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Language Management in Diaspora:
Tu'un Nda'vi, Spanish, English, Constricted Agency, and Social Capital in a Oaxacan Indigenous Diasporic Community

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by

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I dedicate this dissertation to the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, without whom this dissertation would not be possible, to my wife, Shana and my kids, Unai and Enara, and my family and friends for their love and support.

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ABSTRACT

Language Management in Diaspora:

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Miguel C. Morán-Lanier

This dissertation examines individual, constricted agency in a multilingual environment within the context of a language discussion group and the form of social capital possessed by their Mexican Indigenous diasporic community living on the California Central Coast. The research is based on participant-observation ethnographic work with a language and literacy exploration group of four Mixteco men, speakers of Tu'un Nda'vi, a variety of Mixteco. This group was created with the purpose of exploring Spanish language topics, which expanded to the exploration of Tu'un Nda'vi literacy and English language needs. The group was sponsored under the auspices of a regional Indigenous community organization, which was in operation during the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque.*

Despite the history of Spanish as a colonial language and its legacy of oppression and assimilation for Mexican Indigenous communities in their ancestral places of origin, learning Spanish was identified by a Mixteco community leader that coordinated the creation of the group as one of the most important needs for his diasporic community living on the California Central Coast. The internal and external language use of Tu'un Nda'vi and

Spanish within their community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and this community organization is analyzed through the lens of social capital. However, social capital as conceptualized by Bourdieu (1985) is insufficient in describing the forms of social capital demonstrated within this community. Grounded in ethnographic work conducted within *el grupo de enfoque* through the community organization and building on the work of Bourdieu (1985), Coleman (1988), and Portes (1998), I introduce an expanded model of social capital that serves to identify, understand, and analyze the community's adaptive potential within their diasporic context.

Additionally, the four men revealed a complex set of language needs that included the desire to develop literacy in Tu'un Nda'vi, an oral variety; they did not know of anyone in their language community that could read or write in this language. Two of the men who were fluent Spanish speakers expressed their need to learn English as well. While the four men demonstrated a strong desire to explore Tu'un Davi literacy, their stated language learning and literacy development priorities in English and Tu'un Nda'vi were conditional upon their level of Spanish fluency. I introduce the interrelated concepts of *constricted agency* and *functional resources*, as well as the concept of *sacrifice* as an alternative to choice, and their effect on the conditional language-learning and literacy prioritization for the men in the group within their situated diasporic contexts. Furthermore, I present an ontological framework for constricted agency to clarify the concept in relation to other forms of agency and its placement within a broader ontology of human agency.

The findings with regard to the dynamics of language-learning prioritization in diaspora discussed in this dissertation have potential implications for decolonizing multiliteracy

program development for Indigenous communities and first-language maintenance in diaspora through community-based projects and community-based research.

Key terms:

Spanish, Mixteco, ethnography, grounded theory, literacy, language maintenance, diaspora, social capital, and agency.

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1.0 Introduction

> *...tenemos el lenguaje [Tu'un Nda'vi], estamos batallando el español, y queremos el inglés... ¿Cuál es la importancia de mantener ese lenguaje [Tu'un Nda'vi]? ('...we have the language [Tu'un Nda'vi], we are fighting [to learn] Spanish, and we want English... What is the importance of maintaining the language [Tu'un Nda'vi]?')*
>
> —*Fidel, study participant*

This dissertation is based on an ethnographic research study investigating the factors influencing the literacy development and language-learning prioritization of four Mixteco men in a language and literacy focus group (*el grupo de enfoque*). I discuss how each of three languages—Tu'un Nda'vi, a Mixteco language variety; Spanish; and English—help meet a variety of basic needs for the members of the group, and I examine the dynamics of their language-learning prioritization in their Indigenous immigrant diasporic community in California. More specifically, I examine the complex circumstances that influenced participants' priorities between developing fluency and literacy in Spanish and English in their specific immigrant, diasporic, and binational contexts on one hand and, on the other hand, maintaining fluency and developing literacy in their first language, Tu'un Nda'vi.

In addition to the four Mixteco-speaking men—Casimiro, Cornelio, Emiliano, and Fidel—the group was composed of two UC Santa Barbara graduate students who served as discussion facilitators: Rebekka Siemens, from the Department of Linguistics, and me, from the Department of Education. While Rebekka and I participated in the group during the data collection period, we each conducted our own individual research. *El grupo de enfoque* was

established under the auspices of the *Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño* (CBDIO: Binational Center for the Development of Oaxacan Indigenous Communities), a nonprofit Indigenous community organization in Santa Maria, a California agricultural community (the names of the four Mixteco men are pseudonyms).

1.1 Literature review

Since the 1980s, Indigenous immigration from Latin American countries to the United States has been growing as a topic of research, sparked in part by the seminal work of Michael Kearney, who studied the migration patterns and labor, and living conditions of Mixtec immigrant communities in the U.S. (Rivera-Salgado 2014). Indigenous immigrants have to overcome entrenched structural inequities from their places of origin as well as in their receiving communities that severely limit opportunities for advancement. In particular, many have only been able to attain low levels of education before migration. This is due in large part to limited access to education beyond primary school in rural, low-income areas (Mutersbaugh 1994, p. 56; Lopez Ramirez 2010, p. 97). The impact of these structural inequities in Mexico can have long-lasting, deleterious effects on future socioeconomic advancement.

Over a decade ago, the California Institute for Rural Studies issued a report (Kresge 2007) addressing the employment sectors where many Indigenous communities originating from the Oaxaca region in Mexico tend to work across different regions of California and compose the larges Mexican Indigenous groups of the state. While these workers were found in large numbers in both the service and agriculture industries, there were regional distinctions, with a tendency for more employment in the service industry in metropolitan

areas, such as Los Angeles, and primarily farm work in rural areas, with large groups also working in the construction and landscaping industries throughout the state (Kresge 2007, pp. 7-9, 12). Indigenous farmworkers were reported to earn less than those working in the service industry (Kresge 2007, p. 2): at less than $10,000 per year (Aguirre International 2005),[1] farmworkers income was at the poverty line for a single individual in 2005 and well below the poverty line for households with two individuals or more (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Poverty Guidelines 2005).

1.1.1 Issues confronting Indigenous diasporic communities

Many Indigenous Mexicans speak little to no Spanish or English and therefore face an almost insurmountable challenge in communicating within diasporic environments with anyone outside of their language community. The resulting lack of linguistic access restricts opportunities for employment, educational support, and access to health care, among other resources. Consequently, Indigenous language speakers must rely heavily on others within their language community who speak some Spanish or English to mediate any communication in their new communities. Fox and Rivera Salgado report that Indigenous migrants are systematically excluded from economic, social, and political life and are limited to "ethnically segmented labor markets" in arduous, low-paying labor (Fox and Rivera Salgado 2004, p. 4) such as farm work. In California, where in 2005 36 percent of all farmworkers in the United States resided, as reported in the National Agricultural Workers Survey, Indigenous immigrants are considered the fastest-growing population of

[1] The most recent NAWS report is from data collected from its 2005 survey. Although raw data is available online through 2012, NAWS has not produced a report or findings based on this data. However, a 2015 report based on the NAWS 2012 survey data, produced by the Legal Services Corporation (Agricultural Worker Population Estimate Update 2015, p. 42), reported that 76% of agricultural workers in the United States in 2012 were Latino/Hispanic, with 96% of foreign-born workers originating from Mexico.

farmworkers (Aguirre International 2005, p. 12). The opportunities for moving out of agriculture and other low-paying industries to sectors where English or at least Spanish would be required are very limited for Indigenous monolingual speakers in the U.S. In addition to the arduous nature of farm work, Indigenous farmworkers have been and continue to be at greater health risk due to pesticides than non-Indigenous farmworkers, as a result of discriminatory practices, improper safety training, and language barriers (Farquhar et al. 2008, pp. 1, 3; Farquhar et al. 2009, pp. 94-99) as well as the risks associated with reporting unsafe practices (Kresge 2007, p. 3).

Moreover, Indigenous parents' socioeconomic status, educational level, and opportunities for advancement, can affect the educational experiences of their children. The lack of language access for most Indigenous parents combined with the lack of experience maneuvering educational systems, their severe time restrictions, and resource limitations can hinder their ability to support the educational needs of their children. Chavez-Reyes (2010) and Torres and Hurtado-Vivas (2011) note that parents from low socioeconomic and educational backgrounds who face language barriers and also have severe time and resource restrictions are not adequately supported by schools and are particularly burdened and underprepared to help their children with the increasing demands placed upon them by schools.

In addition to educational support, access to healthcare is another basic resource that presents particular challenges to monolingual speakers of Indigenous languages living in the U.S. In addition to the lack of language access and the resulting inability to communicate, Indigenous people often face discrimination by health workers who lack sensitivity, cultural competence, or patience in dealing with monolingual Indigenous speakers, and who fail to

treat them humanely and with the dignity afforded to English speakers (Mines, Nichols and Runsten 2010, pp. 75-76; Maxwell et al. 2015, pp. 4, 8). Holmes, who conducted ethnographic work with Triqui diasporic farmworker communities from Oaxaca living in the United States, reported that the lack of interpreters meant that, even with clinicians who understand the complex lives of Indigenous workers and are sensitive to the needs, the structural restrictions in U.S. health settings combined with the lack of language and cultural support is a severe detriment to patients' health and wellbeing (Holmes 2012, p. 877). In many cases, this lack of support can result in misdiagnosis and unnecessary tests, leading to loss of wages and creating additional financial burdens for these patients (Holmes 2013, p. 142).

Despite such difficult circumstances and severe resource limitations for Indigenous language speakers in these contexts, in this dissertation I discuss the social capital possessed by the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their diasporic community and present a model of social capital building on previous conceptions of the concept, which provides a means to identify different forms of social capital across various socioeconomic contexts.

1.1.2 Theoretical overview – Social Capital

In this dissertation, I offer a broad critique of the concept of social capital and its limits as originally conceptualized by Bourdieu (1985) and further refined by Coleman (1988) and Portes (1998). Nevertheless, the concept still has great explanatory potential. Based on the ethnographic research I conducted for this dissertation, I present a grounded model of social capital that has the potential to identify and analyze the types of social capital possessed across different socioeconomic segments of society, not just among those who possess higher

levels of power or wealth or are otherwise better positioned for success, resulting in part from various forms of structural privilege.

Despite the severity of the limitations that Indigenous monolingual speakers face, many Indigenous communities have access to a degree of social capital that is uncommon among newer immigrant communities in the U.S. with limited education and financial resources. While some scholars researching Indigenous diasporic communities have recognized, reported, and expanded on some aspects of social capital within these communities (Lopez, 2007; Malpica 2008; Gabarrot Arenas 2010; Nawyn et al. 2012), current understandings do not recognize or address key forms of social capital and are thus limited in analyzing the social adaptive strategies of Indigenous diasporic communities. Before discussing these key forms of social capital, I highlight work that, while not framed around social capital, contributes to the understanding of social capital in such communities.

In their discussion of Indigenous political consciousness and activism as components of Mixtec ethnicity, Nagengast and Kearney (1990) propose that, while ethnicity might not be a form of self-identification in communities of origin in the Mixteca, in diasporic communities it forms the basis for political unity and activism to advocate for the community's human rights. Such unity in diaspora through groups and coalitions can be analyzed through the lens of social capital, as I discuss in this dissertation. Similarly, in discussing Indigenous group identity in diaspora, Fox touches on some aspects that could be framed as social capital when discussing defines translocal community citizenship as "the process through which indigenous migrants are becoming active members both of their communities of settlement and their communities of origin" (Fox 2004, p. 20). However, he notes that he does not know why some Indigenous communities are more able to maintain themselves as a group and

create their own spaces for organization than other communities (Fox 2004, p. 22). Similarly, Delugan (2010) frames collaborative relationships between Indigenous groups living in diaspora in the U.S. as Indigenous cosmopolitanism and discusses practices of Indigenous groups that may be considered adaptive strategies in their new environments. In particular, she identifies "practices that cultivate humanity and promote beneficient sociality." As I propose in this dissertation, such practices embedded within Indigenous groups are important in understanding the process through which social capital is generated.

Several researchers specifically reference social capital as a framework for understanding the adaptive strategies of Indigenous communities in diaspora. Malpica (2008, p. 116), in discussing Zapotec workers in Los Angeles, briefly touches on the generation of social capital within their community. However, he does not directly address the process or practices through which social capital is generated. Gabarrot Arenas (2010), who also writes about Zapotec diasporic communities in the U.S., discusses a form of communal self-government in Indigenous communities in Mexico as a manifestation of social capital, but acknowledges the difficulty of applying the concept to Indigenous migrants. Nawyn et al. (2012) also use the social capital frame in explaining the adaptive capacity of recently resettled refugees in the United States in their new communities. Their work contributes to the understanding and application of social capital by introducing the concept of non-economic social capital. This form of social capital was available to new arrivals in their study who were able to access information and social support from their local language community network in order to indirectly access resources even though they lacked the linguistic capital to do so on their own. Similarly, in this dissertation, I discuss information as a resource generated by social capital.

In the grounded model of social capital that I present in this dissertation, I elaborate on the concept of social capital as framed by Bourdieu (1985), Coleman (1988), and Portes (1998), and I present an analytic framework that goes beyond previous work of others to more clearly define social capital. Additionally, this model has the potential to guide future research to identify and analyze different forms of social capital possessed by some groups despite being situated in lower socioeconomic segments of society. Such groups were not considered to posses social capital as conceptualized by Bourdieu.

A separate but related concept that is heavily influenced by resource limitations is agency. More specifically, in this dissertation I discuss a form of individual agency and its connection to resources, which has not been identified in previous research.

1.1.3 Theoretical overview – toward an ontological framework of constricted agency

Agency is a broad concept that is difficult to define, in part because there is no single form of agency nor, in many cases, is there clarity in its conceptualization (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p. 962; Kabeer 1999, p. 454; Ahearn 2001, p. 113; Duranti 2004, p. 453; Hitlin and Elder 2007, p. 173; Hitlin and Long 2009, p. 139). Given that the concept of agency has been framed in such different and often conflicting ways, I devote considerably more attention in this review on agency. In this dissertation I offer, not a broad definition of agency, but a focused and narrow concept, *constricted agency*, which I situate in a broader ontological framework of agency under *individual agency*. More specifically, I discuss constricted agency within the context of the dynamics that affect the decision-making process of the multilingual agents participating in this ethnographic research project within the

specific context of their language-learning prioritization at a given point in time and given the resources available to them.

As a concept, constricted agency has not been defined or elaborated upon by others. The scholarship that mentions constricted agency (Maloney and Kelly 2004; Kearns 2006; Beniston et al. 2014; Lee 2016; Parkinson et al. 2017; Rasmussen Lenox 2018; Wilson 2019; Rubin 2021), dose so only in passing and in all cases and it is discussed as limited or constrained agency, which I frame under *structural agency.* In the following discussion, I clarify the distinction between constricted individual agency and constrained structural agency. In doing so, I address the need raised by others to identify and disaggregate different forms of agency (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Ahearn 2001; Hitlin and Elder 2007) to consider different aspects of this concept across the many diverse settings of the human experience. To provide clarity regarding the placement of constricted agency within a broader ontological framework of human agency, here I summarize different forms and conceptions of agency presented by others. More specifically, I situate each concept within two ontological subcategories of human agency: structural and individual agency. I then briefly discuss constrained agency, as a form of structural agency, which is similar to and in some cases may be interrelated with constricted agency, but which is ontologically distinct.

Ahearn, a linguistic and sociocultural anthropologist, presents a survey of scholarship on agency "focusing in particular on practice theorists such as Giddins, Bourdieu, De Certeau, Sahlins, and Ortner" (p. 109). While she provides an admittedly "skeletal definition" (p. 109) of agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (p. 112), she calls for future scholarship on agency to carefully define and distinguish different forms of agency as well as where they are situated (Ahearn 2001, p. 130). However, the entirety of her analysis can be

framed ontologically as structural agency. As her definition of agency suggests, she discusses individuals only in direct relation, response, or opposition to some form of social structure, and she does not directly address conceptualizations of individual agency.

Duranti, another linguistic anthropologist, discusses agency as it exists or is manifested in the act of producing language and provides a more comprehensive definition:

> Agency is here understood as the property of those entities (i) that have some degree of control over their own behavior, (ii) whose actions in the world affect other entities' (and sometimes their own), and (iii) whose actions are the object of evaluation (e.g. in terms of their responsibility for a given outcome). (Duranti 2004, p. 453)

However, because his discussion centers around the structure and in some cases cultural structuration of language, there is little to no space for discussing individual agency. Consequently, his approach too is situated under a structural framework. While much research on agency focus strictly on structural agency, some discusses both structural and individual agency as time-and context-dependent and addresses the need to analytically separate the two, which are often conflated (Emirbayer and Mische 1998; Hitlin and Elder 2007; Hitlin and Long 2009).

Emirbayer and Mische (1998), both sociologists, advocate for the disaggregation of human agency into separate elements, but they do not specifically define different forms of agency as either structural or individual agency. Instead, they refer to the chordal triad composed of three different "elements" or "dimensions" of agency: iteration, projectivity, and practical evaluation. The iterational element is associated mainly with habits, traditions, and structures established in the past, though affecting the present. The projective element is

associated with individuals reframing their future and envisioning future actions in relation to their "hopes, fears and goals." And the practical-evaluative element operates in the present where an actor has the capacity to formulate judgments and potential actions within the context of existing structures (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p. 971). Based on this conception of agency, structural agency is mostly associated with the iterational/past dimension, individual agency with the projective/future dimension, and the practical-evaluative/present dimension is associated with either, depending on the situation. Emirbayer and Mische clarify, however, that there is no strict connection between the three elements and these temporal dimensions (Emirbayer and Mische 1998, p. 972). Nevertheless, the connection between time and situational context can help to disaggregate different forms of agency, as described below.

Building on Emirbayer and Mische's concept of time to situate and identify different forms of agency within specific contexts, Hitlin and Elder (2007) discuss different theories on agency from the perspective of social psychology, which can be framed as either structural or individual agency, but also illustrate where these forms of agency can intersect. They recognize that much research on agency within the field of sociology, which is mostly theoretical, focuses on limitations and constraints on individual choices within structural settings (i.e. structural agency) to the exclusion of choices made at the individual level despite structural limitations (Hitlin and Elder 2007, pp. 173, 175, 185), which can be framed as individual agency. They call for empirical research to disaggregate the different types of agency operating at the structural and individual levels in order to understand the complex mechanisms operating within each and to be able to analyze them independently (Hitlin and Elder 2007, pp. 175, 177, 180, 183, 185). Using time to illustrate the interplay between an

individual's structural limitations from the past and the decisions they make as they envision their future, the authors note that "transitions are rarely spontaneous" and that, with regard to personal resources, "we do not have the power to [spontaneously] become richer, or smarter, or often to accumulate resources that enable more privileged individuals more options" (Hitlin and Elder 2007, p. 184). That is, even in mostly personal realms, beyond the direct influence of cultural, societal, or organizational structures, individual agency in the present is still affected by structural limitations inherited from the past. In my analysis for this dissertation, grounded in my ethnographic work with the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, I similarly discuss the intersection and impact of structural limitations from the past with an individual's plans for the future as manifested in the present within the context of language-learning prioritization.

