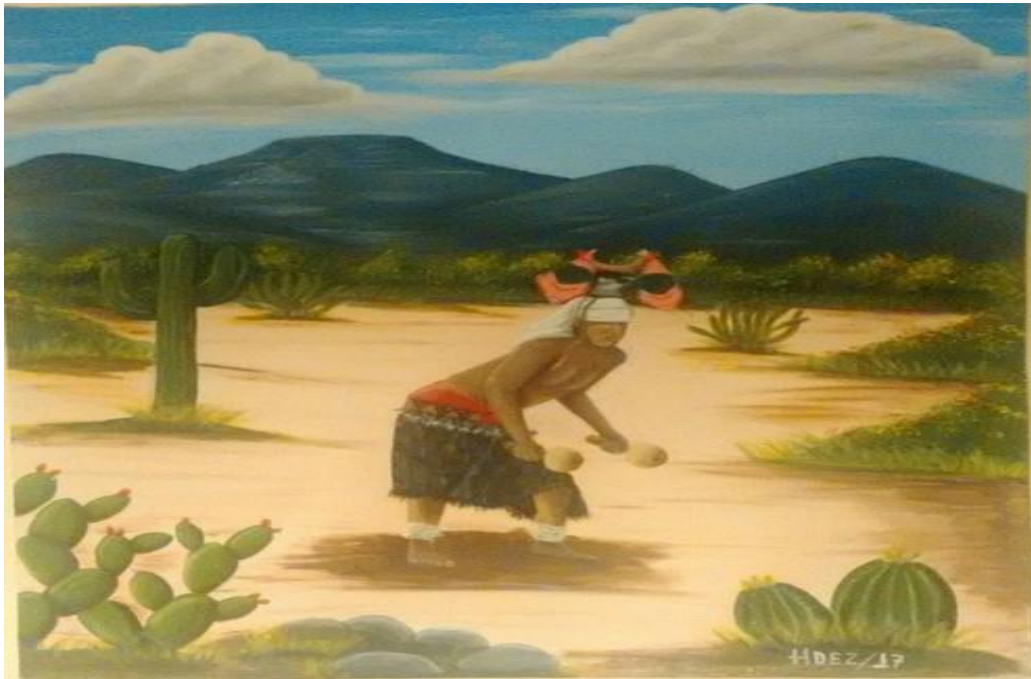


Figure 4 (Illustration 3, Lu'uturia: Culture)

Yo'em Lu'uturia: Culture

Lu'uturia (sample question from intermediate level)

- 1) Found in the Huya Ania, name the being known to grant power and the gifts for Pascola members to dance, play music, and perform their humorous speech? **A: Hu'u**

Chivato: The Chivato, a male goat

Lu'uturia (sample question from beginner level)

- 1) Found in the Huya Ania, name the beings known today as the ancestors of the Yo'eme?

A: The Surem

Lu'uturia (sample question from advanced level)

Read and translate the following story in Yo'eme about the Surem and their transition to permanency in the Huya Ania:

1 (Huname'e Surem vaha Huya Aniata watek). 2 (Bwe'ituk wame'e kaa vato'imtukame), 3 (vea huyau watekam). 4 (Huname'e vea huya kowimtik, masomtuk, ouseimtuk, yookomtuk). 5 (Si'ime yoawamtuk huname'e ian itom vivicha'u). 6 (Ta vat naatekai wa'a vatoowawakame, into inim taawak). 7 (Ta ime'e yori into wate kia itom kaa homem hiia). 8 (Kaa itom ho'ak ti hiaka vea, hunaka'a bwiata itom u'uravaekai). 9 (Hunuen itom kia rehte tiia, kaa itom ho'ak, kia kau goho'oriapo itom ho'ak tiia, nuen vea inika'a bwiata itom bwiseka, veja kaa itom ama yeu kate ti hiaksa, ian vea Hiak Vatwepo teuwawa). 10 (Yoemia inien a hu'uneyane ni'I wa'a Surem vetana).

1 (These, the Surem, they are the ones who decided to move into the wilderness world). **2**

(Because they choose to not be human), **3** (they are the ones who went to the wilderness).

4 (Precisely, now, these beings proceeded to become boar, deer, mountain lions, jaguars, and tigers). **5** (All of them became animals, the animals we see nowadays). **6** (At the

point of contact, those who decided to accept the changes, they remain. It is those Sure to whom we are descendants of today). **7** (However, beware the white man will say that we

are nomads, that we moved). **8** (They say that we never had a home, the truth is that they want to steal our land). **9** (They will say that we have never settle, that we migrated, that our home is non-existent, that we were ignorant ones who lived in the mountains and in caves. They say, we took over this land by force, that we do not want to leave, what is our homeland, our Rio Yaqui). **10** (My relatives, it is very important that we never forget where we come from in order to honor our ancestors).



*Figure 5 (Illustration 4, **Lu'uturia**: Culture)*

The following square also examines culture through the context of the traditional Deer and Pascola dances. Such dances are considered vital elements of Yo'eme identity and cultural resistance.

Yo'em Lu'uturia (novice category)

1) When is the deer dancer allowed to dance? **Answer:** During religious ceremonies and festivities.

Yoem Lu'uturia (intermediate category)

1) Where do the deities of the *Maaso Yi'iwame*: Deer dancer originate? **Answer:** *Huya Ania*: Wilderness world.

Yo'em Lu'uturia (advanced category)

1) Please read and translate an excerpt regarding the importance of the *Maso*

Yi'iwame: Deer Dance?

Uu Maso yi'iwame che'a si'imem vepa yosiriwa, bweitu hunum yeu weye wa itom Yo'em ee'ri into utte'a, wa maso into Pahkoola yi'iwame che' a howa siimem vepa, pahkompo im Yo'em pueplo vel'lekatana.

The deer dance is one of the vital dances of the Yo'eme people. The dance is considered a symbol of identity and cultural resistance and often danced along with the Pascola dance.

The Deer dance performed during the ceremonial calendar and religious festivities.

Living Yo'eme by remembering our Vat'nataka: History

In the Yo'eme language, *Vat' nataka into ian weria*: Our past and present, are indicative of the time frame used to delineate Yo'eme history. For Yo'eme people, the past is as relevant and alive as the present. In this sense, history Yo'eme tribal history is a needed truth for Yo'eme people to follow the ancestral path. (see illustration 5, *Vat'nataka into ian weria: Yo'eme History*)

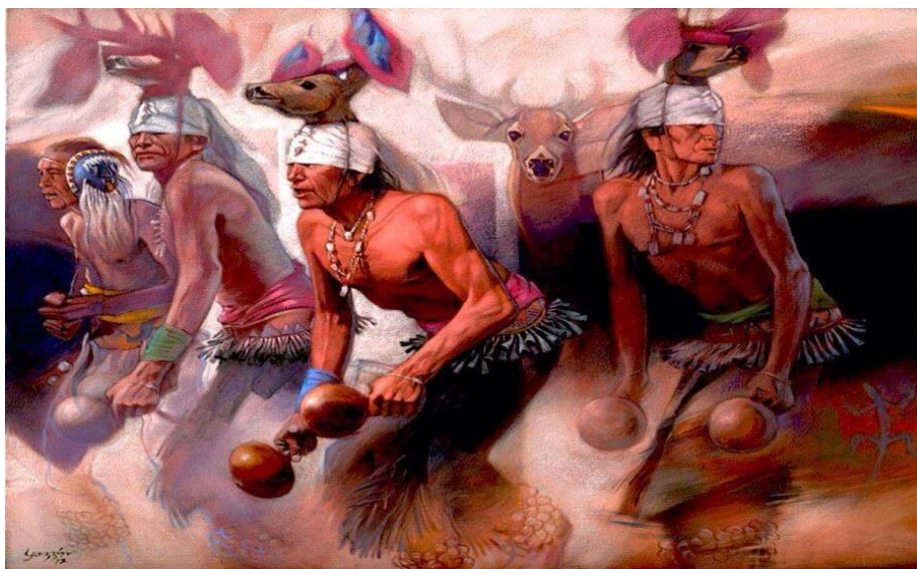


Figure 6 (Illustration 5: Vat' nataka into ian weria: History)

Yo'eme history (novice category)

1) Why is September 18, 1978, a day to remember for Yo'eme in the United States? **Answer:** Yo'eme gained federal recognition as a tribal nation.

Yo'eme history (intermediate category)

1) In 1740, Led by Juan Calixto Ayamea, the Yo'eme were able to fend off Spanish rule through a plan of unification. Which tribal nations participated in the Sonoran revolt of 1740? **Answer:** Pimas, Opatas, Mayos, O'odham, and Yo'eme.

Yo'eme: The ones who follow the ancestral path through resistance

As Chickasaw scholar and anthropologist Shannon Speed has emphasized, “Latin American states are settler colonial states, though they are rarely analyzed this way” (Speed 2017:783). For the Yo'eme people, as a transborder Indigenous nation (Mexico and the U.S.), this analysis has a very explicit significance. Since 1543, The past 477 years have seen three nation states (Spain, Mexico, and U.S.), develop around the Yo'eme homeland. During this time frame, the Yo'eme people have experienced wars of wars of extermination which brought down

the Yo'eme population by approximately 82 percent (Taibo 2013 and Spicer 1980). Borrowing from Speed's (2017) anti-colonial research, it is fundamental to understand how Latin American states (Mexico for the Yo'eme) continue to operate as a colony despite the assumption that in Mexico, the colony is assumed to have ended with Independence from Spain. Therefore, we come to an understanding of how Yo'eme existence continues to be characterized by a deeply rooted defense of territory, culture, and language. As such, the creation of the board game attempts to serve as an ideological contribution designed to impart Indigenous knowledge to further enhance Yo'eme tribal members critical language awareness (Lee 2014). This sought-after awareness will allow for Yo'eme tribal members to be conscious of the historical oppressions the Yo'eme language has faced as a direct result of colonialism. Additionally, it will allow for Yo'eme people to understand the underlying responsibility they have to push forth the legacy of the ancestors.