Hitlin and Long (2009) build on Hitlin's previous work with Elder to present three elements of agency as individual, structural, and cultural, which can also be viewed as three ontological subcategories of human agency. However, they present cultural agency as a theoretical construct and leave it to future research to develop this concept (p. 140). Although it seems that cultural agency could be developed independently in ethnographic research on the subject, given Ahearn's definition of agency as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (Ahearn 2001), cultural agency is better situated ontologically as a subcategory of structural agency. Hitlin and Long focus on six constructs as measures of individual agency throughout a person's life course: 1) self-efficacy, 2) locus of control, 3) personal control, 4) mastery, 5) planful competence, and 6) ego depletion and self-control. I focus on personal control in particular as an element of individual agency because of the relationship of this concept to functional resources, which I present in this dissertation in relation to constricted

agency. However, the authors do not discuss the factors or resources possessed by an agent that contribute to a sense of personal control or that either enable or constrict individual agency. More specifically, they do not address how limited resources affect the options available to agents from which to choose. I elaborate on the connection between constricted agency and functional resources below.

From the field of gender and development, Kabeer's (1999) discussion of the relationships between resources, choice, and agency, is relevant to the concept of constricted agency. She describes "first-order choices" as those that are most critical for people living in poverty and which are made under conditions where people have insufficient means to meet their basic needs and are therefore unable to make meaningful choices (Kabeer 1999, p. 437). Additionally, Kabeer describes "second-order choices" as less consequential or less critical in nature, yet as nevertheless meaningful and important for people's quality of life. First- and second-order choices are related to the language-learning prioritization dynamics I discuss in this dissertation and the concept of sacrifice, which I introduce under constricted agency, substituting for choice, whereby individuals must sacrifice something that is meaningful to their quality of life for something else that is critical in order to meet their basic needs for survival.

To further clarify constricted agency, in the next section I contrast this concept with a similar form of agency, constrained agency, which I situate ontologically under structural agency as I explain below.

1.1.4 Constrained, structural agency versus constricted, individual agency

The term *constrained agency* has appeared across a variety of disciplines and, in all cases, it is framed in direct relation to structure. In many cases, as with Gulati and Srivastava (2014), it is used to describe, not what I understand to be constrained agency, but rather the limits of agents' power or authority within a given context. In other studies, constrained agency addresses the vulnerability and intersectionality of agents' situated contexts as well as defining or at least discussing constrained agency in opposition or resistance to structures (O'Brien Hallstein 1999; Herndl and Licona 2007; Coe and Jordhus-Lier; Kiura 2012; VanderStouwe 2016).

O'Brien Hallstein (1999) offers a thorough treatment of constrained agency from the perspectives of feminist standpoint theory and communication ethics. She analyzes prior scholarship through the lens of constrained agency as follows:

> Constrained agency…refuses the binary logic that either denies agency by viewing subjects as fully oppressed or denies oppression by viewing the subject as fully free. Instead, constrained agency recognizes that subordinate subjects have suffered systematic oppression that is damaging without condemning subjects to positions of victimhood. (p. 37)

The salience of this early work is in the comprehensiveness of its conceptualization, which highlights most if not all of the aspects of the evolving scholarship on constrained agency: disaggregation of different forms of agency and recognition of the oppressive nature of structures while viewing subjects, not as victims, but as agents despite considerable structural disenfranchisement, within the context of the intersectionality of gender disparity.

Herndl and Licona (2007), meanwhile, discuss constrained agency from the perspective of social and rhetorical theory. They write that constrained agency "emerges as a result of the relationship between agentive opportunities and the regulatory power of authority" whereby "[b]oth agency and authority are generated by material practices established in institutional contexts" (p. 19). In places, they suggest that constrained agency is a result of structural oppression. For example, they write, "authoritative practices can so condition the opportunity for agentive action that it becomes extremely difficult for some subjects—typically those from non-dominant groups—to successfully occupy and engage the agentive space" (p. 16). These specific conditions are consistent with the evolving concept of constrained agency as introduced by O'Brien Hallstein (1999).

The conceptualization of constrained agency by Coe and Jordhus-Lier (2011), from the field of labor geography, might initially seem to diverge from that of O'Brien Hallstein (1999) in that it discusses organized labor groups as agents. However, previous work on constrained agency does not preclude agency from existing within groups.

While most of the conceptions of constrained agency I review here are consistent with O'Brien Hallstein's, Gulati and Srivastava (2014) stands in stark contrast. The authors discuss constrained agency from the fields of business administration and organizational sociology with a focus on network structure and action. They propose a connection between resources and constrained agency, but this does not resemble functional resources and constricted agency as I discuss in this dissertation or the connections between resources and agency discussed by others in this review. Instead, Gulati's and Srivastava describe resources as:

> capability-based… which provide actors superior insight with which to map and navigate their social environments… [or] symbolic… [which] do not merely shape the meaning and purpose of interpersonal relations; they also influence inter-organizational ties—such as through cooperative norms that vary across national contexts and affect the configuration of alliance networks. (p. 9)

Additionally, the type of agents in the authors' representation of constrained agency are not in any sort of vulnerable capacity and are thus not being constrained in the true sense of the word, in that they are not oppressed, disadvantaged, or disempowered by the structures in which they operate. Instead, what Gulati and Srivastava define as constraints as merely operational limits on agency within structures or networks, to which even those in privileged positions are subject, albeit to different degrees, consistent with the conceptions of agency by Giddens (1984), Bourdieu (1986), and Sewell (1992).

Having discussed different theoretical conceptions of constrained agency, I review work which demonstrates constrained agency in practice. Kiura (2012), within the discipline of developmental studies, conducted research on the contraceptive use and family planning constraints for a group of Somali women living in a refugee camp in Kenya within an environment with heavy patriarchal, sociocultural restrictions placed on women. She describes the different ways that women exhibited constrained agency despite severely repressive structural constraints in the form of inability to take control over their body with regard to family planning and reproductive health (pp. 13, 30); intersectional dimensions of vulnerability, exclusion and subordination in relation to male family members, religion, culture (p. 14); illiteracy (p. 29); and fear of stigmatization (pp. 30, 37), which were

amplified within the refugee camps. Despite these constraints, some women exhibited agency by accessing contraceptives secretly and through unofficial means and entities (pp. 30, 31, 37).

VanderStouwe (2016), from the perspective of sociocultural linguistics, discusses the concept of constrained agency in relation to sociocultural constraints in his research on straight-identified men interested in or seeking sexual encounters with other men. VanderStouwe defines constrained agency as follows: "The agentive manipulation of and negotiation around constraints, whether self-imposed or external, that limit the capacity of a subject or group of subject to act" (p. 14). An important consideration of various forms of agency is that agency, whether structural or individual, constrained or constricted, is not binary; there is no on/off switch. Rather it exists and expressed in a continuum or spectrum of varying degrees of agency and limits. This being said, while the men discussed in this study did not experience anywhere near the same degree of constraints as those experienced by the women discussed by Kiura (2012), they were nevertheless subject to a variety of social constraints such as "social norms, individual desires, religious dogma, and ideological expectations of sexual identities [circumscribed to heterosexual men]" (p. xi) and they maneuvered identities and "labels such as straight, gay, bisexual, and others" (p. 17). The men in VanderStouwe's study exhibited constrained agency by anonymously reaching out to others through online safe spaces, while conforming to "normative gender presentations in public spaces" (p. 120).

Having framed constrained agency in direct relation to the structural conditions in which agents are situated, I close by discussing my concept of constricted agency, which differs from constrained agency, and its potential contribution to theories of agency. Unlike

constrained agency, constricted agency is not directly bound by structure, even though the present conditions of agents are inherited in part by the structural conditions of their past. In developing the concept of constricted agency, I focus on factors that affect an agent's decision-making process. In the specific context of this study, where participants experienced severe restrictions in what I define as functional resources, not only were there fewer options available for them, but they found themselves having to also sacrifice one basic need for another, depending on the urgency of the most immediate and beneficial need. Therefore, under a constricted agency framework, the fewer the functional resources a person has, the more constricted their agency is. Alternatively, the more and more varied the functional resources available to a person, the more unconstricted, or free, their agency is within individual domains. By contrast, a person's ability to make decisions under structural agency is either enabled or constrained by the level of authority or privilege they possess within a given sociocultural or structural domain. In the scenarios discussed by Gulati and Srivastava (2014), individuals' decisions were only limited by the operational limits of agency within structural domains. Whereas the women in Kiura's study (2012), were highly disenfranchised and oppressed to a degree that control over their own bodies was socioculturally circumscribed and, therefore, the agency they exhibited was highly constrained.

In framing the distinction between constrained and constricted agency, as mapping on to structural and individual agency respectively, I am not proposing that a person only possesses one type of agency or another. A person is likely to exhibit a variety of forms of agency across a variety of individual and structural domains, which need to be understood and analyzed separately. However, it seems very likely that the greater the structural constraints and functional resource limitations in a given case, the more difficult it would be to

disaggregate and identify different forms of agency for analysis. Additionally, these forms of agency are more likely to be identified and understood with in-depth ethnographic studies analyzed within specific contexts. Larger qualitative studies are not likely to elicit or identify the dynamics associated with constricted agency unless they are clearly understood first. Ultimately, the better we are able to identify more forms of agency in this way, and with a better understanding of agency in all its different forms, the more refined our understanding of the decision-making processes of agents across a variety of socioeconomic and sociocultural contexts.

1.2 Language management in diaspora: Conceptual framework

In this study, I analyze how the four men in *el grupo de enfoque* prioritize language learning and development across the three languages in their lives: Tu'un Nda'vi, Spanish, and English. I demonstrate that the men's level of Spanish fluency is directly associated with their prioritization of English language acquisition and inversely associated with their prioritization of Tu'un Nda'vi language maintenance and literacy development. Beyond examining language-learning prioritization across the three languages, my analysis addresses the complex socioeconomic conditions and needs that influence these men's decisions in establishing their language-learning priorities.

Language management in diaspora is a broad term I introduce to frame the dynamics that influence language-learning prioritization within the diasporic contexts of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*. The core theoretical elements that I develop or elaborate upon in this dissertation, which I frame under this umbrella term, are the following: internal and external language use, social capital, and constricted agency.

Internal and external language use is the term I use in this dissertation to describe language use by the men in *el grupo de enfoque* within their language community and to engage with the world outside of their language group respectively. I discuss Tu'un Nda'vi as an internal language in Chapter 3 and Spanish as both an internal written language and an external language to engage with non-Tu'un Nda'vi speakers in their diasporic community. The men and their community used Tu'un Nda'vi as the primary language for internal oral communication within their language group. However, as they could not read or write it, they relied on Spanish to meet their internal written communication needs locally, regionally, and with communities of origin abroad. Additionally, given the broad use of Spanish across a variety of contexts within their language community, it served to meet their primary external communication needs to engage with the world beyond their language community.

Social capital plays a vital role within the community of the four men in helping recent immigrants adapt to their receiving community by providing information to acculturate to the norms of their new environment, access community resources, and provide educational materials relevant to their rights, work, and personal lives. I discuss social capital with a focus on the role of Tu'un Nda'vi as an internal language and develop an expanded model of social capital grounded in my ethnographic research with the men of *el grupo de enfoque*. I elaborate on the concept of social capital as introduced by Bourdieu (1985) to describe both how the four men in *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community generated social capital through Tu'un Nda'vi and how they were able to extend the benefits of social capital beyond their language community through Spanish. After developing a grounded model of social capital, I develop the model further in its situated context with a focus on Spanish as a secondary source of social capital.

As discussed above,I frame constricted agency as a component of functional agency, expanding on the broader concept of individual human agency. Like the expanded model of social capital I introduce in this dissertation, constricted agency is grounded in the ethnographic research I conducted with *el grupo de enfoque.* I focus specifically on individual agency, under which I situate my findings, because structural agency is insufficient to address the dynamics of language-learning prioritization that I observed within *el grupo de enfoque* at the micro level. That is, my theory and analysis takes into account agents' specific interests and goals as well as the constraints on individuals' ability to act, rather than factors operating at the macro institutional, organizational, or societal levels, which are more within the realm of structural agency.

In the remainder of this chapter, I present a broad overview of these topics and of the research I conducted based on my work with *el grupo de enfoque.* In Chapter 2, I discuss my data collection and analytical process. In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, I discuss the main elements of my analysis and findings. I embed my literature review in the analytic chapters in order to situate the discussion within the context of the analysis and the findings of each chapter.

1.3 Chapter 2: Research and methods

In Chapter 2, I discuss the research process and methodological framework that guided my approach to the formation and operation of *el grupo de enfoque,* upon which this dissertation is based. I also describe the analytic process that I developed and adapted to fit with the conditions of the site, the group, and its participants.

In planning my approach to exploring Spanish language needs with *el grupo de enfoque*, I drew from the work of Freire (1989). His work, however, focuses on the relationship

between teachers and young students in a traditional classroom setting. As *el grupo de enfoque* was not a class and I was not a teacher, I adapted Freire's approach to fit within the context of this adult language and literacy discussion group. Drawing on his emphasis on understanding the cultural context and the contributions of learners, I proposed these main principles to the group members at the first meeting of *el grupo de enfoque*: all members were equal contributors in providing their individual perspectives; we were all learners within the group; and all questions and discussion topics had value. From the beginning of the project, I clarified my role as a learner and as a facilitator and expressed my hope that I might be able to base my dissertation research on my experiences with the group.

The research methods and analytic framework that I developed were determined in large part by and centered on the discussion group. However, the operation of the group and the needs of its members within that context were my main priority. Therefore, from the outset, the research component was secondary to the needs of the group, and the methodological framework that I developed was a reflection of that priority. For a similar reason, I did not develop an *a priori* line of inquiry. My intent was to observe and learn as much as possible about the men and their needs through the interactions of the group, to develop a foundation of knowledge within this situated context, and only then to determine a possible line of inquiry. Therefore, the research I conducted during the course of the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque* was meant as an exploratory endeavor using ethnographic methods of participant-observation. Through my participation in *el grupo de enfoque,* my focus was on understanding the men's perspective. By first approaching the research from this emic perspective, I developed a foundation of knowledge on which to base my later analysis.

From an analytic standpoint, I was drawn to grounded theory from sociology because of two main principles of this research methodology. First, grounded theory approaches data collection without extensive theoretical assumptions from previous research; I wanted to approach my research with *el grupo de enfoque* without a predetermined theoretical framework. Second, grounded theory is emergent theory: my goal was to observe and collect as much data as possible and allow for theoretical constructs to emerge from my subsequent data analysis and only then compare my findings to existing research.

Despite my adherence to these two principles as part of my methodological framework, I realized that grounded theory was not designed for the type of exploratory research that I was conducting and I had to make several adjustments and combined these with ethnographic practices of participant-observation. In Chapter 2, I discuss my rationale for the use of these different methodological principles and how I applied them in practice to meet the conditions and demands of the data collection and the discussion group during data collection, data analysis, and the writing process.

1.4 Chapter 3: Tu'un Nda'vi

Chapter 3 is devoted to the relationship that the four men in *el grupo de enfoque* had with their language as observed through the study and within the context of CBDIO, the Indigenous community organization to which they belonged and that sponsored this group. I argue that, despite the men's lack of literacy in their first language, Tu'un Nda'vi provided them access to a significant level of social capital across a variety of contexts, and it was at the core of their ability to adapt within their diasporic community.

However, the lack of literacy in Tu'un Nda'vi influenced their perception of the pronunciation of certain words in their language as a less proper in comparison to written languages. This seemed to be the case when drawing comparisons between Tu'un Nda'vi and both Spanish and English, as well as written varieties of Mixteco. Additionally, the men made a clear distinction between their language, Tu'un Nda'vi, and Tu'un Savi, another Mixteco language variety for which there are more available written resources.

The main focus of Chapter 3 is the use of Tu'un Nda'vi by the four men in the study and its relevance in their diasporic contexts. I introduce the concepts of internal and external language use to show the use and benefits of each language within their diasporic community settings. Given that many members of their community are monolingual Tu'un Nda'vi speakers, this language is used as the primary means of oral communication within these settings. However, because it is not written, the language cannot satisfy their internal language communication needs. Furthermore, as there are no Tu'un Nda'vi language speakers in their diasporic community outside of their language community—as is the case with Spanish, which satisfies both internal writing and external language needs as I discuss in Chapter 4—it cannot serve as an external language to engage with non-Tu'un Nda'vi speakers.

In the remainder of Chapter 3, I discuss Tu'un Nda'vi within the framework of social capital, centered on the language as the source of social capital for the men's community. I propose that their community had access to social capital in a form not previously addressed by researchers. In my framing of social capital, I go beyond the limited concept first presented by Bourdieu, in which it is related to individuals and contexts at the highest institutional and most privileged societal levels. Drawing from Coleman (1988), I elaborate

on the concept of the function of social capital, whereby human capital is converted to social capital. I argue that it is through the practices taking place within a unit of social capital, in this case, CBDIO, that human capital is converted to social capital and then made accessible to its members. I also draw on Portes (1998) in discussing the ultimate purpose of social capital: its benefits for members. Additionally, by clearly defining the six elements of social capital that I present in my expanded model, I address Portes' concern regarding how far this concept has been stretched in its applications to a wide range of uses, to the point that it may lose its meaning.

Based in my analysis of the data collected from my participation with *el grupo de enfoque,* I elaborate on these traditional concepts of social capital to propose a framework that clearly defines social capital through its constituent elements and can be understood and applied to broader socioeconomic contexts than those envisioned by Bourdieu. I introduce a model of social capital that can be recognized and applied to all levels of the socioeconomic spectrum. With this in mind, I present a model of social capital comprised of six elements: 1) the source of social capital, 2) the unit of social capital, 3) the resources that are made available through social capital, 4) the function of or process for generating social capital, 5) the benefits that social capital generates, and, 6) representation through social capital. This expanded model of social capital can be used in future research to identify previously unrecognized forms of social capital situated within the unique contexts of underserved, under-resourced, and marginalized communities. Subsequently, identification of situated forms of social capital can aid in the development of specific means to support and bolster existing social capital within communities for the benefit of their members.

1.5 Chapter 4: Spanish

In Chapter 4, I discuss the benefits of developing Spanish fluency and literacy for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* due to the function of Spanish both as an internal administrative language for the men and their diasporic community and as an external language for engaging with the non-Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking world around them. I also expand on the model of social capital introduced in the previous chapter with a focus on the complementary and crucial role of Spanish alongside Tu'un Nda'vi to expand the scope of social capital beyond their language community.

While several language-learning needs and interests were conveyed during the course of the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque,* the explicit reason for the group's creation under the auspices of CBDIO was to discuss and address the need for Spanish literacy, language, and learning within this community. Based on my work with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and my exposure to their community by observing the work and services provided by CBDIO, I argue that Spanish, despite its long history of colonial oppression in relation to Indigenous languages, was essential to the men's diasporic community as a culturally adaptive strategy. Because of the ubiquity of Spanish in all sectors in the city of Santa Maria, this language served as a lingua franca: a bridge to resources, collaboration, and engagement with different language communities and institutions across a variety of binational contexts. While it would seem that English is the most useful and desirable language for new immigrants to learn when coming to the U.S., this was not the case for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and many others from their community for a variety of reasons related to their situated diasporic contexts, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 5. For the men in *el grupo de enfoque,* Spanish was a more accessible language to learn than English. This, I argue, was due to their

familiarity or contact with Spanish from their communities of origin and the more readily available access to family members or acquaintances who spoke Spanish, but not English, in addition to Tu'un Nda'vi.