In order to provide the gamer with 'critical awareness' (Lee 2014), it is necessary for tribal members to understand the historical oppressions that have hindered the cultural continuity of the Yo'eme people. Therefore, it is fundamental for the game to include historical colonial oppressions manifested as challenges spread out throughout the game. This series of squares presenting colonial imposed adversity to the gamer are intended to serve as more than just booby trap. In fact, these squares are set up to show the historical times in which Yo'eme people experienced extreme hardship. This will present the opportunity for gamers, who may have yet learnt about these circumstances, to reach an understanding of the sacrifices and resistance of the ancestors as well as the responsibility they have inherited in order to be Yo'eme: "walk in the ancestor's path." To better understand the lessons in play let's examine questions intended to demonstrate Yo'eme resistance in the board game.



Figure 7 (Illustration 6 **Namakasia: Resistance- the strength and resilience of the ancestors**).

Namakasia: Resistance

Namakasia (sample question from intermediate level)

- 1) Due to their Indigenous heritage, the Yo’eme were targeted by the Mexican government.

To which of the following places where they deported? **A: All of the above-Yucatan, Veracruz, Oaxaca, Cuba, Costa Rica, Africa.**

Namakasia (sample question from beginner level)

- 1) During the exile, order to return home to Arizona and Sonora, what did Yo’eme have to do? **A: Walk over 2,000 miles to return to the homeland.**

Namakasia (sample question from advanced level)

- 1) Read and translate the following story about the Dance of the Raccoon and the Yo’eme lost the tradition in the wars of extermination.

1 (Hunak hakko uka goh naiki pueplota nanancha a ho’ako, bweere pahkompo ian venasi nesanuwan). 2 (Chooparau yi’iwame savala Looria pahkopo yi’iwan inim goh naiki pueplompo). 3 (Ian kaita lu’utek amau tawala si’ime, katte humak intok a vitne. Itepo intok eme’e uusim ian katria). 4 (Huna’a chooparau yeye’eme tosali

payummea kovata suma'ine nakam vewit payupuntam, kom cha'arine, wituhammea intok puhvata yoka'ine). 5 (Vichaa komimpo ket tosali payummea au suma'ine, popuntam ket kom nau cha'arine). 6 (Mampo makochiam hipu'une, sanava chikam. Mathcuu tahtia ye'ekai ansune). 7 (Mathcuu tahtia ye'ekai ansune. Wepulaikai hiva yi'ine a bwikriame intok goine). 8 (Bweheta ba'apo movektaikai kutae a vepne, senu intok vavu pu'atota bwiapo a movektaikai ket ili kutae a vevakai bwikne). 9 (Sehtul hiva ne a vichak looria pahkopo, ke yee Yukataneu toiwao).

1 (Some time ago when the Yo'eme pueblos lived uninterrupted, as it was tradition, great festivities like the ones we have today use to take place **2** (The Racoon dance used to take place during the festivity of Saturday of Glory in the Yo'eme homeland). **3**

(Unfortunately, today these dances are no more, everything has been left behind. We probably will never get to see them. We the elders or you the youth, we might never get to see it again). **4** (It is said, that the one who Racoon dances, dances with a white handkerchief in the head, the corners of the handkerchief are to be tied to one's ears, pointing down, and with burnt bone fragments one will paint its face). **5** (The white handkerchief needs to be tied near the fist, while the corners of the handkerchief should also point down). **6** (The dancer will have palm tree seeds in his hands along with fragments of corn leaf). **7** (The dance will continue dancing till dawn. There is only one dancer and two singers present). **8** (Placing the gourd face down into the water, one of the singers will hit it with its wood. While the other will place a clay plate face down in the ground and with his piece he will hit the clay plate and sing all at once). **9** (It was last seen in a festivity during a Glory Saturday performed, before we got deported to Yucatan

and we lost our beloved tradition).

To clarify, every time a gamer lands in one of these designated “resistance” squares, the gamer will be required to pay a tribute to his ancestors. The tribute will require a sacrifice in either a form of trading currency or an artifact collected for his Deer dancer. The gamer will not lose for landing in these squares, but it will require the gamer to give an extra effort in order to recover from the set-back. As addressed in the previously mentioned square, (Estacion Lencho), for those tribal members who are unaware of the hardships experienced by their ancestors this game will certainly provide the needed knowledge to understand current language conditions and the need for reclamation. For those tribal members who are aware of the conditions experienced by their ancestors, this game will seek to fuel the fire of motivation in order to inspire them and many others to be advocates and defenders of Yo’eme cultural sovereignty.

Yo’eme agency and resistance rooted in traditional discourse

Historically Yo’eme women’s matriarchal assertion of agency in the community has served as the driving force to sustain cultural continuity in the home. However, with settler colonial globalization and the introduction of Christianity, multiple Euro-American ideologies have reinforced a devaluing view of the roles, tasks, and spaces traditionally assigned to Yo’eme women in the community (Elsa 2013). Therefore, reexamining traditional Yo’eme society will present a cosmological model based on the traditional role of the Yo’eme women (Yo’em hamut). Each Yo’eme woman, through asserting her individual agency to sustain material, moral, and cultural reproduction.

In similar but controversial fashion, anthropologist Kirstin Erickson emphasized that Yo’eme women’s agency is asserted through ritual activity and the socialization carried out in the home as a fundamental contribution to Yo’eme identity reproduction (Erickson 2009:97).

However, Erickson also added that the Yo'eme home is a space of great contention for Yo'eme women. According to Erickson, the 'matrifocal' centered tendency in Yo'eme communities promotes roles of authority and agency that cultivate both empowerment but also disempowerment of Yo'eme women (Erickson 2009:100). Erickson's assessment of the Yo'eme household was based strictly from a non-indigenous perspective. She saw Yo'eme women as circumscribed to the domestic sphere and reinforced by culture through 'ideologies limiting the location of a women's activity' (Erickson 2009:101). Shortly after however, Erickson notes that 'the women I know never portrayed themselves to me as confined or stuck at home' (Erickson 2009:101).

Briefly stated, Erikson's ethnography in Potam Pueblo lacks understanding of Yo'eme Indigenous worldview and the value of Yo'eme women in supporting their families and communities. Laguna Pueblo Scholar and Poet, Paula Gunn Allen argued that Native women play a critical role in shaping their communities, including roles of political leadership amongst which the support of their families and communities depend on (Allen 1986). Allen described the assertion of Indigenous female agency as a fundamental value of Indigenous feminism. Additionally, she criticized the tendency for Euro-American values influencing feminist movemetsns as dismissive of the critical role Native women play in building and supporting their communities and families (Allen 1986). Instead of challenging the settler colonial nation state notion of delimiting gender roles, Erickson goes onto describe a Yo'eme social structure as encroaching on Yo'eme women's agency.

For the Yo'eme, the result of the implementation of settler colonial ideologies derived from the vision of the nation state to replace and assimilate has led to the loss of economic, political, and cultural autonomy. These intrusions on Yo'eme sovereignty have brought the

reversal of traditional practices and institutions within the community. Resulting in a greater influence of dominant society ideologies influencing the distortion, discontinuation, and questioning of traditional structures. Intrinsic to these processes, as Native anthropologist Shannon Speed has articulated, colonialism’s ‘current iteration-neoliberalism’ has incorporated the proliferation of values shaped by the ‘settler colonial imperative of dispossession, extraction, and elimination” (Speed 2019:24) Taken together, these factors, have the effect of rethinking the roles and social relations between genders and generations, producing changes in the perceived structure of Yo’eme society. To better understand Yo’eme agency and resistance rooted in traditional practices let’s examine a sample square in the culture and language board game.



Figure 8 (Illustration 7 **Susuama: Storytelling**)

Susuama: Storytelling (sample questions from beginner level)

- 1) What does the name Yomomuli mean? **A: Enchanted bee**

Susuama: Storytelling (sample questions from advanced level)

- 1) Read and translate the story of Yomumuli and the talking tree.