Beyond the needs that Spanish could satisfy for individuals and the community as a whole, in Chapter 4 I discuss Spanish within my previously developed framework of social capital for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community. I revisit the six elements of social capital introduced in Chapter 3 within the context of Spanish. If Tu'un Nda'vi was the primary source of social capital, then Spanish was a secondary source of social capital. I elaborate on the process of generating social capital and the role of Spanish in the conversion of human capital to social capital, as well as the benefits that are rendered through this language. Finally, I discuss the role of Spanish as an external language within the context of civic representation for the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and how their social capital extended beyond the sphere of their language community. As an internal language within the Tu'un Nda'vi language community, Spanish served as an administrative written language through which they coordinated their efforts with their communities of origin at the binational level. Externally, Spanish served as a lingua franca to communicate in more formal contexts with Mexican and U.S. governmental agencies. Additionally, it allowed the men and their community to connect with various community resources in the U.S., enabled pan-Indigenous communication, and functioned as the primary language in their work contexts. Through Spanish, and the social capital available through CBDIO, members of the men's language community were able to engage with local, national, and binational institutions and governmental entities. Theoretically, then, this

chapter further develops the framework of social capital laid out in Chapter 3 within the contexts of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community.

1.6 Chapter 5: English and multilingual needs

In Chapter 5, I discuss the interest in English expressed by two members of the group and use this issue to develop the interrelated concepts of language-learning prioritization and constricted agency. I argue that the men in the group established their language-learning priorities under constricted agency, whereby their decisions were limited by their socioeconomic conditions, the time and energy available to them, and how a given language could best help to meet their most basic needs, even if prioritizing one language over another conflicted with their personal preferences.

Tu'un Nda'vi is the language that connected the four men in this study with their heritage, with their communities of origin, and with their cultural community in diaspora. However, this language was not enough for them to function in Santa Maria. The ability to communicate within a given environment is essential in order to be able to access and attain basic resources within that environment. For immigrants coming to the U.S., where the primary language is English, it would seem that this language would be the most important language-learning goal. However, I argue that this was not the case for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their diasporic language community. This is not necessarily because of a lack of desire to learn English but in order to meet their most urgent and immediate needs in their specific settings. In this regard, it was not so much a question of desire, but of necessity. Consequently, because Spanish allowed the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and their community to meet their most basic needs, learning Spanish was more consistently prioritized highly

within the group, as compared to developing Tu'un Nda'vi literacy or learning English. While Tu'un Nda'vi connected the men with their cultural heritage, providing social capital within their diasporic cultural community, Spanish allowed the members of *el grupo de enfoque* to engage more broadly in the Santa Maria community. In this sense and within this situated context, Spanish was not only a language of oppression for Indigenous peoples, but also a language of necessity that provided access to resources in their Santa Maria community.

A key finding discussed in Chapter 5 is the conditional language learning prioritization displayed by the men of *el grupo de enfoque.* I show that, given each man's specific circumstances and diasporic settings, developing an interest in learning English was conditional upon first developing a practical level of Spanish fluency. This is because Spanish served as a more immediate bridge to resources, such as employment in the agriculture industry, one of the main industries open to new immigrants with low levels of education. Spanish was the language identified as the most useful for employment for the men's community. Indeed, this was the premise for creating *el grupo de enfoque*. and it was also made evident in various ways during the course of the group's existence. With regard to language-learning prioritization, Spanish was the top priority for many reasons: it provided the most immediate benefit to the men and their community, it was a more accessible language than English because of exposure and access to other Spanish speakers within their language community, and it was the most relevant language to learn given their situated needs and the ubiquity of Spanish speakers within their community.

Understanding the language learning priorities of one man in particular, Fidel, was more complicated because his stated language-learning priorities conflicted with his demonstrated

interests. This was most apparent when the discussion revolved around Fidel's personal interests when not in the presence of the other men in the group, who had a greater need to develop Spanish fluency than he did. This conflict between stated and observed language-learning priorities, I argue, is a consequence of constricted agency and was crucial in understanding individual agency within the context of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*.

I frame the concept of constricted agency, under the umbrella of human agency. More specifically, I elaborate on individual agency with the concept of functional agency, under which I position constricted agency, to include the effect of functional resources on individual agency whereby an agent's ability to act, or to function within a given context, is enabled or restricted by the options available to them and by the types and amount of functional resources possessed by the agent. The conceptual framework of constricted agency that I present in Chapter 5 helps to distinguish the factors that influence an agent's decision-making process at a micro level and clearly disaggregates them from factors that operate at the macro or structural level. It therefore contributes to theories of agency by developing a fuller understanding of individual human agency.

A key element for conceptualizing constricted agency within the context of *el grupo de enfoque* is the concept of sacrifice. Under this model, decisions made under full functional agency are choice-driven, and an agent has many options. However, decisions made under constricted agency are driven by sacrifice: that is, decisions that require an agent to sacrifice basic needs in order to meet another much more immediate need.

The framework of constricted agency can be a valuable tool for community-based ethnographic research, specifically with disenfranchised communities, in order to understand the deeper motivations behind members' decisions and to uncover the often-unstated

sacrifices that people must make in order to meet their most basic needs. Any community development program guided by an awareness of the dynamics of constricted agency is more likely to be able to develop programs that are responsive to the needs of those communities.

1.7 Chapter 6

In Chapter 6 I discuss the implications of my research findings for scholarship and community support. Both from a practical community need and from my research perspective, the purpose of *el grupo de enfoque* was to uncover the multiple needs of the group members in relation to language learning. My analysis is relevant to future research on the development of multilingual language programs to meet the various needs of monolingual Indigenous language speakers. A related implication is the relevance of multilingual literacy programs to Indigenous language maintenance in diaspora. It is difficult for Indigenous people living in diaspora to maintain their heritage languages through intergenerational transmission in their new communities in cases where the language is not recognized by receiving communities as either an asset or a prestige language. In these cases, children of minority-language speakers face strong assimilation forces from educational systems where their language is not recognized or valued at the structural level, and they also face racism and bullying by their peers. As difficult as it is to maintain a minoritized language in the face of strong assimilation forces, doing so is much more difficult when speakers are not literate in their own language and do not have access to literacy resources for themselves or to promote the language to younger generations.

While the development of trilingual literacy programs was not directly raised during the course of the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque*, the fact that the members were continually

drawn to sharing and speaking about Tu'un Nda'vi language concepts, even after expressing the need to focus on Spanish, showed a clear desire for Tu'un Nda'vi literacy among all members, including those who did not state Tu'un Nda'vi literacy as a learning priority. Additionally, concern about language shift was raised within the group and was observed at different points throughout the course of the meetings; one member with school-age children specifically expressed his personal concerns related to intergenerational transmission of Tu'un Nda'vi.

Finally, I discuss the implications of the findings and of this research and the relevance of language-learning prioritization dynamics to future research on decolonizing multiliteracy development programs and first-language maintenance for Indigenous diasporic communities through community-based research projects and community-based research.

Additionally, as I approached the completion of this dissertation during the global COVID-19 pandemic, in Chapter 6 I discuss the impact of this pandemic on immigrant and indigenous communities living in diaspora within the context of the United States and its policies.

1.8 Conclusion

The circumstances and dynamics that affected the language-learning and literacy development priorities for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* are complex. My primary goal during the ethnographic research and in my initial analysis was to understand the needs of the four men from their own perspectives. Only after developing the strongest possible foundation of knowledge grounded in their perspectives and experiences through my participant-observer role within the group was I able to develop a line of inquiry to guide my

analysis and subsequent theoretical development. This has taken me from understanding and presenting an emic perspective as faithfully as possible to developing a model for understanding what I learned and framing the resulting theoretical claims I present here from a grounded perspective. Through the analysis in the following chapters, I present these theoretical concepts as tools that I use to explain the multiple dynamics that not only operated to limit or constrict the four men's ability to pursue their language learning goals, but that also drove them and inspired them to attain the language resources they needed to improve their circumstances, both for themselves and for their families and communities. It is my hope that the research, analysis, theory, and implications presented in this dissertation will add to a growing body of knowledge and research on the complexities faced by adult minority-language speakers as they seek to satisfy their language-learning needs in their diasporic communities.

Chapter 2. Research process, methods, and analytic framework

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss my methodological perspective on the ethnographic community research project that forms the basis of this dissertation and my approach to working with *el grupo de enfoque.* My primary focus was on the functioning and mission of the group, and my secondary focus was my own research goals. My methodological approach to each was interrelated. As I discuss in detail in section 2.2 below, both my Freirian approach to my personal interactions and functioning of the group and my ethnographic my research perspective influenced by grounded theory were focused first and foremost on developing a foundation of understanding from an emic perspective before defining the direction of the group or a line of inquiry for my research as I transitioned to and developed an etic perspective.

In section 2.1, I introduce the research site and participants, the men of *el grupo de enfoque* with whom I worked in the literacy exploration group over a period of 10 months. In section 2.2, I describe my methodological approach and ethical considerations before entering the project and during the course of the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque*. In the remaining sections, I focus on the research aspects of the project and related methodological considerations. In section 2.3, I discuss methodological considerations and the adjustments I made to grounded theory principles, in particular, to fit the interrelated needs of the group of *el grupo de enfoque* and my research considerations. The research process was divided into three main stages. The first stage, discussed in section 2.4, constitutes the data collection period, which took place during the course of the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque*. Given that the functioning of the group was my primary focus, I adapted my research approach to fit its

needs; below, I discuss how these were combined in practice. The second research stage, which I discuss in section 2.5, is the focused analytic period that began after the end of the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque*. The third stage, discussed in section 2.6, involved the process of writing down my initial thoughts and creating dissertation drafts based theoretical concepts emerging from the analytic stage, followed, only then, by the compilation of a literature review related to those concepts. As the third stage progressed, the writing and literature review became increasingly interrelated. Completing the literature review in Chapter 1 was the final stage of my dissertation writing process, allowing me to ground my theoretical engagement in the analysis of data, rather than the reverse.

2.1 The site, research project, and participants

The ethnographic study which is the focus of this dissertation was carried out during the course of eight months, from October 2009 to June 2010, within the context of a literacy group created under the auspices of a regional branch of an Indigenous community organization, Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño (CBDIO: Binational Center for the Development of Oaxacan Indigenous Communities) which was then located in Santa Maria, a city on the California Central Coast. This regional branch of CDBIO has since closed, and many of the functions that were carried out through that organization, which I describe in this dissertation, are now carried out by another Indigenous community organization, MICOP (Mixteco Indígena Community Organization Project/Proyecto Mixteco Indígena*)*. Persons' names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms, which I use to protect their confidentiality.

Santa Maria has an agricultural industry supported by a large, mostly Latinx, immigrant workforce. This workforce includes a large number of Indigenous immigrants from Mexico, many of whom do not speak Spanish. Many of these people trace their origins to the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, and more specifically to several Indigenous communities in and around the state of Oaxaca (Mines, Nichols, and Rusten 2010). Through CBDIO, I learned that there were three main Indigenous groups living in Santa Maria: Zapoteco, Triqui, and Mixteco, with the Mixteco community being the largest of the three by far. Although CBDIO made its services available to all Indigenous speakers and groups, the majority of its members were Mixteco. The mission of CBDIO was to support the socioeconomic development of Indigenous communities while promoting cultural engagement and civic participation.

In the summer of 2009 I reached out to Julián, a leader from CBDIO whom I had met at an event sponsored by the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), a nonprofit legal services organization with which he worked as liaison to CBDIO in service of the Indigenous community in Santa Maria. I explained to Julián that I wanted to learn about the Mixteco community as part of my research, and I asked if I could work with the organization in some capacity. I further explained that through that experience I hoped to develop a research project and a possible subject for my dissertation. Julián noted that developing language and literacy skills in Spanish was a high priority in his community. With that in mind, we developed the idea of a literacy focus group to discuss Spanish language concepts in order to build upon participants' existing foundation of spoken and written Spanish language skills while taking into account each individual's level as a starting point. Julián invited me to a general CBDIO meeting where he introduced me to members of the community. Subsequently, he proposed the formation of the literacy group to the members and put out a

call inviting anyone to participate; four men joined the literacy group. Because of my description of the group as *el grupo de enfoque* 'the focus group' in the Spanish-language consent form I administered at the start of the project, the men referred to the group as *el grupo de enfoque* throughout our meetings, and that is the term I use to refer to the group in the dissertation. Although Julián introduced me to the group and helped organize the meetings during the first few weeks after *el grupo de enfoque* was created, he was not a member of the group or a participant in the research study.

In my first meeting with the four men of *el grupo de enfoque*, in the process of discussing language concepts in Spanish, and briefly in English, they also introduced me to language concepts in Mixteco, their first language. Around that time, I met Rebekka Siemens, a doctoral student in the Department of Linguistics at UC Santa Barbara, who expressed an interest in the group. Given her area of expertise and the multilingual dynamics within *el grupo de enfoque,* with their permission, Rebekka joined the third meeting of *el grupo de enfoque*. Although Rebekka and I both participated in the group as researchers and discussed a variety of topics related to our experience within and about the group, our research areas were different and our research was independent from each other.

The four men who participated in *el grupo de enfoque* originated from three separate communities within the same geographic and language region in Mexico. During our first meetings, the first language of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* was introduced to us in Spanish as *Mixteco Bajo*.

The classification of Mixteco language varieties is complex. CBDIO, for example, refers to Mixteco Alto, Mixteco Bajo, and Mixteco de la Costa in some of its resources. These language categories are also referenced in some non-linguistic academic literature (Rivera-

Salgado 1999; Stephen 2007) as well as reports from the Mexican governmental agency CDI (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas*)* (Trejo et al. 2008, p. 87). By contrast, the Ethnologue website, which aims to inventory all varieties of the world's languages, lists 52 different language varieties of Mixteco, noting the degree of intelligibility between them, but does not include any references to the three broader categories. In her dissertation on a different California Mixtec community, Bax reviews the origin of the Alto, Bajo, and De la Costa classifications and cites references going back to the colonial period where they were referred to as "'las tres mixtecas' (the three Mixtecas)" (Bax 2020, p. 59, citing Josserand 1983, pp. 105, 106) and also notes that these geographic or "territorialized" classifications are entrenched in Mexican governmental bureaucracy and institutional language, as in the CDI example I noted above. In my experience with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* it seemed they had internalized these classifications, as also noted by Bax for the community she worked with, but they reported they did not know why their variety was classified as Mixteco Bajo. From the regional descriptions the men provided to me regarding their communities of origin, their regional language variety according to Ethnologue is Mixtec, Western Juxtlahuaca. Moreover, throughout the course of the meetings, as I discuss in detail in Chapter 3, Rebekka and I learned from the men that Mixteco Bajo was called *Tu'un Nda'vi* in their own language. They explained that Tu'un Nda'vi was different than Mixteco Alto, which they knew as *Tu'un Savi*, and which was unintelligible to them. However, it was unclear whether they could identify Mixteco Alto, or Tu'un Savi, as they did not know any speakers of the language. Based on the men's identification of their language as Tu'un Nda'vi, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 3, I refer to their specific language variety as such throughout the rest of the dissertation.

The descriptions of the men that follow are based on my observations and our conversations during the course of our meetings. With the exception of Fidel, Rebekka and I did not specifically interview the men about their backgrounds; however, the other members shared some background information during the meetings. The three men who spoke Spanish—Fidel, Emiliano, and Cornelio—all exhibited similar contact features when speaking Spanish: they did not follow standard Spanish usage with regard to grammatical gender or pluralization of nouns. When including discourse data from the men in the dissertation, I represent these linguistic forms in the examples as they occurred.

Fidel, a man in his mid to late 30s at the time of the study, already had a strong command of Spanish but spoke very little English. He held a leadership position within CBDIO and in various Indigenous community subgroups connected to it. Fidel had worked in agriculture since he was 13 years old but managed to leave this industry; at the time of the study he was employed as a landscaper, unlike the other three members, whose primary employment was in the agricultural industry. As a result, Fidel had, to a certain degree, more flexibility and time available to allocate to his community work. Because he held a leadership position in CBDIO, he was able to provide Rebekka and me with detailed information about this organization, its resources, and the services it provided to his diasporic Indigenous community. Fidel spoke Spanish well with some contact influence from Tu'un Nda'vi; however, he had difficulty with writing in Spanish. Because he had the best command of Spanish among the four men, Fidel interpreted conversations between Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish during group meetings for Rebekka and me as well as for two of the other members who either did not speak Spanish or did not know enough of the language to carry on extended conversations. Beyond serving as an interpreter, Fidel offered additional

information during group meetings to provide a greater understanding of the discussion topic or to provide context both for our benefit and for that of the group. Given his role as interpreter, in combination with his leadership position, Fidel served as spokesman for the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and was Rebekka's and my primary contact in planning meetings and providing direction for the group.

Emiliano, in his early to mid 20s at the time of the study, was the youngest of the four members. He was a proficient speaker of Tu'un Nda'vi-influenced Spanish, but writing in Spanish was difficult for him. Unlike the other members of the group, Emiliano immigrated to the United States at a young age and attended part of elementary school through high school in the U.S. His level of English proficiency was roughly intermediate: he understood and could ask questions in English, but he often struggled to find words and produced a number of learner errors. Emiliano sometimes spoke in English, primarily when speaking directly to Rebekka or in her presence, perhaps because this was her first language, but he and I mostly spoke in Spanish, as it was less labored than communicating in English. Despite his difficulties when speaking English, he was able to leave agriculture temporarily to work as an electrician's assistant, but returned to agriculture with the downturn of the economy in 2008 and was working in agriculture with his father at the time of the study.

Cornelio was in his late 20s to early 30s and communicated within the group mostly in Tu'un Nda'vi through Fidel, but he occasionally spoke a few words or short sentences in Spanish. Nevertheless, he often contributed significantly to group discussions and was second only to Fidel in this regard. His contributions within the group tended to be substantive and included, on one occasion, a suggestion that we discuss language concepts for communicating with health providers, explaining associated problems and community

needs. This was one of the most in-depth discussions within the group and one of the most pressing language needs for Indigenous-language-speaking immigrants, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 4. Cornelio had worked in agriculture the entire time he had been in the United States.

Casimiro, who was in his mid to late 30s, could not communicate in Spanish, with the exception of a few words. The only way Rebekka and I were able to communicate with him was through Fidel or Emiliano serving as interpreters. However, the other men in the group regarded Casimiro as having the greatest expertise in the language among them in Tu'un Nda'vi—followed by Cornelio—and they tended to defer to his expertise in that language when they either did not know a word in Tu'un Nda'vi or needed additional context regarding Tu'un Nda'vi language concepts that arose during discussions.

Rebekka and I were also members of the group; our role was to facilitate discussions on language topics and elicit these topics from the men. Although Rebekka was not fluent in Spanish, she had a high level of proficiency in the language and an advanced understanding of written Spanish. Her expertise as a linguist was crucial in the exploration of linguistic concepts across the three languages.

Spanish was the primary language used during the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque,* as the purpose of the group was to explore Spanish language concepts. Being fluent in Spanish, I was the primary facilitator during group meetings and also bridged conversations between Spanish and English with Rebekka as needed. However, Fidel served as primary facilitator, in every respect, when bridging exchanges between Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish. Due to Casimiro and Cornelio's limitations in Spanish, they primarily spoke in Tu'un Nda'vi during group meetings. Because of this dynamic, combined with Rebekka's and my complete lack

of understanding of Tu'un Nda'vi, any exchange between Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish was mediated primarily by Fidel and occasionally by Emiliano. Emiliano, however, only took on the role of facilitator in Fidel's absence. When doing so, his role was more that of an interpreter than a facilitator in a strict sense, conveying questions and responses between Spanish and Tu'un Nda'vi, but only rarely initiating an exchange or inquiry and not providing much context beyond his interpreting. As noted previously, Fidel and Emiliano deferred to Casimiro's expertise when discussing language concepts related to Tu'un Nda'vi for confirmation, understanding, and further elaboration in that language. Cornelio served in this capacity as well, though not as frequently as Casimiro.

Having discussed the research site and participants, in the following sections I discuss my approach to the group itself as well as my research process and analysis.