1 (Hewi, Yoemia, nehpo ket emou etehovae wame’e Surem vetana, inim Yo’empo

hoho'asukame). 2 (Hume'e tua im hoomem. Itom Lioh Achai im am hu'unaktek,
 huname'e itom yo'owam, namet itepo yeu sahak). 3 (Name'e Surem im Yo'em
 pueplompo naah kuaktek into kaa vato'imtukan). 4 (Hunuen Lioh Achai vea am
 chupak. Hunak vea hume'e wasuktiam siik, vea yuumak hume'e taewaim Yorim
 ameau vittuavaawaka tehwak). 5 (Vat naatekai, hunak vea kuta wakia nokvaeka
 weyek, bweta kaave a mammate). 6 (Luula kom yehteo, hunum haksa vea tosisiti
 hihutaite hu'u kuta. Hunama'a vea hu'u kuta nooka, bweta kave a hikkaha). 7
 (Hunum aman vea hu'u yoemem vea a mammate hikkahivae. Vea si'ime wame'e
 Yo'emta ama au yeu mamatchu). 8 (Hume'e Yo'emem kateka, hunum vatwe vetana
 kateka, vea ili hamut vemetau yahak). 9 (Au yahaka vea au tevotek. Huna'a ili
 hamut vea, Hausa eme'e sahak?). 10 (Ti ameu hiia wame'e Yoememmewi. Wam te
 Yo'em Pueplota nau yeu yahawi, kutata nokvae teamtawi aman, te nokhikkahivae).
 11 (Ti au hiia. Ta kave nokhikkahimachi, hitasa a teuwavae'u). 12 (Yomomuli:
 Hunuenpo amani si enchim nee aman weiyavao, nee enchim kombilaraoavo, tua
 nehpo ket enchim kompanyaroane aman vichaa, bweta ni malatawi achaita nokne).
 13 (Huna'a yo'ora vea lisenziata nenkine, eme'e vea nee avo nu'une). 14 (Huna'a
 ya'ura vea tuasu vea tu'I ti hiuwaka vea, aman sahak ili hamuttawi, au uhvwanaka
 vea a nuksahak aman vichaa. Hunak beha aman kuvahim hihutuawak, Yo'em
 Pueplom vetana hume'e kuvahim popomwak. Hunumpo vea nattemae u ili maala,
 hak horapo a momoviaro'a u a tosisitahiutaiteo). 15 (Hunama'a vea hoowak,
 chuvatuk vea hiutaitek hu'u kuta. Hunak vea aman kikteka vea a hikkaha, a
 hikkaha, a hikkaha. Chukula yesteka vea, ameu a teuwataitek hume'e
 Yoememmewi: 16 (Ya'ura si'imem im aneme, leim, Yoemaria im aneme, nehpo

enchim tehwavae wa'a itom vatowaneme itou yevisne.) 17 (Into wa'a Yo'emta hinneuneeme ket anne. Wa'a itom aniane, kaa itom bwa'ana vetchi'ivo, hunu'u ket kavetune me'etune.) 1 (In this way, my relatives, I am going to tell you the story about those who occupied the Yo'eme homeland). 2 (The Surem, they are natives to our homeland, they are Native because our Creator created them here, they are our ancestors, we originated from them). 3 (The Surem lived here in the Yo'eme homeland, they were never baptized or colonized). 4 (Our Creator made them unique in that way. As time passed, the day arrived in which it was told to them that one day intruders will arrive). 5 (At that time, an old dried tree began to talk, but no one could understand it). 6 (Around noon, the tree began to make lots of noise. The tree will talk but no one could understand it). 7 (In this way, the residents of the Yo'eme homeland attempted to understand the tree. All the residents of the Yo'eme homeland stayed up day and night to try to find out what it had to say). 8 (One day a group of Yo'eme crossing the Yaqui River found a young little girl). 9 (When they saw her, they greeted her. She asked, where are you headed too?) 10 (Those were her exact words to those Yo'eme. They responded, we are headed were a big group of Yo'eme is congregated. Over there where it is said that there is a tree who can talk, we want to hear it talk). 11 (Those were their exact words. However, no one can understand what the tree is trying to say). 12 (Yomomuli said, thus, if you all can take me over there, if you all can invite me, I certainly will accept your invitation, but before we do so, we have to ask my mother and father permission). 13 (If I am granted permission by my elders as well, then you can come get me). 14 (Upon receiving permission from her parents, the Yo'eme went for Yumumuli. On behalf of the Yo'eme homeland, drums were beating. Therefore, Yomumuli asked: what time does the tree start

making noise). 15 (Every Yo'eme in attendance witnessed the tree talking, everyone standing paid close attention and listened, they listened, they listened. Soon after, they took a seat. Yomomuli proceeded to say: My relatives) : 16 (The tree tells us that one day, intruders will come to our land with the ends of eliminating our beliefs and indoctrinating us). 17 (But there will also be one coming to us, one given to us, one who will save us from the evil no one has been able to stop.

The Yo'eme people, despite colonial intrusion, continue to manifest the systems of traditional ceremony, culture, discourse, and political authority based on ancestral practices. Following the teachings of the ancestors, the Yo'eme seek to preserve their identity and persistence by utilizing the language and culture for the defense of political and cultural sovereignty. Additionally, through Yo'eme traditional discourse, Yo'eme people, (men and women/youth and adults), can reach a better understanding of their equally vital role of preserving the legacy of the ancestors.