2.2. Working with *el grupo de enfoque*

In this section I describe my process for approaching the Mixteco community living in Santa Maria, how *el grupo de enfoque* developed from my discussions with Julián, and the ethical foundation I used when I started my work with *el grupo de enfoque*.

As noted previously, when I first met with Julián, a Mixteco community leader in Santa Maria, I expressed my interest in working with the Mixteco community in some capacity, while providing some sort of service. Furthermore, I expressed my hope that, by working with the community, I would be able to learn from them and develop a dissertation topic grounded in their needs and circumstances. Beyond these guiding principles to my engagement with the community, I did not have a specific theoretical agenda or research question in mind. I felt I needed to get to know the group first before I could even begin to

ask questions. The goal was first to meet members of the community and understand their circumstances, goals, and perspectives and only then to develop a line of inquiry for a possible research project.

Before entering the research site, that is, before meeting with *el grupo de enfoque* for the first time, there were two separate but related considerations. The first consideration was the approach I would take in working within the group and the second, related, consideration was my approach to the research. In both cases, I envisioned that the men of the group would lead as much as possible and determine a direction for me to follow, whether directly, as expressed during the meetings, or indirectly, as guided by my observations.

In preparation for the first group meeting, and feeling woefully inadequate for the task, I looked for language-learning resources for adult learners to help guide my work with the group. I found resources on the Internet, mostly geared toward a structured classroom format and formal educational settings. However, because I was not trained as a teacher and this was not a role I presumed to take, these resources did not feel appropriate for the group and what I could provide. However, in my research I came across adult learning resources that referenced a Freirian pedagogy and perspective, which seemed to fit better with the informal approach I envisioned for the group. I was inspired by the concepts presented by Freire (1998) in *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare Teach* and was encouraged to find there a justification for the approach I envisioned following with *el grupo de enfoque*.

Freire's book focuses on education involving formally trained teachers and K-12 students. Because I was not a teacher and I was working with adults within the literacy discussion group, some adjustment was required in my approach. Nevertheless, several of

Freire's principles and concepts seemed readily transferable to working with adults. Three concepts, in particular, spoke to me as I planned my approach before the meetings started. I later incorporated these into my interactions with the men of *el grupo de enfoque*: 1) addressing my personal insecurities in my approach to the group, 2) defining my relationship with group members, and 3) valuing individual members' independent contributions and personal areas of expertise.

I start by addressing my insecurities, which were present from the beginning, after Julián and I discussed the idea of the literacy group. The title of Freire's second letter is "Don't Let the Fear of What Is Difficult Paralyze You" (Freire 1998, p. 27). Here, Freire addresses the difficulty in an anticipated educational endeavor and an educator's ability to respond to the challenge (p. 28). My greatest insecurity in approaching the group was wasting participants' time and not being able to provide something useful to their needs and circumstances. In the weeks leading up to the group meetings, I initially thought about the daunting task of preparing literacy resources. However, approaching the group as if it were a classroom did not feel appropriate. I needed a different strategy. One way in which I responded to this dilemma was to move away from any semblance of a classroom setting and to propose a discussion group format, in which different members would contribute to the discussion and I would serve as a facilitator instead of a teacher.

This approach, I felt, would also help participants by preventing them from thinking of our meetings as a formal education setting or bearing any resemblance to a classroom. Not knowing whether participants' prior educational experiences had been positive or negative—but suspecting they could be more in the realm of the negative—staying away from formal

education models, I hoped, would reduce the risk of their experience within the group being tainted by association with a past negative experience.

Despite finding a format for the group that felt better suited to the situation, other considerations arose almost immediately that stretched my ability to respond to the needs of the group. During the second group meeting, on October 11, 2009, Fidel and Emiliano expressed an interest in topics beyond exploring Spanish, and specifically in learning English and discussing English concepts within the group. Additionally, Fidel expressed an interest in learning grammatical concepts in both Spanish and English and exploring Tu'un Nda'vi concepts as well. In discussing some examples of the differences between Spanish, English, and Tu'un Nda'vi, we noted the tonal nature of Tu'un Nda'vi, in contrast to Spanish and English, and how the tones in Tu'un Nda'vi might be represented in writing or how to represent the sound that I later learned is termed a glottal stop. Given the emergence of these multiple interests, I told the group that I would consult with the Linguistics Department at UCSB regarding any Mixteco language references. Despite the informal nature of our discussions, the topics being raised required a level of expertise which I was not able to provide. Luckily, between the first and the second meetings, a mutual acquaintance mentioned and introduced me to Rebekka Siemens, a graduate student in the Linguistics Department. After an initial discussion with Rebekka where I explained the group and the needs that had arisen, she expressed her interest in working with us. Rebekka's joining the group, with members' permission, allowed us to respond to their developing linguistic needs in a way that I could not do alone, while providing legitimacy to the discussions, as perceived both by the men and by me, through her ability to address linguistic concepts in a way that I could not.

Additionally, as part of addressing my insecurities from the start, and later in order to respond to the men's varied needs, I felt it was important for me to define my role within the group. Being explicit about my role as facilitator allowed me to be as clear as possible with respect to my approach, the purpose of the group, and its limits. In reference to educators addressing their fears and insecurities and how to overcome them, Freire writes, "By speaking of their feelings, they accept themselves as persons, they testify to their desire to learn with learners" (1998, p. 48). While I did not directly speak about my personal feelings or insecurities with the men of *el grupo de enfoque,* I addressed these by clarifying my approach with the group and my role within it. As noted above, I made it expressly clear to the four men that the group was not intended as a class similar to what they might have experienced in school in the past. Additionally, in clarifying that I was not a teacher and that my academic program was not intended to prepare me for that role, I noted that, in my capacity as a researcher and as a part of my doctoral studies, within the group I was a learner, like the men themselves. I added that one of my personal goals within the group was to learn from each of them and from our discussions. Perhaps, for me, as a researcher within the context of this group, Freire's words rang ever truer than they do for most teachers in traditional educational settings.

In clarifying my own role and the function of the group as a collaborative learning environment for all participants, I was defining my relationship to *el grupo de enfoque* and its members. By implication, I was also proposing roles and relationships for the other group members. In Freire's sixth letter, "On the Relationship Between the Educator and the Learners," he writes, "our relationship with the learners demands that we respect them and demands equally that we be aware of the concrete conditions of their world, the conditions

that shape them" (1998, p. 58). Again, this principle was readily adaptable to adult learners exploring literacy topics situated in the realities of their individual experiences. Furthermore, in the way that I suggested we define our relationship, I conveyed to the men in the group that they were experts in their own language and had a wealth of personal experience to contribute. If, as noted above, we were all learners within the group, then, in the process of sharing our own expertise across a variety of topics we were also all, in a way, educators and could contribute our individual expertise to group discussions.

During our third meeting on October 18, 2009, something that happened that helped me convey this point. As part of a language topic, we were discussing how to relay directions to a local market. As Fidel translated from Spanish to Tu'un Nda'vi for the other members, he seemed to encounter a problem. He explained to me that he didn't know the words for 'right' and 'left' in Tu'un Nda'vi, and most of the other members didn't know either. Casimiro, however, was able to explain the equivalent meanings to the other members in Tu'un Nda'vi. I used this example to show the group that, even though Casimiro could not speak Spanish, he was able to use his expertise in Tu'un Nda'vi to provide clarity for the other members. He was teaching them something they didn't know about their own language. This interaction set the tone for the group in a way that promoted the participation of all the members regardless of their ability to communicate in Spanish. This interaction is analyzed in Chapter 3.

The Freirean perspective that I took in this study did not provide me with a model or theoretical framework to follow in a prescribed way, but instead provided me with the insight necessary to approach the project with an open mind, the courage to jump in and come to terms with the idea of figuring things out along the way and with jointly creating an open and

collaborative format where all members were encouraged to participate in their own way. While Freire's words were intended for traditional classroom settings with clearly defined teacher and student roles, his principles—addressing my personal insecurities in my approach to the group, defining participants' roles and relationship to the group, and valuing members' independent contributions and personal areas of expertise—were readily adaptable to *el grupo de enfoque*.

Having addressed the ethical considerations in my approach to forming *el grupo de enfoque*, in the following sections I describe my research approach and perspective, beginning with the data collection period during which Rebekka and I conducted group meetings.

2.3 Research methods

The research portion of this project was divided into a data collection stage, a focused analytic stage, and a writing stage. As I prepared to work with *el grupo de enfoque*, and throughout the data collection period and subsequent analysis, I drew on various methodologies to guide my research approach. The primary methods I drew on for data collection and analysis were participant-observation with recordings of interactions and grounded theory. However, because Rebekka and I focused on the function of the group and the needs of the participants first and foremost, due to the men's time restrictions as well as our own, I adapted my individual research process to meet the conditions and demands of the ongoing situation. Before discussing my research process, I address the methodological considerations in my approach, starting with the ethnographic method of participant-observation from anthropology as a means to develop a line of research inquiry.

From the start, although I was not strictly following a traditional ethnographic methodology, my research perspective with *el grupo de enfoque* was consistent with a "classic ethnographic study [which] seeks to provide a theoretically relevant description of aspects of social life" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 125), in which participant-observation is used as an exploratory method before formulating "appropriate questions" or a line of inquiry (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 128). In this sense, the entire data collection period with *el grupo de enfoque* was an exploratory endeavor.

Supporting this approach was my role as discussion facilitator, which involved me in every aspect of the functioning of the group from the beginning. It allowed me to observe and learn from group members and gain an understanding of their needs that would allow me to develop a foundation of knowledge regarding their circumstances and guide future research inquiry. Since I was unfamiliar with the community, I could not possibly develop research questions or a line of inquiry in advance.

All of my questions early on were prompted by an ongoing or previous exchange with the group members and were intended for me to gain clarity and understanding. A core tenet of my approach was to understand what was important and relevant to the needs of participants before developing a direction for the research component of my work, both for the sake of the group's functioning and for any research that might come out of it. Consequently, whatever protocol I developed needed to be malleable and to emerge from the natural development of the group as we formed it together. Similarly, my goal was to have any findings resulting from research and subsequent analysis emerge from and be grounded in the situated circumstances of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*. This is one of the reasons that grounded theory initially appealed to me as an analytic perspective along with

participant-observation. In reference to grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin explain, "the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data" (Corbin and Strauss 1998, p. 12). The following excerpt from Glaser and Strauss describes how I adapted principles of grounded theory to my participant-observation approach:

> An effective strategy is, at first, literally to ignore the literature of theory and fact on the area under study, in order to assure that the emergence of categories will not be contaminated by concepts more suited to different areas. Similarities and convergences with the literature can be established after the analytic core of categories has emerged. (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 37)

In envisioning the research approach to my work with *el grupo de enfoque,* I considered two guiding principles from grounded theory: 1) starting with as clean a slate as possible, without a particular theoretical framework in mind through which my observations or perspective would be filtered; thus, 2) allowing any theoretical concepts developed from my experience with the men in the group to "emerge from the data" (Glaser and Strauss 1967, pp. 46, 189; Glaser 1978, p. 95; Corbin and Strauss 1998, p. 12). However, beyond these guiding principles, I did not implement a strict grounded theory approach to either data collection or analysis but, instead, adapted these principles to meet the demands of the research site. This was partly because I did not feel that the specific methodology of grounded theory fit with my particular research site and setting.

Despite its focus on the emergence of theory during the research process, grounded theory does not necessarily produce foundational knowledge about a given research setting. Grounded theory, as introduced into sociology by Glaser and Strauss, assumes that the

researcher has a foundation of knowledge about the specific context being studied before beginning data collection, a foundation which I did not have. Referring to their research for their book *Awareness of Dying* (Glaser and Strauss 1965), Glaser and Strauss describe having a high degree of understanding about their research participants and settings: their roles, the structures in which they operated, and the research sites in which they were situated. In later work, Glaser states, "For example, one simply knows before beginning the study of a ward in a hospital that there will be doctors, nurses, ancillary personnel, shifts, admittance procedures and so forth" (Glaser 1978, p. 45). Because of this assumed background knowledge, Glaser advocates that researchers develop a line of inquiry in advance (Glaser 1978, p. 45). As noted previously, for my research with the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, I felt I first needed a more foundational understanding of their circumstances. Essentially, I wanted the research questions or topics themselves to emerge from and be equally grounded in my emerging understanding of the men's circumstances and what they considered important and relevant, rather than my own preconceived interests or concerns as a researcher.

In line with this perspective, the methods I used in data collection and analysis developed around the needs of the group. Despite my initial desire to follow grounded theory, the model that I developed during the course of the meetings was ultimately more in line with a participant-observation model. The theoretical concepts that emerged from my subsequent analysis were nevertheless grounded in the data derived from my observations, my early analysis, and the more refined analysis that followed. While I developed some preliminary questions in the process of working with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* during the data collection period, I only developed a more refined research focus during the

subsequent analytic period. My line of inquiry, then, was focused on what the collected data could address.

Having addressed the methodologies that informed my research, I now discuss the research process that I developed and followed during the data collection stage.

2.4. Data collection stage

The research process during the data collection stage of this study progressed in an iterative cycle that involved two steps of data collection followed by three steps of preliminary analysis: with regard to data collection: 1) the in-the-moment process of recording video and/or audio and writing in-progress notes during the group meetings with *el grupo de enfoque*, and 2) fieldnotes written immediately after the meetings at various public locations in the city of Santa Maria, prior to commuting back home. Then, with regard to preliminary analysis my process involved the following steps: 3) debriefing and discussion between Rebekka and me during our return commute, where we explored preliminary concepts to be considered for subsequent meetings and eventually for our independent research projects, 4) independent review of my notes and recordings, and 5) writing of analytic notes and memos. In the latter two steps of this cycle, during my initial analysis throughout the data collection period, I developed preliminary thoughts and questions for consideration in later, more in-depth analysis.

The majority of participant-observation and data collection was carried out within the context of the group meetings. These were generally two hours in length and scheduled on a weekly basis, mostly on Sundays or as convenient for the members, allowing for the variability of individual schedules and community events.

During group meetings, my in-progress notes were restricted to jotting down a few words or key phrases, which is consistent with the practice of participant-observation (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995, pp. 19, 20; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 160). My engagement and focus during group activities was of primary importance and this did not allow for detailed in-progress notes. Even during periods when I was not directly a part of a conversation, it was more important for me to observe interactions within the group than to document them in detail. In-progress notes were intended to serve as a reminder of key events for the more formal fieldnote writing process immediately following each meeting.

Beginning with the first group meeting, after receiving participants' consent, I began the practice of developing my fieldnotes as soon as possible after group meetings. After each meeting, and before the drive home, I would go to a nearby coffee shop in order to write fieldnotes in as much detail as possible. This allowed me to focus entirely on the writing of fieldnotes while events were fresh in my mind. This practice continued, with only a few exceptions, after Rebekka joined the group and throughout the entire data collection period. After writing our independent notes, we debriefed the events during our drive back to Santa Barbara. Once the immediate need to write fieldnotes was addressed, subsequent review of the notes and additional writing—in the form of expanded notes and analytic memos—could then be done at a later time, allowing for flexible time management.

While I have discussed the process of writing fieldnotes as part of my data collection process, it also naturally served as the first stage of analysis. That is, the writing of fieldnotes was not just a matter of writing down what I observed, but it also involved, to a certain degree, meaning making on my part. DeWalt and DeWalt address the analytic nature of fieldnotes as follows:

> [F]ield notes are simultaneously data and analysis. By this, we mean that they should be the careful record of observation, conversation, and informal interview carried out on a day by day basis by the researcher. At the same time, field notes are a product, constructed by the researcher. The researcher decides what goes into the field notes, the level of detail to include, how much context to include, whether exact conversations are recorded or just summaries, etc. …Field notes are thus the first or perhaps second or third step in the process of analysis. This inherent contradiction of being both data and analysis that is embodied in field notes is part and parcel of the continuing discussions surrounding the nature of anthropological inquiry and the nature of ethnography. (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 159)

As I wrote down what I had just observed with as much detail as possible, using my in-progress notes as a reference for recollecting events, I also added my immediate impressions, ventured preliminary interpretations of what I thought at the time, and wrote questions for future consideration and to guide further exploration. Any information and insight garnered through the writing and review of fieldnotes during the data collection period provided a constantly developing frame of reference to inform my subsequent interactions, observations, and discussions, as well as the progressive planning and restructuring of group activities. In this sense, the line between what constitutes data collection and analysis is unavoidably blurred. This intertwining of data collection and analysis continued immediately after writing fieldnotes. After Rebekka and I wrote our independent fieldnotes each week, our conversations during our drive back to Santa Barbara served as debriefing sessions for the meetings with *el grupo de enfoque*. This allowed us to voice our initial impressions and note

any remarkable incidents with a focus both on understanding the functioning of the group and refining our in-group practices.

Another form of early analysis that I conducted during the data collection period was the process of writing analytic memos. My analytic memos at this stage were what De Walt and DeWalt term meta notes or analytic notes:

> Meta-notes or analytic notes are those notes that represent some level of inference or analysis. Some are generated during the recording of expanded notes, others are written upon further reflection on events and the notes that record them. They include comments on notes, summary of the evidence for a particular argument collected to that point, preliminary interpretations, hypotheses, and questions for further research. (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 170)

My writing of analytic memos continued throughout the entire dissertation process. They gradually became more extensive and focused on my developing understanding, first, throughout the focused analytic period that followed the data collection period, and then throughout the writing of the analytic chapters of the dissertation.

Before moving on to discuss my more formal analytic process, it is important to highlight the role of video and audio as forms of data collection, which proved invaluable to my research process as a whole. In-progress notes written during group meetings and the expanded fieldnotes written immediately afterward provided a record both of my developing views and understanding of the dynamics that operated within *el grupo de enfoque* and of my growing familiarity with the men in the group, as well as some of their needs and individual circumstances. However, the perspective that these notes provided was limited by my

understanding at the time when I recorded them. Anticipating the need to revisit those interactions with new eyes in the future and and with participants' consent, I started recording during the second meeting with *el grupo de enfoque,* and we continued making audio and/or video recordings of the meetings after Rebekka joined the group. These recordings proved invaluable in complementing my in-progress notes and fieldnotes during the analytic period subsequent to data collection.

The problem with relying on fieldnotes alone was that I could only document limited details, and what I chose to document at any given point in time was limited by my understanding at that point. In other words, by their nature, fieldnotes are not just a snapshot in time, but a snapshot in understanding at a particular point in time. DeWalt and DeWalt note, "While we may reassess the meaning of field notes over time, as our experience grows and our theoretical perspective matures, the notes themselves remain unchanging" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 172). The limitation of fieldnotes was that it was not only possible for me to neglect to document something important, but it was also likely that I might not document something that would eventually become important as my understanding of the research experience and the data matured. As noted above, during the meetings with *el grupo de enfoque*, I did not know what the focus of my research would eventually be. Therefore, Rebekka and I recorded as much video and audio as possible, because capturing the level of detail that might be needed in the future was not possible with fieldnotes alone, particularly details regarding what precisely was said and how. DeWalt and DeWalt address the need for detailed interactional records as follows:

> the written record should contain as much verbatim conversation as possible. Realistically, however, unless the researcher is making rather detailed jot

> notes, or audio or video taping while interacting, reproducing much of any verbatim conversation will be difficult. Finally, nonverbal expression and gesture are also important to understand what is going on. Attention to detail in observation should also include noting nonverbal cues and communication. (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 87)

During analysis, video and audio recordings allowed me to go back to important moments during a given meeting and analyze excerpts verbatim. Additionally, video allowed me to observe embodied communication that, in one particular instance, ended up revealing a concept related to a hypothesis that I developed later during the analytic period. The video revealed the physical manifestations of increased engagement of one of the group members when the topic of Tu'un Nda'vi arose during the meeting; this member's interest stood in contrast to another member's statements noting the importance of focusing exclusively on Spanish-related language topics within the group. This incident and others pointed me to an idea that emerged only later during analysis, and, thus, they were crucial to my later understanding. What I originally viewed as a conflict between group members' observed and stated goals and interests evolved into a concept that became part of my core theoretical framework, which I discuss in subsequent chapters. Without being able to review audio and video recordings at a later time, to verify my developing understanding of group dynamics, I am almost certain that I would not have been able to make the same connections and theoretical abstractions at later stages of analysis. In this way, audio and video recordings allowed me to triangulate for validity by comparing the impressions I had recorded in my earlier fieldnotes with newer or alternative concepts developed later on, enabling me to better

determine whether my conclusions were grounded in what was happening within the group (Creswell and Miller 2000, pp. 124, 125).