As previously analyzed, the game is another example of how the Yo'eme language is dynamic as the game has undergone and continues to undergo adaptations to better serve the needs of its users. This is precisely why the game is both a representation while also an avenue to the present and future. It presents Yo'eme people with the opportunity to appreciate the sacrifices made by our own ancestors in order for us to become carriers of their legacy as worthy representatives in today's day and age. Yo'eme is very much alive and it lives in the hearts and minds of many of the descendants of the original defenders of Itom Yo'em Bwaian (Our Yo'eme Homeland.)

Part Four:

Assessing the Ideological impact of Yo'eme Language revitalization efforts

The following passage describes the ideological impact of the two ongoing language reclamation projects. It is necessary to take into account that the projects are still ongoing and in the developmental process. During the summer of 2017, Kelly Stewart, director of Cultural Preservation for the Torres Martinez Tribal TANF, asked me if I was interested in teaching the Yo'eme language in Los Angeles. From September 2017 to September 2018, the Torres Martinez Tribal TANF office located in Monterrey Park, CA, was the site for Yo'eme language revitalization. Not only was this an opportunity to share the language, but it was also an opportunity to use the classroom as the site of testing for the Yo'eme culture and language board game. Previously the game was utilized in my home and modified accordingly. However, it was in the class that both the weaknesses and strengths of the game came to life.

The classes hosted twice a month had an incredible turnout. I was fortunate to see as many as 30 Yo'eme Tribal citizens and descendants in regular attendance, ranging from ages 3 to ages 91. The ample range in age and size of the students provided a perfect sample audience for testing the game. Upon testing, one of the most significant weaknesses exposed in the game was the apparent need to provide a linguistic challenge to those who possessed above-average linguistic and cultural understanding.

The initial design of the game had my sister, at the time 15 years old, as the target audience. However, fostering language learning is not done through a one size fits all approach. Despite initial positive results coming from the first trials of the board game, the game needed to cover a broader spectrum of knowledge to reach a wider audience. After consulting with my thesis committee adviser, Paul Kroskrity, we determined that a better approach to the board game

would be to create a distinct set of categories made to address the different learning capabilities of players.

Shortly after, the task to add alternative levels to the existing language and culture categories began. The expansion added 12 additional questions (six intermediate and six advanced), to each square. This new advance allowed the board game to better cater to each Yo'eme language learner's specific needs at their particular level of understanding.

Changing “beliefs and feelings” about the language

In my personal opinion, the most rewarding aspect of teaching the language is seeing it “grow on” tribal members. Each student learns at a different pace, but regardless of how much they can remember, it is what remains with them that truly matters. The following quotes are taken directly from the students who participated in Yo'eme language revitalization classes at Monterrey Park, CA, during the 2017-2018 cycle and again during February of 2020 to the abrupt ending, of course, due to the global pandemic.¹ The names of the students have been replaced with Yo'eme names to protect their confidentiality and preserve anonymity. *Hiapsi and Kawi* (Heart and Mountain): I met *Hiapsi* 15, and her father, *Kawi*, during my first week of teaching Yo'eme at Monterrey Park. *Hiapsi* was quiet yet assertive, only speaking when she felt she was correct. In conversation, I asked her, "Most of the time you know the answers to the questions, yet you don't share with the class, why is that?" *Hiapsi said*, "In the past, people have corrected me, questioned me, and made me feel uncomfortable about how I use the (Yo'eme) language. Not knowing how to use the language has only made me feel less native. Why should I spend time learning a language with no future?"

¹ Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic our last in person class took place February 17, 2020.

Hiapsi's words resonated with me. They made me think about ways in which, as a language advocate, I can provide a 'safe heaven' for language learners. *Hiapsi's* feelings about the language were not uncommon. Her father, *Kawi* (Mountain), expressed the following about the Yo'eme language, "I know being here, learning my language is the right thing to do. How much would I use it? I don't know. It just feels right." *Kawi's* honest answer is closely aligned with the "static image" Trujillo (1997) portrayed of the language. These assessments were taken from the students during the first month of class. At the time, little did I know how much the game would impact students like *Kawi* and his daughter *Hiapsi*.

Our language classes lasted three hours, including a 30-minute dinner before the start of each lesson. To begin the testing of the game, I assigned the last hour of each session to play the board game. It did not take long for *Hiapsi* to become comfortable and take a lead role in participating both during class and during the gameplay. Towards the end of the one-year course, I asked *Hiapsi* how she felt about the Yo'eme language. *Hiapsi* responded, "The (Yo'eme) language gives me purpose. It gives me a sense of pride and identity. There is no limit to what I can do with Yo'eme. I can communicate with my dad, and I can pray, and I can use the language and culture to live the way my ancestors would want me to live." *Hiapsi's* perspective about the language had shifted, she no longer saw the language as an archived only accessed during times of ceremony, but as an avenue of empowerment. Another student, Tenku 17, explained :

'Through the game, I have learned that there is much more to our language than just vocabulary, the cultural part of our language, particularly when greeting one another carries a powerful meaning for me. It teaches me that I am never alone even when I find myself physically alone and feeling consumed by darkness. The teachings found in both the game and in the class are invaluable to me. Life and its experiences have not been

kind to me, but I have learned that as a person of Yo'eme ancestry I am not alone because I carry my ancestors with me. That brings relief, hope, and strength to my heart. My life has meaning, even if it does not always seem like that. Through my culture and language, I am reminded that I have purpose, and no one can take that away from me. I come from the people who speak with authority, the authority given to me by Creator and inherited through my ancestors. I am Yo'eme.