A more basic reason for me to use audio and video, however, was that it allowed me to focus on the functioning of the group, which was my priority. While I made in-progress notes to jog my memory later about what might have seemed important at the time, recording group conversations allowed me to focus on the members and be fully present and invested in the experience of the moment, "attending carefully to what [was] being said" and taking care to "attend not to remembering but to feeling and experiencing" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, pp. 87, 92). I could do so trusting that I could go back and review the recordings of an interaction when needed, at which point I could also be more attentive to its research implications.

My initial independent analysis during the data collection period, however, involved very little review of the recordings due to time constraints and consisted mainly of reviewing my fieldnotes, writing additional analytic notes, and writing a few more extensive memos during nights and weekends. Because I had to conduct the data collection and analysis around my full-time work schedule and other responsibilities, and because my focus on the functioning of the group was my main priority, my analysis during the data collection period was not as extensive as I would have liked or had initially intended. Consequently, the more formal and in-depth process of reviewing audio and video data and comparing these with my records did not happen until the data collection period had ended, as I describe below.

2.5 Analytic Stage

During the data collection period, while exploring topics for future research, I was in large part focused on the functioning of *el grupo de enfoque* and its main purpose, exploring language concepts with the men in the group. Once the meetings had ended, however, I was able to focus on analysis and the research implications of my observations and data collected during the course of the meetings. This stage of analysis consisted of the time between the end of the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque* and through the writing of the dissertation. While my analysis continued into the writing stage, as I describe in the next section, this stage is where I began my analysis in earnest. In this section, I describe the process I followed during the analytic stage and related methodological considerations.

One of the first things I did during this period was to take stock of the information I had collected and begin to organize it. As I did so, I created a key to keep track of interesting incidents and where they were recorded, such as in-progress notes, fieldnotes, audio, video, and analytic memos. While in-progress notes were brief, fieldnotes written after group meetings were more detailed, recording as much vivid detail as I could recall, with additional meta-notes or analytic memos venturing initial thoughts and ideas on what I had observed. Additionally, I noted the specific timestamp for each incident in either the audio or video recordings so as to be able to access the information easily at a later time. As I went through the records in chronological order, I began labeling each incident by either a descriptive category, noting the action I was observing (Glaser 1978, p. 57; DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 80; Tweed and Charmaz 2012, p. 137), or noting a more abstract concept, what DeWalt and DeWalt term a "conceptual label" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 183). I refer to these initial descriptive concepts as labels rather than codes, which is a term I reserve for more developed concepts in later analysis. Because I did not know the direction the research would eventually

take, I began labeling the incidents in the early stages as inclusively as possible without a specific method or strategy. These initial descriptive and conceptual labels are what Glaser refers to as "open coding":

> Open Coding: The goal of the analyst is to generate an emergent set of categories and their properties which fit, work and are relevant for integrating into a theory. To achieve this goal the analyst begins with open coding, which is coding the data in every way possible. Another way to phrase it is "running the data open." The analyst codes for as many categories that might fit; he (sic) codes different incidences into as many categories as possible. New categories emerge and new incidences fit existing categories. He (sic) may even code for what is not obviously stated. This maximizes allowing the best fits, the most workable ones and the core relevancies to emerge on their own… . (Glaser 1978, p. 56)

The basic-level analysis progressed in two stages. The first stage took place during data collection, as discussed in the previous section. However, because of the nature of the research project and my need to focus on the functioning of *el grupo de enfoque* during the data collection period, my analysis during data collection was not as in-depth as I would have liked—that is, in a way that would have allowed me to establish early or "lower level categories," as suggested for grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 36).

The second stage of my basic-level analysis began after the data collection period had ended. During this period, I continued to develop lower-level categories from the data I collected. While these categories emerged quickly, as suggested by Glaser and Strauss, these initial categories were still very preliminary and exploratory, not quite foundational.

Furthermore, this process was not linear. That is, I did not label all the data with the initial descriptive categories or concepts at once. As I reviewed pieces of data in chronological order, I would continually return to data I had previously reviewed and added additional conceptual labels or relabeled incidents as categories began to take shape along the way as I developed these into more formal codes. As I continued reviewing and recoding the data in this way, the salience of certain interactions and potential meanings became clearer. As my understanding increased and I developed greater insight throughout the process, based on what was beginning to emerge from re-reviewing and reanalyzing incidents, I would go back to the data to see if it supported my understanding and insights. At this stage, however, the conceptual codes and categories were still preliminary and were more "descriptive" or "interpretive," but did not yet have "explanatory" potential (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 180; Glaser 1978 pp. 45, 70). This iterative process led to more in-depth analysis as emerging concepts began to take shape.

Concurrent with this process, I began to write expanded notes and memos. I continually jotted down more and more thoughts, questions, and potential lines of exploration garnered from my review of the data in a way that is consistent with the concept of memoing noted by Glaser and Strauss in order to record my initial "theoretical notions" (1967, p. 107). This allowed me to flesh out each concept before moving on to another concept and thus avoiding the risk of forgetting nascent thoughts or concepts in the process and over long periods of time. My notes and exploratory conceptual writings varied in length from a single question to a few sentences to documents of a page or more. While I engaged in this exploratory writing process sparingly during data collection, I began using it in earnest during this analytic period and continued throughout the entire dissertation writing process. Exploratory writing

in this way allowed me to think through my developing understanding while continually going back to the data to see if my initial thoughts were supported by the data. My analytic process was analogous to that of exploring physical trails to see where they might lead. As I followed conceptual trails, sometimes they led to dead ends, when these trails of thought were not sufficiently supported by the data, failed to provide additional understanding, or did not hold the promise of explanatory power. In such a case, having explored a given concept, I could cross it off if it proved unfruitful and double back to see where other concepts would lead. This is similar to the process described by Glaser: "while the analyst keeps doubling back to more data and coding, the emphasis keeps shifting toward more memos on data and memos on memos (memo sparking)…" (1978, p. 16). Fleshed out ideas and concepts in this way informed the process of developing categories that I used to reanalyze specific incidents through emerging conceptual lenses and nascent frameworks.

Beyond describing my data analysis process, it is important for me to address my underlying research perspective, because this is what ultimately informed my process. As I noted above, the needs of the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and the functioning of the group were my main priority during the data collection period. Similarly, my primary research goal during data analysis and throughout the writing process was to gain an understanding of the men's circumstances, their needs, and the dynamics or conditions that affected them. Secondary to this goal, if not more of an afterthought, but, as it turned out, inextricably linked in my process was the goal of theoretical development. Throughout the entire data collection period and for a good part of the analytic process, I was not focused on theory development, and did not know whether my research would lead to a theoretical contribution. Despite starting the research project with grounded theory broadly in mind—which

inherently implies the development of theory—my main goal in thinking about grounded theory was to apply its underlying principles to learn from what I observed. I wanted to avoid having a given theory in mind in advance and risk overlaying some preconceived theory or concept onto what I would be observing and thus potentially obscure, direct, or even bias my interpretation in a manner inconsistent with the realities of the men with whom I worked. As the analysis progressed, however, and as I learned more and gained a better understanding of what I was observing in the data, theoretical development eventually followed.

My analysis, then, evolved from being focused on gaining understanding from an insider's perspective to making theoretical connections from an outsider's perspective. Both DuFon (2002) and DeWalt and DeWalt (2011) address these emic and etic research perspectives in similar ways: the emic perspective focuses on "the culturally specific framework used by the members of the community under study for interpreting and assigning meaning to their experiences" (DuFon 2002, p. 42), and the etic perspective involves "*a priori* categories drawn from the initial theoretical framework" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, p. 183). However, the etic perspective need not be preconceived but may itself emerge from, and thus be grounded in, the emic perspective. Similarly, related to this etic perspective, although Glaser and Strauss recommend for grounded theory research that the researcher not have a preconceived theory in mind when starting the research, in later stages and once core categories have emerged through data analysis, they recommend that researchers review existing theories to establish similarities and convergences between existing literature and the emergent concepts of a given research project (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 37). Although the use of grounded theory itself does not necessarily mean that a researcher's analysis will take into account an emic perspective, it can do so, and this was my intent from the start.

Eventually, however, in delving into existing literature for convergent theories, the level of analysis for convergence required me to analyze emergent concepts from an etic perspective, but one that was nevertheless grounded in the emic. That is, as my understanding grew and I developed core categories, concepts, and hypotheses based as much as possible on the perspective of the men in the group, the connections that emerged from that analysis progressively moved beyond what I had observed and toward the etic: toward linked but separate theoretical abstractions. Once I fleshed out the theoretical concepts that I discuss in the following chapters, I compared the theoretical concepts that emerged from my analysis with existing theories and literature, as I describe below. The resulting end product, in which I wrote about the theoretical implications of my research, was produced through a decidedly etic perspective.

Another issue related to perspective, especially during my data collection process and throughout my analysis, is data reduction. In my case, it was the process of honing down the data and, consequently, the questions and concepts that eventually led to a specific line of inquiry and the core concepts presented in this dissertation. While data reduction can be done from data already collected (Miles and Huberman 1984, p. 23), in grounded theory this process runs concurrently with data collction through "selective sampling" and "selective coding" (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 45). I could not have applied data reduction as stipulated by grounded theory in this way, given the structure of my work with *el grupo de enfoque*. Regarding theoretical sampling, Glaser and Strauss write:

> Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his (sic) data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in

> order to develop his (sic) theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal. (1967, p. 45)

Theoretical sampling—in contrast to random sampling in quantitative research or selective sampling for both quantitative and qualitative research—ultimately relates to group selection. In grounded theory, the early emergence of core concepts during data collection determines or delimits the selection of additional "comparison groups" in theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 9), as well as the categories that a researcher will look for to "delimit coding," in the process of recording data (Glaser 1978 p. 61). The first assumption of theoretical sampling, is that a researcher has access to multiple groups, and the second assumption is that the process of data reduction, through selective coding, begins during the data collection stage. I address the problems with both of these assumptions below.

Theoretical sampling cannot be done with single-group ethnography, as in the case of my own research project, as there are no other groups being studied simultaneously. Conceptually, however, theoretical sampling could be done later: a future group could be selected to explore specific concepts and theories that emerged from the first study. But this was not my intent here, as this dissertation is focused on a single group, *el grupo de enfoque*. Additionally, selective coding as presented by Glaser and Strauss is also problematic for my research. The assumption of this approach is that the researcher has made up their mind in advance about what they will study and will, consequently, only focus on the line of inquiry they have previously established. This is only possible if the researcher already has a foundation of knowledge or a basic understanding of the people they are studying and the

dynamics of the research site (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 45; Glaser 1978, p. 45). However, as discussed above, I did not have a foundation of knowledge about the men with whom I was working or their lives or circumstances. This naturally limited my ability and desire to start the process of data reduction during data collection. I felt I needed to learn as much as possible first, and only after gaining a better sense of understanding could I then start the process of data reduction. Again, my primary goal was not theory development, but to gain an understanding from the men's perspective about their reality, as much as possible. In order to do so, I tried to remain open to different lines of inquiry during the entire data collection period and well into the analytic period. In short, data reduction through theoretical sampling and selective coding during data collection, as required by grounded theory, were not compatible with my ethnographic study. The process of data reduction in my case did not take place until the analytic period, after the core categories had emerged.

My ability to delay the data reduction process until after the data collection period had ended was made possible in large part because of my use of video and audio recording process. As concepts emerged from my analysis of the data during this analytic period and I gained a better understanding of the data and what it represented, this prompted additional questions. Although *el grupo de enfoque* had ended and I no longer had access to the men to ask them these questions, I could still access the audio and video recordings as needed and, essentially, ask these emerging questions of the data by analyzing the recordings using a different conceptual lens. As noted previously, in-progress or jot notes and fieldnotes written after I left the site on a given day, where very valuable, but only as good as my limited understanding at that point in time. The video and audio record, while still limited in its unchanging nature, provided a much more detailed record of the meetings at any given point,

which allowed me to revisit interactions later during the analytic stage with increasingly informed questions and perspective as concepts emerged from continual analysis.

Data reduction progressed together with my analysis during this period, but it did not end here. Both continued into the writing stage, as I discuss in the following section.

2.6 Writing stage

The dissertation writing stage began after the analytic stage and was characterized by more focused writing after a significant portion of analysis had taken place. However, there was not a clear separation between these two stages; rather, there was a progressive transition between them. My analysis began the moment I wrote my first fieldnote, it developed during the focused analytic period, and it continued throughout the writing stage, all the while taking on different forms. In fact, my analysis did not end until my final piece of writing for this dissertation was complete. One type of analysis that changed at different stages, in both form and content, was exploratory writing via analytic memos.

As noted previously, once I determined the core categories that emerged from my analysis, I continued progressively expanding my exploratory writing. While my earlier memos were generally short, focusing on brief thoughts for future exploration and emerging concepts and ideas, these progressed to more extensive and focused memos during the latter stages of the focused analytic period and into the writing period. I used this exploratory writing, or memoing, to flesh out basic concepts that emerged from my analysis and to make sense of the connections between concepts and how these, in turn, reconnected to the data. Glaser defines the continual process of memoing from data collection through the writing process as follows:

> Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding. Memos lead naturally to abstraction or ideation. Memoing is a constant process that begins when first coding data, and continues through reading memos or literature, sorting and writing papers or monographs to the very end. Memo-writing continually captures the "frontier of the analyst's thinking" as he (sic) goes through either his (sic) data, codes, sorts or writes. (Glaser 1978, p. 83)

During the writing stage, while memoing on different concepts continued, I began to write drafts of parts of the dissertation, and through this writing process I continued to flesh out concepts and the connections between them. Having started this process, I then began reviewing the literature to see where existing research intersected with my emerging findings. This approach is consistent with the recommendations for the writing stage, as proposed by Glaser and Strauss for grounded theory development (Glaser and Strauss 1967 p. 37; Glaser 1978, p. 22). I had avoided reading previous research extensively during data collection and early analysis so as not to bias or direct my developing understanding of the dynamics that operated within *el grupo de enfoque*, but my goal during the writing stage, as Glaser recommends, was to review literature specifically relevant to my developing theoretical concepts, compare it to the work of others, and, if possible, either integrate the work of others into my developing theory or extend their work and contribute in this way to existing theory (Glaser 1978, p. 139). The work of others that was relevant to my own findings is referenced in the following chapters.

The few analytic memos I wrote during the data collection stage were mostly focused on my observations during meetings. During the writing stage, I more fully developed the theoretical concepts that emerged from my analysis, and therefore some of the memos at this stage were decidedly theoretical, especially after I reviewed literature on subjects that related in some way to the concepts that emerged from my analysis. This is similar to the process that Glaser describes:

> One must write as if no one ever wrote on the subject. Then after a first draft during the reworking time, the analyst explores the literature to see just what new property of an idea he (sic) has offered or how his (sic) idea is embedded in a new set of connections of others' ideas in order to yield his (sic) theory. (Glaser 1978, p. 22)

Through analytic memos, I conducted this exploratory analysis to examine the connections to the theories I discuss in detail in Chapters 4 and 5, with the intent of seeing them in practice in other contexts. Thinking outside of my own research helped me explore possible connections and potential gaps in my understanding as well as theoretical concepts that emerged through my analysis. Exploring these concepts by applying them to other contexts helped me step back from my own research to see my emerging theories from a different perspective.

Having developed my final core categories at this stage, and after going back to make sure they were both supported by the data and held explanatory power, I continued reviewing literature that related to social capital and agency, which I discussed in the literature review of Chapter 1 and apply to my data analysis in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, where I discuss the men's three different languages as well as their language-learning prioritization.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed my approach to working with *el grupo de enfoque*, guided in part by the work of Freire (1998). I also discuss how I adapted my research methods to fit the needs of the group—which included the needs of the four men, the two discussion facilitators/researchers, and the research conditions. These two issues were inextricably linked. My methods for data collection and analysis were guided in part by principles of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), but modified to fit the needs of this ethnographic research study. The methods that I have discussed in this chapter led to my development of grounded models of social capital and constricted agency. I use these models, in part, to explain what I learned from working with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and to contribute to and inform future scholarship.

Chapter 3. Tu'un Nda'vi, First Language Literacy and Social Capital

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on Tu'un Nda'vi, the first language of the four men in *el grupo de enfoque,* with respect to what the language represents for them outside of their communities of origin and in their specific diasporic setting in Santa Maria. I discuss the lack of literacy resources available to the men in their first language and, for one of the men, the resulting first-language subordination in relation to written varieties of Tu'un Nda'vi. I argue that despite this lack of literacy resources, Tu'un Nda'vi was an element that bound the men's diasporic community and was a source of social capital that connected the men and their community with a variety of resources and services generated through social networks at local, regional, and binational levels.

In sections 3.2 and 3.3 of this chapter, I address the profound effect that the lack of readily available language resources in Tu'un Nda'vi had on the men in this study. I discuss potential internalized subordination by one member of their oral-only first language in relation to written varieties of the language. I propose that these perceptions may have stemmed at least in part from the lack of first-language literacy resources in their variety of Tu'un Nda'vi in relation to other Mixteco varieties, specifically, Tu'un Savi. There are widely varying degrees of intelligibility between Mixteco varieties (INALI, 2003, p. 8). Consequently, speakers from different regions view their own language as distinct from Tu'un Savi, as in the case of the men of *el grupo de enfoque.* Bax discussed one particular Mixteco family's description of their language as Tu'un Nda'vi and *Ñuu Nda'vi*, 'humble people', based on the literal meaning of nda'vi as 'poor' (2020, pp. 76-79). Similar self-identification with Tu'un Nda'vi as a language variety, distinct from Tu'un Savi, is reported

by Peters (2018, p. 1). The Tu'un Savi language variety has been positioned as the standard form of Mixteco by Ve'e Tu'un Savi, the Academy of the Mixteco Language (Caballero 2009, p. 61). Caballero, a Mixteco scholar in Indigenous American studies and a former general manager of Ve'e Tu'un Savi, asserts that other varieties of Mixteco are not languages in their own right but dialectal variants of Tu'un Savi and claims that, despite differences in the names of those varieties, they are essentially the same language (2009, pp. 11, 32). While this may very well be the case among some Mixteco language varieties, the four men in *el grupo de enfoque* did not consider this to be the case regarding their variety of Tu'un Nda'vi[2].

Beyond the issue of the promotion of a single language variety as the standard Mixteco language and the resulting implications of hierarchy and differing prestige between language varieties (Castillo Garcia 2007, pp. 12-13), I focus on how the men of *el grupo de enfoque* used Tu'un Nda'vi in their diasporic contexts and its role in defining their individual and cultural community identity. Tu'un Nda'vi served a very practical need in their community's formation and development: it was the primary language used for communication between members of their cultural community who often knew very little to no Spanish, let alone English.