As Tenku would go on to express, given that the language is being learned as the game is being played, critical cultural context and history is being learned.

As previously mentioned, the board game's creation and implementation pointed to the need for a Yo'eme language dictionary to provide a resource for gamers and students of the language. We were fortunate to have the Torres Martinez Tribal TANF provide ten copies of Shaul, Molina, and Valenzuela's Yo'eme Dictionary for our use during the classes. Students and I immediately noticed that having a dictionary was a blessing for vocabulary expansion and general practice. However, as a class, as community members, and, I, as a dictionary-maker, we all concluded that an addition to the current dictionary was needed to showcase sentence structures pointing to cultural knowledge and everyday use of the language. The dictionary-making process, which was already in the Yo'eme Language Project plans, received a boost of motivation to officially undertake the process. Every week sentences were tested and consulted with TANF students and my dictionary consultants (Elder Valenzuela and Language advocate Domi Molina) and my father and other family members. The students' comments provided feedback, which contributed to the dictionary's improvements and an analysis of the "beliefs and feelings" towards the language expressed by students using the dictionary.

To further analyze the dictionary's impact, it is necessary to examine experiences shared by Yo'eme youth in their role of language learners, gamers, and dictionary collaborators. *Ania(universe)*, 16, a Yo'eme student, mentioned, "I have a confession to make, over 35 people are coming to class weekly, and there are only ten copies of the dictionary available. So, I decided to borrow one, without telling anyone, so I could use it to look up words. Now that you are sharing the new dictionary you are making with us. I have decided to return the 'borrowed' copy. I am thrilled with the amount of detail and examples provided in the new dictionary but overall the amount of relatedness it has to my every life. It shows me that the language I am learning I can easily use it daily."

Ania's cousin, *Wikit* (Birdie) 20, further elaborated,

"my favorite part about the dictionary is the cultural content. When I joined the class, I was skeptical of the way Yo'eme culture is portrayed as a very male-dominant society. Almost in a way that is dismissive of non-gender binary individuals. I was amazed to learn that my Yo'eme language is a language that is inclusive of gender-neutral individuals. For example, I love how the definition of *aapo* (they, them) has no ties to gender whatsoever, and it is perfectly acceptable to use the term to describe others. I have longed for my culture for so long, and now that I am learning more about my culture, I could not feel any prouder to learn the language of my ancestors."

Wikit's experience learning the language and using the dictionary as a tool of decolonization speak about the nature of the project as an indigenization avenue for Yo'eme of all ages.

Sewa(flower), 16, another student and cousin of *Hiapsi*, also experienced a change in attitudes and feelings towards the heritage language. When I first asked her, what do you like more about the class? she responded, "I come because my mom forces me to come." However, it

did not take long for Sewa to become an active participant in the class. About her experiences, Sewa said, "when my mother told me, get your stuff we are going to go learn our language, I was upset, more learning, I already have to go to school, I do not need any more education. But things are different during our class meetings. Learning is made fun and very easy with the game. Not only am I learning the language of my people, but I am also learning our history, our songs, and our stories. The game allows me to identify with our culture. It has also made me a better student, and I want to get good grades so I can go to college and be a fighter for my people." The culture and language board game reaffirms the importance of the Yo'eme language as an ancestral guiding path, 'a gift from Creator,' and as a source of cultural identity. Both youth and adults utilized the board game and the Yo'eme language dictionary as a 'safe haven' not to feel ashamed of their lack of fluency and cultural knowledge, but rather to enhance and expand their Indigenous knowledge. Thus, the youth no longer see the ancestral language as speaking the past, and hence 'static,' utilize it as a form of 'speaking the present' with pride and resilience.

Ever-changing, ever evolving: The future

In writing this section, the words of my grandfather resonated in my thought. As recently as our last conversation, my grandfather asked, 'when are you going to finish your language projects?' My response, 'I just need a little more time,' he replied, 'time is what there is to spare. What is missing is life to live. Despite the progress made on the dictionary and the board game, these works remain as ongoing linguistic revitalization efforts in need of revision and improvement. I am happy to say that the dictionary as representative of a living and recovering language will never be a finished work. However, the need to further enhance the dictionary's effectiveness remains. As such, adding to the existing effort will be an forthcoming Spanish translation to address the needs of Yo'eme, whose primary language is not English.

Additionally, it is necessary to continue the sustained collaboration with community elders to produce an audio format to accompany the dictionary as a pronunciation guide. “Inspired by the community,” requires a sit down of Yo'eme language speakers to capture essential elements of the language and storytelling. To fully capture Yo'eme cultural and linguistic knowledge, it is necessary to consult and utilize Yo'eme of different ages and genders so the dictionary can adequately represent Yo'eme knowledge. By doing so, the collaborators of the YLP remain committed to providing a dictionary that serves as a vehicle of cultural conductivity reaffirming cultural and linguistic continuity.

As previously mentioned, the above collaborative works are founded based on community consultation and collaboration. The Yo'eme language and culture board game design aims to bring Yo'eme of all ages, particularly the youth and the elderly, to create a space that fosters language and cultural acquisition through a dynamic and entertaining game that facilitates intergenerational communication. The game's set up allows for those who possess enough cultural and linguistic knowledge to serve as the guiding source to pronunciation and recounting the stories within. However, in the likely case that a fluent speaker is not present, the gamers will be missing out on the pronunciation and content of the game. As such, I hope to continue my research and task to improve the board game by organizing resources and community members to create audio content to supplement the content of the board game and thus serving as a new yet, vital addition to the game.

Also, continuing the ongoing conversation on community collaboration. I hope to involve the youth in 'owning' the language, the culture, and the responsibility of being Yo'eme by allowing them to play a more significant part in designing the game. Before the COVID-19 pandemic started, I had raised funds to start a community-wide competition to create drawings

for each square of the game. The images used above are part of this ongoing collaboration, which I hope to return to in due time. The community collaboration does not only involve Yo'eme in the United States but also youth in the Yo'eme Pueblos of Northern Sonora. By promoting the board game in both the U.S. and Mexico, a path is paved for the near future, which sees the game be available in a trilingual application (Spanish, English, and Yo'eme) 'owned' and appreciated by Yo'eme in Mexico and the U.S. alike.

Linguistic contributions to Yo'eme Sovereignty: concluding remarks

Analyzing successful practices of language renewal found in the literature of endangered language documentation and revitalization heed us to a critical ideology: the need for 'language ideological clarification.' The term 'Language ideological clarification' was first introduced by Joshua Fishman (2001). However, it did not become a theoretical contribution to the field of American Indian languages until the published work of Nora Marks Dauenhauer (Tlingit) and her husband, Richard Dauenhauer (1998), and later Paul Kroskrity (2009). Over thirty years of community work in the Arizona Tewa and California Western Mono communities have led Kroskrity to produce a pivotal theoretical interpretation of 'language ideological clarification,' conceptualized as a process of bringing forth implicit and at times contradictory "beliefs, or feelings, about languages (Kroskrity 2004). This conceptualization focuses on the need for the speakers to become 'aware" of the many language ideological debates within their communities as they take on a more active role defending cultural sovereignty. This awareness most recently identified by Native scholar Tiffany Lee (Dine/Lakota) as 'critical language awareness'-the process which allows speakers to gain agency by 'embracing one's role in contributing to and transforming their communities and families" (Lee 2014).

As previously discussed, the culture and language board game's design transmits critical historical knowledge of colonial imposed oppression (by Spain, Mexico, and the United States), characterized By assimilation, genocide, and linguistic discrimination. The Yo'eme dictionary serves as a vehicle of cultural conductivity by fomenting language learning and cultural continuity found within the documented knowledge. Allowing students to use these two resources to access, learn, and revisit this information would allow for an elevation and refinement of their 'indigenous consciousness.

While both language revitalization products serve as tools of Yo'eme indigenization, by nature, the board game is an act of decolonization. Given its re-indigenizing nature, it contributes to the fostering of positive changes in the 'emergent language ideologies' of Yo'eme youth. Both the dictionary and the board game- provide a means for decolonization and indigenization of Yo'eme efforts to reclaim and revitalize the heritage language. The interactive design of the game pioneers a fun and dynamic way that Yo'eme youth can simultaneously take pride, celebrate, and own responsibility for their heritage language and culture. Altogether, these factors are crucial elements of transmission for Indigenous language reclamation (McCarty et al. 2008). Ultimately, it is essential to conclude by acknowledging these language revitalization efforts as inspired by and for the community as a collective and collaborative effort to defend Yo'eme cultural and political sovereignty. Consequently, the foundation for Indigenous epistemology resides in community-based ideologies, participation, and objectives and guided by principles of linguistic and cultural knowledge and, combined with academic resources, result in the enhancement of language reclamation and reinvigoration of the tribe's cultural sovereignty.

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