While all four men in the group were dominant in Tu'un Nda'vi, they held varying degrees of expertise in the language. Fidel facilitated communication within the group by translating between Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish for the other men, Rebekka, and me, but he deferred to Casimiro, primarily, or sometimes Cornelio when addressing Tu'un Nda'vi

[2] The analysis required to determine the veracity of Caballero's claim is well beyond the scope of this dissertation, and I make no attempt to either prove or disprove it. The focus of this study is specifically on the meaning and significance that the men in *el grupo de enfoque* ascribe to their own variety of Tu'un Nda'vi as represented by them during the course of this study.

language topics or concepts. Casimiro's and Cornelio's expertise in Tu'un Nda'vi, combined with their limited ability to communicate in Spanish, contrasted with the language abilities of Fidel and Emiliano, who were both proficient in Spanish but were unable to maintain an equivalent level of expertise in Tu'un Nda'vi, having migrated away from their communities of origin at a young age. This situation seemed to be a consequence both of their early age upon migrating as well as the lack of readily available Tu'un Nda'vi language resources available to them. As I show in Chapter 5, the differing ranges in language expertise in Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish among the four men in *el grupo de enfoque* provide a basis for understanding how their competing linguistic needs influenced their language-learning prioritization in diaspora.

In the second section of this chapter, I discuss social capital within the context of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community. As a conceptual foundation, I draw from the work of Bourdieu (1985) and Coleman (1988) as well as Portes (1998), who synthesizes the work of these theorists and others. I elaborate on these scholars' theories by drawing elements from each of their definitions and conceptualizations of social capital as a foundation for the model of social capital that I develop below. Additionally, in describing how social capital was generated within *el grupo de enfoque* and the men's diasporic community, based both on my discussions with them and my observations during the study, I elaborate on Coleman's description of the conversion of human capital, that is, the contribution of individuals to social capital that ca

n be accessed by others. In the model I propose below, I identify six elements of social capital: 1) the source of social capital, 2) the unit of social capital, 3) the resources that are made available through social capital, 4) the process for generating social capital, 5) the

benefits that social capital generates, and, 6) social capital as representation, which provides a voice to the group that holds this capital. In defining the six elements, I draw *source* from Portes' definition but disaggregate it from other components and define it more narrowly in practice; I draw the *unit* from Bourdieu's networks, which he includes in his definition of social capital, and also redefine *resources* in the model I present below; I draw from Coleman's definition of social capital as a *function* to describe the process for generating social capital; I draw from Portes in discussing the *benefits* to those who have access to social capital; and I expand on Bourdieu in discussing social capital as *representation*. Additionally, I discuss both the contributors to social capital—which are different than the source of social capital—and the recipients of social capital.

By disaggregating these components of social capital, this model, which is grounded in my ethnographic research, has the potential to be applied across different cultural and socioeconomic contexts.

3.1 Reworking social capital

While Bourdieu (1985) is widely regarded as one of the first contributors to the concept of social capital, I argue that his model does not go far enough to include the various socioeconomic contexts to which social capital can be applied, in that in his view social capital can only be possessed by a society's upper socioeconomic classes. Social capital is defined broadly by Bourdieu as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (1985, p. 248). Essentially, he conflates social capital with cultural, economic, and even inheritable forms of physical and symbolic capital (1985,

pp. 249-251, 254). Thus, this type of social capital, which is attained in part by virtue of an actor's position in society and in part by their wealth in other forms of capital, becomes "part of the reproduction of social inequality" (Saldívar 2011, p. 81). Additionally, because Bourdieu conflates various forms of capital and does not define the concept more narrowly, it is difficult to see where the effects of various forms of physical and symbolic capital end and the effects of social capital begin.

Bourdieu characterizes the contributors of social capital as part of an elite class, "(a family, the alumni of an elite school, a select club, the aristocracy, etc.) that is more or less constituted as such and more or less rich in capital" (1985, p. 256: note 11). Without separating the attributes possessed by the contributors of social capital (e.g. individuals with status and power) from the source of that capital (e.g., individuals' wealth and influence, in Bourdieu's conception) without specifying what defines the unit of social capital (i.e., a clearly defined group), and without further separating the processes that generate social capital (i.e., specific practices within the unit that generate social capital), then these are all incorrectly understood simultaneously as the input and the product of social capital. In Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital, wealth and opportunity beget wealth and opportunity. This view limits the ways in which the concept of social capital can be applied to different settings and relegates it to the contexts that Bourdieu suggested. Similarly, Bourdieu restricts representation of a group through social capital to spokespersons within the realm of the socioeconomically powerful:

> Every group has its more or less institutionalized forms of delegation which enable it to concentrate the totality of the social capital, which is the basis of the existence of the group… in the hands of a single agent or a small

> group of agents … to represent the group, to speak and act in its name and so, with the aid of this collectively owned capital, to exercise a power incommensurate with the agent's personal contribution. (1985, p. 252).

Bourdieu focuses on the higher classes of society, such as nobility, in illustrating how an individual or a small group—the contributors to social capital—can be the voice of or represent a network of social capital. Despite this restricted application, his description of representation can be adapted to a variety of socioeconomic contexts, as I discuss in this chapter.

Moreover, Bourdieu does not elaborate on a related aspect of representation implicit in his description: the possibility of social capital providing a group with the ability to have their voice and interests represented in settings beyond group activities. In this regard, Nguyen Long writes, "Social capital is the value entrenched in our relationships that can be transformed into tangible assets for the pursuit of individual and collective interest. [It] improves a community's capacity to organize and, therefore, to mobilize" (2016, pp. 821-822). Going beyond Bourdieu, in this chapter, I discuss social capital as representation, the role of contributors and their contribution, and the benefits to recipients within a unit of social capital. The unit in my study was the group to which the men in *el grupo de enfoque* belonged, CBDIO, and representation was the voice that was provided to their community as a whole through social capital. In the model I propose later in this section, I also elaborate on Bourdieu's basic definition of social capital, particularly focusing on "actual or potential resources, which are linked to possession of a durable network" (1985, p. 248).

Unlike Bourdieu, Coleman (1988) does not focus on the attributes possessed by the contributors to social capital, but rather on what that they contribute. He defines social capital

as follows: “Social capital is defined by its *function*. It is not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they *facilitate* certain actions of actors—whether persons or corporate actors—within the structure” (1988, p. 98: emphasis mine). When social capital is viewed in this way, both by its function and as actions to be carried out, it can be extended beyond the upper classes of society and can be seen as taking a multitude of forms across the vast array of socioeconomic settings of the human experience.

Another significant contribution by Coleman is his elaboration on the relationship between human capital and social capital. Coleman provides a very basic definition of human capital, describing it as “embodied in the skills and knowledge acquired by an individual” (1988, p. 100). Others offer more detailed definitions and have further refined the concept. For example, Subramaniam and Youndt, summarizing Schultz (1961), define human capital as “the knowledge, skills, and abilities residing with and utilized by individuals” (2005, p. 451). Elaborating further, referencing Becker (1964), Pil and Leana define human capital “as an individual’s cumulative abilities, knowledge, and skills developed through formal and informal education and experience” (2009, p. 1103). However, Coleman does not distinguish between social capital and the specific mechanism or process for converting human capital to social capital, beyond noting that strong social relationships are needed. Nevertheless, understanding human capital as the element that individual actors contribute toward social capital, which can be accessed by others in their network (i.e. recipients of social capital), is critical for understanding how social capital was generated within the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, as I discuss later in this chapter. In my model of social capital, I specifically address how it is generated through the conversion of human capital via the

practices that are carried out within the unit of social capital. In the case of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their diasporic Indigenous community, the unit of social capital was CBDIO and the networks that operated under its auspices.

Building on Bourdieu, Coleman, and others, Portes defines social capital as "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks and other social structures" (1998, p. 6). In developing his analysis of social capital, Portes favors Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital over Coleman's, but his version of social capital also shares some commonalities with Coleman's. Following Coleman, he suggests the need to identify the means through which social capital is generated, but like Coleman, he does not go far enough. In regards to the source of social capital, he writes, "[t]o possess social capital, a person must be related to others, and it is those others, not himself (sic), who are the actual source of his or her advantage" (1998, p. 7). Here, Portes appears to be conflating the contributors to social capital with its source, as Bourdieu does before him. As noted previously, I disaggregate the source of social capital from those that contribute to it in the model I introduce later in this chapter. Nevertheless, in my model of social capital, I elaborate on Portes by framing benefits, which are included in his definition, as the product of social capital, and networks and social structures as the unit through which social capital is made available to community members.

As Portes notes, one of the challenges with using social capital as a theoretical framework is overcoming the degree to which the concept has been stretched through the wide range of uses to which it has been put. He writes, "the point is approaching at which social capital comes to be applied to so many events and in so many different contexts as to lose any distinct meaning" (1998, p. 2). With this caveat in mind, in addition to describing

the production of social capital and grounding it within the context of this study, I narrowly define the unit of social capital under discussion. This avoids the problem of applying social capital to groups so large that members have little to nothing in common and lack direct and identifiable connections. In such applications, social capital becomes purely abstract. By defining the unit of social capital as a concrete, cohesive unit and by identifying clear connections between the members of the unit of social capital under analysis, the concept can be grounded in empirical (in this study, ethnographic) observations, thus adding to the validity of its application.

Bourdieu provides a strong foundation for defining a unit of social capital. He references a "network of relationships" which can be used to define a unit of social capital as a community or group of "individuals [who are] as homogenous as possible in all the pertinent respects in terms of the existence and persistence of the group" (1985, p. 250). While I borrow Bourdieu's description of network of relationships to define the unit of social capital, because his applications of social capital are limited to those with power, prestige, and wealth, only his most abstract description of the concept is directly relevant to my discussion of social capital.

To summarize, I argue for the disaggregation of six distinct elements of social capital so they can be viewed and understood independently: 1) the source of social capital, 2) the unit of social capital, 3) the resources that are made available through social capital, 4) the process for generating social capital, 5) the benefits that social capital generates, and, 6) social capital as representation.

In section 3.4, I ground my conceptualization of social capital in my analysis of data gathered through direct observation of the operations of CDBIO through the course of the

meetings of *el grupo de enfoque* and through the functions of the organization as described by Fidel as one of the leaders of this organization. However, before I delve into social capital, I begin with a discussion of what Tu'un Nda'vi represented to the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community, which I follow with a discussion of this language's role as the source of social capital for the men's diasporic community.

3.2 What's in a name?: Mixteco Bajo and Tu'un Nda'vi

Mixteco comes from a Náhuatl word meaning 'cloud people' that was reportedly attributed to the region, the people, and the language at the time of initial contact during colonization (Whitecotton 1977, p. 23 in Pharo 2007, p. 38; Terraciano 1990, pp. 124-126). Mixteco people refer to themselves in a variety of ways, depending on their language variety and ideological orientations, as reported by Bax (2020), including *Ñuu Savi*, 'people of the rain', and *Ñuu Nda'vi* 'humble people' (p. 77) among others.[3] Mixteco encompasses numerous Mixteco language varieties, including the Tu'un Nda'vi variety spoken by the four men in *el grupo de enfoque*. *Mixteco Bajo* was the name that the men and members of their language community used to refer to their language when speaking to non-Tu'un Nda'vi speakers, and this was how they introduced the language to me in our earliest interactions, similar to some cases reported by Bax elsewhere in California (2020, pp. 63, 86). The four men of *el grupo de enfoque* consistently referred to their language as *Mixteco Bajo* in Spanish and as *Tu'un Nda'vi* in their own language.

In one of our earliest meetings, Emiliano and Fidel addressed but could not explain the meaning of *Mixteco Bajo*. At this point I did not yet know the term *Tu'un Nda'vi*; the men

[3] Other terms include Ñuu Davi, Ñuu Sau, Ñuu Dawi, Ñuu Dau, Ñuu Djavi, and Ñuu Javi (Caballero 2009, p. 8), among others.

had only introduced their language to me as *Mixteco Bajo* a few weeks earlier. The following excerpt is from my meeting on October 18, 2009, with Fidel, Emiliano, and Casimiro; Rebekka had not yet joined the group at this point. The interaction begins as I ask what language variety they speak.

Excerpt 3.1

1 Miguel: Ustedes usan el mismo [idioma], los tres?

You use the same [language], the three of you?

2 Fidel: Sí. Usamos el mismo.

Yes. We use the same.

3 Miguel: Y, ¿cómo se llama el variante, o de que área es, de qué comunidad o cómo

And, what is the variety, from what area is it, from what community or what

4 le llaman ustedes?

do you call it?

5 Fidel: Pues, nosotros le llamamos mixteco bajo, es otro variante pero:, ah:,

Well, we call it Mixteco Bajo, it's another variety bu:ut, a:ah,

6 pues, la verda:d al, al, hay otro, viene siendo como el mixteco alta, mixteco

well, the tru:th, the, the, there's another, it's Mixteco Alta, Mixteco

7 de la costa y, o sea, hasta mixteco bajo también tiene su variante.

de la Costa, and, well, even Mixteco Bajo also has its variety.

8 Miguel: Pero, ¿el que ustedes hablan, los tres, cuál usan?

But, the one that you speak , the three of you, which do you use?

9 Fidel: Mixteco bajo.

Mixteco Bajo.

10 Miguel: Mixteco bajo. Entonces…

Mixteco Bajo. Then…

11 Fidel: No sé por qué le pusieron mixteco bajo.

I don't know why they called it Mixteco Bajo.

12 Miguel: Se me hace que es por la área, pero no sé, porque…

I think it's by area, but I don't know, because… [interruption]

13 Fidel: No creo que bajo de estatura.

I don't think it's low as in height.

14 Miguel: No creo [chuckles; Fidel laughs], me imagino que la área, no sé,

I don't think so (Fidel laughs), I imagine that the area, I don't know,

15 si sea de las montañas, o de los valles, por ejemplo. "La costa," obviamente

if it would be from the mountains or the valleys, for example. "the coast,"

obviously

16 es de la costa (Fidel laughs). Me imagino que tiene algo que ver con la

is from the coast (Fidel laughs). I imagine it has something to do with

17 geografía, pero la verdad no sé. Pero sí he oído esos conceptos,

geography, but the truth is I don't know. But I have heard those concepts,

18 pero no, yo no sé mucho de eso.

but no, I don't know much about that.

19 Emiliano: A lo mejor porque, ese mixteco bajo que, que le llaman, o sea, cuando

alguien

Maybe because, that Mixteco Bajo as, as they call it, I mean, when someone

20 lo habla, lo habla bien así despacito. Y a los triqui, eso entonces, a los otro,

speaks it, they speak it very slowly. And the Triqui, they then, the others

21 ellos lo hablan bien rápido, como si fuera hablando así, en inglés también.

they speak it really fast, as if they were speaking like that, in English too.

22 Y nosotros tenemos, cuando le hablamos el, este de idioma, o sea, todo el voz

(And we have, when we speak it, this the language, in other words, all the voice)

23 tiene que ser bajo para que el, para que, pa' que salga bien el, el palabra.

has to be low so that it, so that, so it comes out right, the word.

24 Miguel: Oh, ¿es por eso?

Oh, is that why?

25 Emiliano: Sí, yo creo, me imagino, ¿no?

Yes, I think, I imagine, no?

26 Miguel: Oh, puede ser.

Oh, it could be.

27 Emiliano: ¿Sí?

Yes?

28 Miguel: Ey, puede ser. No sé por qué.

Yeah, it could be. I don't know why.

In lines 3 and 4, I specifically ask the men what they call their language. When Fidel answers the question in lines 5-7, it is unclear whether he is hesitating or simply formulating his answer. In this instance, Fidel chooses to describe his language using out-group terminology, *Mixteco Bajo* instead of *Tu'un Nda'vi*, situating his language in the context of a framework determined by outsiders. At a later date, Rebekka and I found online scholarly and non-scholarly references to the categories *Mixteco Bajo*, *Mixteco Alto*, and *Mixteco de la Costa,* similar to what Fidel mentions in lines 5 through 7 (e.g., Farris 2012, p. vii). These broad classifications of Mixteco language groups were regionally based, named after elements of the geographic landscape—lowland, highland, and coastal, respectively, as I suggest during the conversation above. Bax discusses these designations as imposed by Spanish colonizers in the sixteenth century (2020, p. 59, citing Josserand 1983, pp. 105-106)

After clarifying for me in the short exchange from lines 8 and 9 that Mixteco Bajo is the variety that the three men speak, in line 11 Fidel makes a point of questioning this label, starting his explanation by saying, "No sé por qué le pusieron mixteco bajo" 'I don't know why they called it Mixteco Bajo'. In lines 19-23 Emiliano also indicates that he is unaware of the meaning of *Mixteco Bajo* and volunteers a possible explanation. He frames his remarks as speculation on the meaning or rationale that others may have used in the naming of the language; this framing indicates that he is not aware of an established origin or explanation for the term.

In subsequent meetings, the men explained that they themselves called their language *Tu'un Nda'vi*, as I discuss in the next section. However, throughout the study, the men variously referred to their language as *Tu'un Nda'vi*, *Mixteco Bajo*, or simply *Mixteco* depending on the context of the conversation. Throughout the dissertation, I refer to the

men's language as *Tu'un Nda'vi*—because this is how they referred to it in their own language—except in certain instances to quote them directly when they used other terms.

Throughout the study, I observed contrasting representations of Tu'un Nda'vi from the men in the group: on the one hand, it served as a source of pride and a connection to their heritage, while on the other hand they expressed an initial unease when explaining the literal translation of *nda'vi* as 'poor; or 'humble' and felt a need to clarify that this did not mean their language was poor. Additionally, Fidel, the only member who referenced written texts in varieties of Tu'un Nda'vi similar to his own, seemed to subordinate his oral-only variety of Tu'un Nda'vi in relation to those written varieties. These issues are illustrated in the following examples.

In the excerpt below from a meeting on January 23, 2010, Fidel, Rebekka, and I are having a conversation about the meaning of the name *Tu'un Nda'vi*, which up to that point we had mainly been referring to as *Mixteco Bajo*. Fidel quickly explains that Tu'un Nda'vi and Tu'un Savi are two different languages, and seems to expresses unease regarding the literal translation of *nda'vi*.

Excerpt 3.2

1 Rebekka: ¿La lengua de, tu'un savi es la lengua de la lluvia?

The language of Tu'un Savi is the 'Language of the Rain'?

2 Fidel: Mhm, tu'un savi.

3 Rebekka: ¿Por qué, por qué es la lengua de la lluvia?

Why is it the 'Language of the Rain'?

4 Fidel: En cuanto a eso, yá no sé allí.

As far as that is concerned, I don't know.

5 Porque, porque, porque nos la llevamos el nombre tu'un nda'vi. Eso,

Because, because, because we have the name of Tu'un Nda'vi. It,

6 Rebekka: Mhm

7 Fidel: como que,

in a sense,

8 Miguel: Tu'un nda'vi?

9 Rebekka: Tu'un nda'vi.

10 Fidel: Ey. Y *nda'vi* quiere decir 'pobre'.

Yeah. And nda'vi *means 'poor'.*

11 Rebekka: Mmm.

12 Fidel: ¡Pe:ro, nuestro lenguaje no es pobre! [laughter]

Bu:t, our language is not poor! [laughter]

13 Rebekka: Sí. No es pobre.

(1 minute, 20 seconds omitted: Fidel sharing his thoughts on the origin and meaning of *savi* as 'rain')

14 Miguel: ¿Es tu'un nda'vi, es el nombre que le dan al mixteco bajo?

Is Tu'un Nda'vi, is it your name for Mixteco Bajo?

15 Fidel: ¡Ajá! Mixteco bajo. Pero,

Aha! Mixteco Bajo. But,

16 Rebekka: Tu'un nda'vi?

17 Miguel: Tu'un nda'vi. Ey, sí me acuerdo que me había dicho.

Tu'un Nda'vi. Yeah, I do remember you had told me.

18 Fidel: Ajá.

Aha.

19 Miguel: Se me había olvidado.

I had forgotten.

20 Fidel: Pero no concuerda, de que, algo, algo significativo. Ey. Así es.

But it doesn't match, with, something, something meaningful. Yep. That's right.

This exchange demonstrates that Fidel views Tu'un Nda'vi as distinct from Tu'un Savi. In response to lines 1-3, when Rebekka asks Fidel about the meaning of the name *Tu'un Savi*, he implies in lines 4 and 5 that Tu'un Nda'vi is a different language than Tu'un Savi*:* "En cuanto a eso, ya no sé allí… porque nos la llevamos el nombre Tu'un Nda'vi" 'As far as that is concerned, I don't know there. Because, because, because we have the name Tu'un Nda'vi'. If, as Caballero suggests, Tu'un Nda'vi is simply a dialect of Tu'un Savi (2009, p. 32, note 35), then, the names of both languages should have the same or similar meanings, 'Voices (or Word) of the Rain'; this is, in fact, the meaning of *Tu'un Savi*. However, as Fidel explained, that is not the meaning of *Tu'un Nda'vi,* at least not to him. While it very well may be that there are varieties of Mixteco with sufficient similarities and mutual intelligibility with Tu'un Savi as to be considered dialects of the same language, as described by Caballero, this is not consistent with Fidel's explanation regarding his variety of Tu'un Nda'vi, based on what he conveys above and at different points throughout the study.

Moreover, Fidel's comments in this excerpt reveal contrasting facets regarding his sense of his language: describing it in line 10 as literally the 'poor' language, while expressing linguistic pride and rejecting the notion that 'poor' in fact has any significant connection with Tu'un Nda'vi. In line 10, he clarifies that *nda'vi* does not share the same meaning as *savi* while pointing out the negative connotation associated with the meaning of the word *nda'vi*:

"Y nda'vi quiere decir 'pobre'" 'And *nda'vi* means "poor".' His statement of the meaning of the word *nda'vi* in line 5 conveys a sense of lower status. However, he rejects that notion in reference to his language in line 12 when he states, "¡Pe:ro nuestro lenguaje no es pobre!" 'Bu:t our language is not poor!' Here he emphasizes the his point by elongating the word *pero* 'but' while simultaneously expressing a sense of pride in his language. He further emphasizes his rejection of the negative association between his language and the word *pobre* 'poor' with his statement in line 20: "Pero no concuerda, de que, algo, algo significativo" 'But it doesn't match, with, something, something meaningful'.

It is unclear where the association between *nda'vi* and 'poor' originated. Nevertheless, Fidel states that in his variety of Tu'un Nda'vi, the word *nda'vi* means 'poor'. Additionally, other varieties of Mixteco have words similar to *nda'vi* both for the word 'poor' as well as for the name of the language. Two examples of this are *ndá'vi* in Tu'un Ndá'vi, Xochapa Guerrero (Stark, Johnson, and González de Guzmán 2013) and *nda'í* in To'on Nda'í, Mixteco Tezoatlán, San Andrés Yutatío, Oaxaca (Willett, Graham, and Stark 2017).

Other dynamics also appeared influence perceptions of the status that Fidel ascribed to his own language. In particular, the lack of literacy resources of any kind in his variety of Tu'un Nda'vi seemed to have an impact on Fidel's perception of his first language as compared to other Mixteco varieties. In the following discussion I argue that the complete lack of access to literacy resources in the men's variety of Tu'un Nda'vi, combined with the legitimacy ascribed to other Mixteco varieties because they had written texts, appeared to have a subtle but profound impact on Fidel's views of his own language in relation to other Mixteco varieties. This relates to considerations of available language resources and their effect on speakers' identity and potential subordination of their own language varieties as

discussed below.

3.3 Tu'un Nda'vi literacy and subordination to written varieties

In his study of the past, present, and future of Mixteco culture and its people, Caballero (2009, p. 206) addresses the negative impact associated with the dynamics of language dominance in general, and within the context of Spanish in relation to Mexican Indigenous languages in particular. However, throughout his dissertation, he himself refers to Tu'un Savi as the standard form of the Mixteco language (2009, p. 261) while referring to all other Mixteco varieties, not as languages in their own right but as dialects of Tu'un Savi (2009, p. 260). A serious concern with the promotion of a single variety of Mixteco as the standard for all speakers, I argue, is the potential disempowerment of speakers of other Mixteco varieties through the resulting, if unintended, devaluation of their language varieties. While Caballero addresses divisive notions of cultural hierarchy and legitimacy that can occur between people from different Mixteco cultural and geographic regions (2009, pp. 35-36), he does not address hierarchical views, whether external or internalized, that might be associated with, or stem from, the elevation of a single Mixteco variety as the official language to the exclusion of others (Castillo García 2007, pp. 12-13). Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge and praise the fundamental efforts of Caballero and others who, through Ve'e Tu'un Savi (the Academy of the Mixteco Language) are promoting literacy in and expansion of Mixteco, whether in communities of origin or abroad.

It is important to also consider the potential impact on a person's agency and linguistic identity that may stem from the lack of first language literacy resources, as shown by the following discussion. On two occasions, Fidel brought several examples of Mixteco writing

to meetings of *el grupo de enfoque*. One of these instances was during a meeting when no other members were present. On December 19, 2009, Fidel brought a book, which he shared with Rebekka and me. He noted that it was written in what he referred to as "Guerrero Tu'un Nda'vi," a variety that he said was very similar to his own but that had a few differences. An example that he provided was the pronunciation of words written with the letter <x>. When reading these words, Fidel pronounced them as [x] (the sound of <x> in the Spanish pronunciation *México*). He gave specific examples of words written with <x> and said that, in his variety of Tu'un Nda'vi, by contrast, they were pronounced as [ʃ] (equivalent to <sh> in English). He pronounced these words in both varieties to demonstrate the difference in the sound of <x> between the written variety of Tu'un Nda'vi and his own. However, he privileged the [x] pronunciation whenever he read such words. Rebekka and I pointed out to him that <x> can be pronounced in various ways: [x] (as in *México*), [s] (as in the name *Xochitl*), or [ʃ] in his own language, as with the examples he mentioned. Nevertheless, when reading words spelled with <x>, Fidel persisted in pronouncing them with [x] instead of as [ʃ]. He also persisted with this pronunciation in at least one other meeting, which I discuss below. Again, despite Rebekka's and my suggestion that he could pronounce <x> as [ʃ], he continued pronouncing it as [x] when reading, disregarding the pronunciation of the letter for his own variety of Tu'un Nda'vi in favor of what he believed was the proper reading pronunciation.

The following example shows how, by contrast, in ordinary conversation, Fidel used the [ʃ] sound for two words that are written with <x> in another Tu'un Nda'vi variety, *kaxá'a* and *kuxi*.[4] In a meeting on November 19, 2009, while discussing the relevance of context in

[4] The forms *kaxá'an* (or *kaxá'a*) and *kuxi* appear with the same meaning as the words that Fidel described in an online reference dictionary that is partly based on the Mixteco of Xochapa, Guerrero (John-Martin et al. 2016).

determining the meaning of certain Tu'un Nda'vi words, he switched to a related topic, the context and interpretation of these words in other varieties. He explained that in his variety of Tu'un Nda'vi the word *kaxá'a* meant 'to eat' and was used specifically for humans. He added that speakers of another variety (which he did not identify) would be offended if that word was used in reference to people eating because, in their variety, *kaxá'a* referred to animals eating. Which is similar to the word *comer* in Spanish to denote humans eating and *tragar* to denote animals eating.

Excerpt 3.3

1 Fidel: Porque, para ellos, comer es *kuxi* [kuʃi].

Because, for them, 'to eat' is kuxi.

2 Miguel: Mhm.

3 Fidel: Entonces, para comer (de) animales, es *kaxá'a* [ka-ʃa'a]

Then, for animals eating, it's kaxá'a.

Unlike in the previous example, Fidel was not reading these words but rather discussing them in ordinary conversation. In both cases he pronounced the <x> with a [ʃ] sound. While the first example suggests that Fidel felt the [x] pronunciation was the proper pronunciation for the written symbol <x> and, consequently, believed that pronouncing <x> with [ʃ], as in his variety of Tu'un Nda'vi was somehow improper, in ordinary speech he used the [ʃ] pronunciation, which was characteristic of his variety.

Based on this and other interactions, I argue that Fidel ascribed more weight to the varieties of Tu'un Nda'vi he discussed with Rebekka and me than to his own variety when reading because those other varieties had written texts. This situation seems to be a manifestation of constrained agency and has implications for language maintenance in

diaspora. O'Brien Hallstein (1999), in an early treatment of constrained agency, writes, "constrained agency recognizes that subordinate subjects have suffered systematic oppression that is damaging without condemning subjects to positions of victimhood" (p. 37). In this case, Fidel is exhibiting agency by exploring Tu'un Nda'vi literacy on his own and without any external support, but this agency is constrained by the dearth of language resources in his variety.

Bax (2020) reports similar forms of subordination of one subset of Mixteco varieties over another. She explains that, as part of activist discourse, some of the Indigenous community members in California's Ventura county, where she did her research, advocated for the use of *Tu'un Savi* to avoid negative connotations associating *Tu'un Nda'vi* with 'poor' (pp. 70-71), the literal translation that Fidel also used in excerpt 3.2 above. Furthermore, she clarifies that the preference over the use of the language 'labels' of *Tu'un Savi* over *Tu'un Nda'vi*, "appear to index a political stance" and that some members "advocated for the use of *Tu'un Savi*… because *Tu'un Nda'vi* is felt by some to represent a negative self-regard imposed via colonization, [so] *Tu'un Savi* is suggested as an alternative decolonial label" (p. 76).

These examples raise concerns about internalized perceptions of subordination of some varieties in relation to others that may result from the promotion of a single variety as the standard or formal name of a language—potentially discouraging the self-identification and development of written forms of other Mixteco language varieties. This, in turn, could affect language preservation and maintenance for Mixteco communities living in diaspora.

While in the above examples Fidel treated written varieties of Mixteco as more "proper" in comparison to his own language variety, there were many more instances in

which he exhibited pride in his language and demonstrated a personal interest in wanting to develop literacy in Tu'un Nda'vi.[5] However, this goal was complicated, as he did not have any access to writing in his own language variety. This point is illustrated in the excerpt below, from an interview that Rebekka and I conducted with him on February 14, 2010, regarding a Mixteco poem he had found on the Internet.

Excerpt 3.4

1 Fidel: …miré unos poemas en mixteco en el internet y me gustó mucho porque decía

...I saw some poems in Mixteco on the internet and I liked it a lot because it said

2 más o menos: 'Dondequiera que yo vaya o dondequiera que esté, la sangre mixteco

more or less: 'Wherever I go or wherever I am, Mixteco blood

3 recorre en mis venas'.

runs in my veins'.

4 Miguel: ¿Y está escrito en español o en mixteco?

And it's written in Spanish or in Mixteco?

5 Fidel: Está en los dos… está bonito.

It's in both…it's nice.

6 Miguel: ¿En que forma de mixteco estaba escrito?

In what form of Mixteco was it written?

7 Fidel: No sé si es mixteco central[6] o es mixteco alto, pero no es mixteco bajo.

[5] The other men also explicitly stated their interest in learning to read and write in their variety of Tu'un Nda'vi. This issue is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

[6] I have not come across any references to Mixteco Central in the literature, and this variety was not mentioned at any other point during the study. I believe Fidel was referring to Mixteco de la Costa.

I don't know if it's Mixteco Central or Mixteco Alto, but it's not Mixteco Bajo.

8 Miguel: ¿Pero lo entendió usted?

But you understood it?

9 Fidel: En español lo entendí. Pero sí, estaba bonito. Hasta lo copié…

In Spanish I did. But yes, it's very nice. I even copied it…

This exchange illustrates that Fidel actively looked for sources of Mixteco writing. In line 1 he mentions finding a poem on the Internet and, in line 9, he reports that he has written it down. However, in lines 7 through 9 he implies that he did not know what variety of Mixteco it was in and stated that he understood the poem in Spanish, presumably because the Mixteco variety and/or writing system was unfamiliar. While he did not have the original Mixteco text, it seemed from his description that that variety was completely unintelligible to him, as opposed to the Guerrero Mixteco Bajo variety discussed above, which he was able to read to a certain extent, transferring his reading skills from Spanish.

Excerpt 3.4 illustrates Fidel's pride and interest in exploring his own language roots and heritage. But, as he does not have access to writing in his own language, his only option is to do so through printed resources of other Mixteco language varieties or, as in this case, their Spanish translations. More generally, the experiences and perspectives shared by Fidel during the course of this study serve to illustrate potential concerns regarding the negative effects stemming from the lack of literacy resources and research in Tu'un Nda'vi and other underdocumented Mixteco language varieties, especially in diaspora.

3.4 Tu'un Nda'vi in diaspora and social capital

Despite Fidel's manifestations of internalized subordination of his variety of Tu'un Nda'vi in relation to written varieties, Tu'un Nda'vi was clearly a source of pride and was of central importance to him and the other men in *el grupo de enfoque*. It was their first language and, regardless of their varying levels of expertise, it connected them with their heritage. In this section I focus on the practical role of Tu'un Nda'vi in the men's diasporic context. I argue that it was the language that bound their community in diaspora and through which they attained a degree of social capital not normally associated with newer immigrant communities from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Throughout the data collection period, it was difficult for Rebekka and me to immediately understand the men's varied language needs and all the factors influencing their language-learning priorities, which I discuss in detail in Chapter 5. Subsequently, through my data analysis, I developed an internal/external framework to contextualize the men's language use. This provided a broad analytic structure that helped me understand their language-learning needs across varied settings from the perspective of the individual, the language community, and the community organization. Communication that occurred within the Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking community and its community organizations, as well as between individual Tu'un Nda'vi speakers, I label *internal language use*. Meanwhile, what I call *external language use* allowed Tu'un Nda'vi speakers to engage with individuals and institutions outside of their language group. The primary external language for the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and their diasporic language community was Spanish, the focus of Chapter 4.

Tu'un Nda'vi was the internal community language used for oral communication, as observed throughout the data collection period. The following exchange from a meeting on

January 23, 2010, prompted by a hypothetical question I posed to Fidel, shows the practical need for Tu'un Nda'vi as an internal language and demonstrates its importance both to cultural community affiliation and maintenance and as the source of their social capital.

Excerpt 3.5

1 Miguel: ¿Todos hablan en mixteco en sus juntas, verdad?

Everyone speaks Mixteco in your meetings, is that right?

2 Fidel: Así es.

That's right.

3 Miguel: ¿Qué pasaría si dijera, 'Vamos a hablar español'?

What would happen if you said, 'We're going to speak Spanish from now on?'

4 ¿Que pasaría con ciertas personas de la comunidad si dejaran de hablar mixteco?

What would happen with certain people in the community if you stopped speaking Mixteco?

5 Fidel: Pues, van a decir,

Well, they would say,

6 'No, pues pa' qué vamos si hablan puro español y no entendemos!' [laughs]

'No, well what's the point in going if they only speak Spanish and we don't understand!' [laughs]

This short exchange illustrates the importance of Tu'un Nda'vi and how it satisfies the most basic need for the community to be able to communicate and operate in diaspora. The meetings referred to in line 1 are community meetings that took place within the offices of CBDIO. Playfully enacting how he expected community members might respond to the hypothetical proposal to switch to Spanish as the language for internal communication, Fidel

highlights in line 5 the central and practical role of Tu'un Nda'vi for maintaining a cohesive cultural community in diaspora: "pues pa' qué vamos si hablan puro español y no entendemos"! 'well what's the point in going if they only speak Spanish and we don't understand!'.

On the one hand, for the four men in *el grupo de enfoque*, Tu'un Nda'vi was a central component of their identity; it connected them with their heritage and bound their cultural community in diaspora. With respect to its practicality, on the other hand, it was the primary language through which they communicated and conducted day-to-day activities within the context of their binational community organization, and it was at the core of their social and civic lives. Correspondingly, Tu'un Nda'vi was of central importance to the formation and maintenance of their community organization, which, in turn, provided the infrastructure and social capital to help community members meet a variety of needs in diaspora. Social capital here does not take the form conceptualized by Bourdieu—an extension of physical and symbolic forms of capital, or in some cases inheritable wealth and title, ultimately restricted to the upper classes of society (1998, pp. 249-251, 254). On the contrary, I propose that social capital can be seen to exist across a variety of socioeconomic contexts when analytically separating the process for generating social capital from the attributes of those who contribute to or have access to it. As Portes notes, "it is important to distinguish the resources themselves from the ability to obtain them by virtue of membership in different social structures" (1998, p. 5).

The social capital that the four men and their cultural community attained through Tu'un Nda'vi was manifested across a variety of contexts. During the time I spent with *el grupo de*

enfoque, I learned of a variety of resources that were made available to the local Indigenous[7] community through multiple formal and ad hoc organizations that operated, at least in part, out of the CBDIO office where we held our group meetings. CBDIO provided centralized access to information relevant to the workplace, education and healthcare resources for workers and families, and information about legal rights pertinent to immigrants. The CBDIO office provided the local Indigenous Mexican community with support with administrative processes by assisting those without documentation in completing paperwork for the Mexican consulate and local agencies to obtain a form of identification that would be recognized by local authorities. Additionally, CBDIO representatives participated at a civic level, conveying the needs of their Indigenous community by engaging in broader local issues with city and governmental officials.

In a meeting on December 19, 2009, Fidel explained to Rebekka and me that, through his leadership role in CBDIO, he was going to meet with representatives from the U.S. Census Bureau who wanted to boost the participation of the Mixteco community in the 2010 census.[8] He said that the Census Bureau recognized and wanted to document the size of the Mixteco community and its language use. The Census Bureau met with representatives of CBDIO in other regions of the state as well (Traux 2010). In the excerpt below, Fidel asks our opinion regarding the importance of maintaining his first language while pursuing Spanish and also wanting to learn English.

Excerpt 3.6

…tenemos el lenguaje, estamos batallando el español, y queremos el inglés…

...we have our language, we are fighting (to learn) Spanish, and we want English…

[7] Services were available to multiple Indegenous groups, regardless of language or origin.
[8] Fidel introduced Rebekka and me to one of the Census representatives after one of these meetings, as we arrived for our own meeting with *el grupo de enfoque.*

¿cuál es la importancia de mantener ese lenguaje [Tu'un Nda'vi]?

what is the importance of maintaining that language?

His inquiry suggests a number of potential underlying questions with respect to speakers of Indigenous Mexican languages in Santa Maria. Was he trying to assess the value that the Census Bureau or other outsiders placed on Tu'un Nda'vi? And if a formal institution finds value in the community's Indigenous language, then might this, in some way, give them license to recognize its value themselves, possibly openly? Alternatively, could the purpose of Fidel's question have been to gain an understanding of what value formal institutions might place on Tu'un Nda'vi? Understanding Indigenous languages as cultural assets could be a valuable addition to the toolkit of languages that he and other members of his community used for engaging with outsiders, by framing Tu'un Nda'vi as a cultural resource to be shared openly, and even safely, in terms that outsiders could understand and possibly support. Could the purpose of his question have been to explore new rhetoric or hone existing rhetoric needed for navigating the potentially turbulent waters of language politics in diaspora? Unfortunately, these are questions that I could not address through my research, but this example demonstrates how deeply Fidel grappled with the complex linguistic needs of his community.

Moreover, the interaction Fidel described between CBDIO and representatives from the U.S. Census Bureau is an example of the generation of social capital by disseminating information to CBDIO's cultural community and encouraging participation in the 2010 Census. Correspondingly, the mere fact of this collaboration implies that through CBDIO individual Indigenous community members had access to social capital, which allowed them to be represented at a civic level beyond the limits of their cultural community. This was

possible because of the contributions made by members of the organization in collecting resources and information and making a concerted effort to engage with the broader community. As I discuss below, these are examples of a form of social capital that was not considered in Bourdieu's conception of the term.

3.5 Situating social capital

Grounded in my data analysis from my work with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their descriptions of their community and the function of CBDIO, in this section I elaborate upon previous models of social capital to propose a framework that has the potential to identify social capital across various socioeconomic contexts through the following six elements: 1) the source of social capital, 2) the unit of social capital, 3) the resources that are made available through social capital, 4) the process of generating social capital, 5) the benefits attained through social capital, and, 6) representation through social capital. These six elements are interrelated with, but separate from, both the contributors to and the recipients of social capital.

Tu'un Nda'vi was the *source* of social capital for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community. As noted previously, this was their first language, the primary language used in oral communication among the men in the group, within their cultural community, and in the daily activities of CBDIO. But the language was not social capital in and of itself. That is, while Tu'un Nda'vi bound their community and was the source of social capital, this was only one component that would be inert without additional conditions and some sort of action. Having a shared language with others is not enough for social capital to be generated.

The next necessary component, the *unit* of social capital, is an entity or group through which individuals contribute toward social capital that others can access. Borrowing from Bourdieu's "network of relationships" (1985, p. 250), I define the *unit of social capital* as a community that is homogeneous in many respects, formed by individuals who are bound together by a shared set of circumstances and experiences, and having common goals and needs. In the case of *el grupo de enfoque* and their cultural community, as I clarify in my description of the remaining components of this model, CBDIO, the community and network of people that operated within it and accessed its resources, served as the unit of social capital.

Any analysis of social capital requires that a unit of social capital be defined as narrowly and clearly as possible. A neighborhood, to take an example of a unit of social capital provided by Putnam (1995, pp. 7-8), may be composed of people with so little in common that defining a unit of social capital in this way could be misleading and result in the loss of any significant meaning for the concept. By contrast, CBDIO can be defined as the unit of social capital for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community, partly because the network of people that worked for and had access to CBDIO shared a unique history and background and were bound in a meaningful way within their diasporic community by their language, heritage, and area of origin. CBDIO was an entity to which individuals from the cultural community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* contributed their time and energy to generate resources to be accessed by their community; this was its very function for being. Although such a situation created some of the conditions for a closed community, this was not the result. CBDIO was an open unit of social capital, where resources were accessible to

community members from other language groups, including Triqui and Zapoteco, among others.

Accessibility of resources leads the discussion to other components of social capital: the resources it produces and the process for generating social capital. *Resources* feature prominently in Bourdieu's definition of social capital, but in his version of the concept, social capital is accessible only to those connected to benefactors who contribute their wealth, power, or prestige; Bourdieu presents these contributions as social capital in and of themselves. But resources come in many forms relative to the needs of those who access them. Additionally, resources themselves are not social capital; as in the case of contributions, they are only components of social capital. From my observations in working with the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, their community resources took the form of access to basic community services made available within the auspices of CBDIO and the organizations and individuals that operated in its office. Some of these resources were information (e.g., how parents can prepare children for school, health education, health and safety at work) while others were services (e.g., helping members complete paperwork in Spanish or creating a recognized form of identification in collaboration with the Mexican consulate for members of the community). In this case, social capital does not come in the form presented by Bourdieu, where it exists by virtue of the attributes possessed by its contributors and which they make available to others in their elite circles. Furthermore, social capital within CBDIO is defined by what it does—in other words, by its function (Coleman 1988). That is, resources are not social capital, but rather it is the act of sharing resources that creates social capital.

This brings me to the *generating social capital*, more specifically, the process of converting human capital into social capital. CBDIO was a unit of social capital in that it was the entity through which social capital was accessed by members of the community. But the unit is only a setting: an entity or community that facilitates the conditions for social capital to be generated. However, the process of generating social capital lies within the practices that take place within that unit; that is, the functions that are carried out within a particular space. This process is the missing piece in Coleman's conceptualization. In his description of how social capital is created within a family, he describes the necessary setting and conditions: When parents have a strong relationship with their children, then through this relationship, parents can share whatever human capital they possess and make it available to their children to use as social capital in support of their education (Coleman 1988, pp. 110-111). In this case the family is the unit of social capital or the setting where social capital is generated, the parents are the contributors to social capital, the children are the recipients of social capital, and the relationship between parents and children sets the conditions for creating social capital. However, these do not address the process of generating social capital itself. In this case, I would argue, it is the practice of parents sitting down with their children to help with homework or transmitting some other valuable resource (e.g. a skill, a life lesson, or perspective, among others) that generates social capital. Without the component of practice, then, regardless of how strong the relationship between parent and child—the potential for social capital—might be, the parent's human capital cannot be made readily accessible to the child as social capital. In the case of CBDIO, individual members contributed their human capital and made it accessible for others to use. Their human capital in this case was the individual resources and knowledge they collected as well as the time

and energy required for collecting these. If these individuals had retained the knowledge, skill, and resources they collected for their own personal use because they did not have the means or desire to share these with others, their human capital would have remained with them. However, by making this human capital available for others in their community to access through the practices that were carried out within the auspices of CBDIO, they were able to generate social capital to benefit their community.

Just as important as the process of generating social capital is its purpose: that which the sharing of resources and information is meant to accomplish, the *benefits* that social capital garners to those that have access to it. For any individual member of this Indigenous community in diaspora, collecting needed information would necessitate devoting a significant amount of time and energy, even years, especially for those who had little to no ability to speak Spanish, let alone English. However, with individual members of their community collecting and sharing a variety of resources and banking them in a single resource, CBDIO, other community members were not required to expend a great deal of time and energy to collect these resources, but had access to them and could put them to use with minimal expenditure of time and energy. For individuals who struggled in arduous and very low-paying jobs, such as agriculture, and already had to spend a great deal of time and energy to provide the most basic resources for themselves and their families, having access to this kind of social capital provided access to health, education, parenting, employment safety, personal rights, and many other resources that helped them improve their quality of life within their diasporic cultural community.

Beyond the benefits that members garner at the individual recipient level, social capital also provides benefits at the community level through representation. *Representation*, the

sixth and final element of my model, is the ability of the collective voice of a group, or unit of social capital, to be heard and have its needs represented beyond the limits or sphere of the group in the broader community and society where it is situated. As with the other elements of the model, here I am disaggregating representation from the whole of social capital. That is, representation and social capital should not be confounded and considered as one and the same or as terms or concepts that can be used interchangeably. Representation is a product of social capital, not social capital in and of itself. Furthermore, it is possible to have social capital without representation, only garnering individual benefits for members through the elements described above, in the absence of a concerted effort by a group through its leaders or representatives to voice the needs of the group in broader contexts. Nevertheless, representation is a component of this model because it is one of the aspects of the form of social capital observed within this community.

The Census Bureau meetings held with representatives of CBDIO with the purpose of encouraging participation of Indigenous communities in the 2010 Census is a clear demonstration of representation and civic engagement made possible by the social capital held by community members through CBDIO. As a representative of the Indigenous community network to which the members were connected, CBDIO was recognized by the Census Bureau as a knowledgeable organization that would be able to speak to the needs and concerns of the Indigenous community. Additionally, CBDIO would be able to assist the Census Bureau in developing a dialogue that could help address community concerns about Census participation and could partner with them in a marketing campaign addressing potential community concerns. Because many members of this community did not speak either English or Spanish, CBDIO could also disseminate information orally in Tu'un Nda'vi

in addition to distributing announcements in Spanish, their secondary common language for written communication. In turn, through CBDIO, individual community members could have their collective needs taken into account. Ultimately, greater participation of the local Indigenous community in the Census process had the potential to lead to the establishment of community resources relevant to the local community, one of the stated goals of the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

I present each of the six elements of situated social capital that I have discussed in Table 3.1 below. The table summarizes the general characteristics of each element and includes an example grounded in this study that is emblematic of each.

Table 3.1 The Elements of Situated Social Capital

Elements of social capital	**Characteristics**	**Example**
Source	The element through which social capital originates and which is at the core of what defines the unit of social capital.	Tu'un Nda'vi was the primary language for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community and connected them to their heritage.
Unit	An entity or network of people defined as narrowly as possible and in meaningful ways that provide cohesiveness to the unit, such as having a shared experience, background, provenience, language, and/or other circumstances, which are not commonly shared by others outside the network.	CBDIO, along with its members, was a unit of social capital. It was created with the purpose of serving and providing resources to diasporic Indigenous communities from a specific region of origin.

Resources	The products generated by social capital and made available to its members.	Direct services, information, and other resources were provided by CBDIO to members of the diasporic community.
Generation process	Social capital is generated through embedded social practices within a unit of social capital. Through these social practices, human capital is converted to social capital that can be accessed by other members of the unit.	CBDIO members who developed human capital in the form of specialized knowledge, skills, and collected community-relevant resources made these available through CBDIO to its members, thus generating social capital.
Benefits	The ways in which members of a unit of social capital improve their circumstances by accessing the products of social capital in addition to attaining its products.	Monolingual Indigenous community members who had limited ability, time, and energy to acquire basic information on resources and services could access these with relative ease through CBDIO.
Representation	The ability to express a collective voice and have the needs of a particular group or community represented in broader contexts beyond what would be possible for individuals.	The U.S. Census Bureau recognized and reached out to CBDIO as a community representative in order to communicate effectively with the local Indigenous community to garner greater participation in the 2010Census.

Through the six elements of social capital that I have presented in this chapter, which are grounded in and emerge from my ethnographic work with the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, I have provided a narrowly defined and fully elaborated model of social capital that may be

applied to a variety of cultural and socioeconomic contexts far beyond what Bourdieu intended. Additionally, this model builds on the work of Coleman by introducing the role of embedded social practices as a key component for understanding the process of generating social capital. Finally, in defining social capital narrowly through the six elements in this model, I address Portes' concerns regarding the concept of social capital being defined so loosely and applied so broadly as to lose any meaning.

Fox offers another approach to social capital likewise grounded in research on Indigenous communities, both in Mexico and abroad. Fox's conceptualization of social capital can be interpreted as political capital raised through horizontal social networks (1996, p. 1091; citing Putnam 1993) and accumulated as political power, that is, as an arsenal to be wielded against the opposing and powerful forces of "social capitalists": authoritarian governments and their agents (p. 1092). While there are some overlapping features with Fox's approach, in the model that I have presented in this chapter, social capital can stand on its own, at the disposal of the unit of social capital that has it, and does not necessarily exist in relation or opposition to the social capital of others, as does political capital.

Using the six elements in this model—the source, the unit, resources, the generation process, benefits, and representation through social capital, researchers applying the model across a variety socioeconomic contexts can develop a robust analysis of social capital to demonstrate from where it derives, who has access to it and under what conditions, what it produces, how it is produced, and how members of a given unit benefit from it. I anticipate that this model will be particularly useful when researching communities in lower socioeconomic segments of society whose wealth of social capital may otherwise be unrecognized and underexamined.

3.6 Conclusion

For the men in *el grupo de enfoque* Tu'un Nda'vi was the internal language through which they were connected to their language community in diaspora. They had a strong identification with their language and did not have a personal connection to Tu'un Savi, another variety that was better documented and which they framed as distinct from their own.

The initial premise behind the formation of *el grupo de enfoque* was to explore Spanish language and literacy topics, because Spanish held the promise for advancement for the men and their community members who primarily spoke Tu'un Nda'vi. However, very early on, the men in the group brought up Tu'un Nda'vi language topics. In this chapter, I have discussed the effect that the lack of literacy resources had on one of the men, Fidel, and how he seemed to subordinate his oral variety of Tu'un Nda'vi in relation to written varieties as he explored his own path to Tu'un Nda'vi literacy. Moreover, as an internal language, because of a strong community network, Tu'un Nda'vi mediated the men's adaptation to their diasporic environment and served as the source of social capital for this language community through interactions with CBDIO and the organizations that operated within that space. Although Tu'un Nda'vi was the focus of this chapter, I discuss this language further in subsequent chapters in relation to the other two languages, Spanish and English, as all three languages were interwoven in our discussions during the course of the meetings.

In this chapter I have also developed a model of social capital building on the combined theoretical foundations of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Portes and ethnographically grounded in discussions with and observations of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and my experience with CBDIO through the group. A central premise of this model is that, by disaggregating the individual elements that constitute the whole of social capital, this concept can be identified

in practice and described analytically without conflating social capital with its constituent elements or with the attributes of individuals who contribute to social capital.

The social capital possessed by the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community would not be recognized as such from a strictly Bourdieuian perspective, as they do not possess physical capital, or the title, power, or authority related to such an attribute. However, as I have argued, social capital can take very different forms at different levels of society. Identifying different forms of social capital requires a deeper understanding of each of the components that make it up, as I have shown in this chapter and as I elaborate in Chapter 4. By defining these individual elements more clearly, social capital can be observed independent of the attributes or possessions of actors and recognized beyond the limited sphere of the highest socioeconomic levels of society.

Based on the six-element model of social capital—source, unit, resources, process of generation, benefits, and representation—I propose the following comprehensive definition of social capital as an intangible asset:

- Social capital is held in common by a clearly defined group that is bound together by conditions or circumstances that provide cohesiveness to the group.
- It is generated within the group through its embedded social practices.
- It provides a structure for group members to bank resources that can be accessed by all members to meet their needs.
- And it holds the potential for the group to be represented as a whole beyond the group's sphere of operation or influence.

Ultimately, as important as Tu'un Nda'vi was to the four men in *el grupo de enfoque* and their community, this language alone could not satisfy all their internal and external

communication needs. Because of the lack of first-language literacy resources, the men's internal communication in Tu'un Nda'vi was limited to oral communication. Additionally, because people outside of their language community could not speak the language, external communication through Tu'un Nda'vi was, in practical terms, not possible. Spanish, then, despite its long history of language oppression of speakers of Indigenous languages, became a language of necessity in the men's diasporic setting as an administrative language for the dissemination of information broadly to community members, other Indigenous language groups that also engaged with and benefited from CBDIO services and resources, and communities of origin abroad. For the four men in *el grupo de enfoque*, Spanish complemented both their internal and external communication needs. The use of Spanish allowed them—as well as other members of their language community—to engage more broadly at a civic level and to extend the benefits of the social capital generated through Tu'un Nda'vi beyond the limits of their cultural sphere.

In the next chapter I discuss the role of Spanish in the lives of the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and the relevance of developing Spanish proficiency across a variety of contexts, which made Spanish a high language-learning priority for the four men and their cultural community in diaspora.

Chapter 4. Spanish prioritization: The need for and relevance of Spanish in diaspora

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the role of Spanish within the broader community of the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and the complex language dynamics that operated across multiple settings in their lives. I discuss Spanish as a bridge to local services for the men and their community and, for two of the men, as a bridge to English language-learning resources that were inaccessible through Tu'un Nda'vi. I discuss the concept of internal versus external language needs, as introduced in Chapter 3, but now with a focus on the use of Spanish as a lingua franca to meet both internal language needs within the Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking community and external language needs for engaging with non-Tu'un Nda'vi speakers and institutions in broader community contexts. In the last section of this chapter, I elaborate on the six-element model I introduced in Chapter 3 to discuss how Spanish is used as a vehicle for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community to extend their social capital beyond the limits of their cultural community.

Given the role of Spanish in the context of the language domination and oppression that Indigenous peoples have experienced in Mexico, I first provide a brief overview of bilingual education policies in Mexico. Mar-Molinero effectively summarizes the pattern of Castilianization in the conquest of Mexico and much of Latin America:

> An area containing very many distinct mother tongues is progressively conquered by the dominant use of the Spanish language. This is made easier because of the prestige of Spanish, its position as the language of power and of the elites, and because it contains a well-developed written form. The

> Indigenous mother tongues are pushed to the edges, and many disappeared altogether by the end of the nineteenth century. (2000, p. 134)

Indigenous languages that survived in Mexico into the twentieth century were subjected to further marginalization, in part through educational systems created with the ultimate goal of assimilating Indigenous peoples into the dominant culture. Spanish, in this way, served as a vehicle for the homogenization of cultures in the nation-building process (Mar-Molinero 2000, pp. 116-117). Although this process has evolved over time and has taken different forms, it has persisted into the present through bilingual education programs ostensibly created with the purpose of preserving Indigenous languages and cultures but which, when implemented, end up being ineffective and paternalistic (Martínez Novo 2006, p. 82). Despite the best intentions of some education policymakers in creating policies and programs under the auspices of Mexico's Secretaría de Educación Pública with the intent of promoting proficiency in both Spanish and the mother tongues of Indigenous speakers through bilingual education, these efforts have fallen short (Mar-Molinero 2000, pp. 134-136). In practice, bilingual education programs still end up focusing on transitioning Indigenous speakers into dominant culture (Mar-Molinero 2000, p. 138). As discussed by Martínez Novo, these programs do not develop students' knowledge of their own Indigenous languages and cultures but instead promote Spanish and hegemonic cultural values at an early age, rarely offering any education in students' mother tongue despite claims to the contrary (2006, pp. 77-85). It might seem that bilingual education programs sponsored by the state in communities with larger concentrations of speakers from a single Indigenous language variety would be more successful in providing bilingual education that is more true to its name; however, Martínez Novo shows that this is not the case. One bright spot are several

examples of reversal of the language shift to Spanish in Oaxaca and Guerrero in the 1990s, where communities reported success with Indigenous language education programs. But these programs were based on the efforts of Indigenous communities themselves rather than of the state or federal government (Hidalgo 1994, p. 2003). The continuing colonial dynamics associated with language policies in Mexico provide a broad context for state-sponsored bilingual education for Indigenous communities in that country and set the stage for the following discussion of the language dynamics associated with Spanish in the diasporic language community of the men in *el grupo de enfoque.*

4.1 Multilingual needs in diaspora

Despite being part of a fairly recent immigrant community in the United States, where English is the dominant language, all the men *in el grupo de enfoque* prioritized their development of Spanish proficiency both over learning English and over their development of Tu'un Nda'vi literacy. This prioritization was because Spanish satisfied the greatest, most broadly applicable, and most immediate needs for their Indigenous cultural community in diaspora. Additionally, because of their exposure to or at least familiarity with Spanish, it was the most accessible language other than Tu'un Nda'vi, providing the greatest benefit combined with the most efficient allocation of their limited time and resources. The need to learn and develop Spanish language skills in the men's community was first communicated to me by Julián, the Mixteco community leader that I approached initially about working with his community in the summer of 2009, and it is for this reason that *el grupo de enfoque* was created.

Internally, Tu'un Nda'vi was the primary language the men used for oral communication within their cultural community. However, given their lack of literacy in their first language, as I discussed in Chapter 3, they relied on Spanish as an internal administrative language for written communication locally within the Santa Maria CBDIO branch, regionally with other CBDIO branches, and binationally for coordinating efforts with their communities of origin abroad. Additionally, they used Spanish as their external language, which served as a lingua franca to communicate with people outside of their language community. Because of the prevalence of Spanish speakers in Santa Maria across various community service, educational, and governmental institutions, Spanish allowed their Indigenous community to access local resources by bridging the communication gap between Tu'un Nda'vi and English.

One example of the complications faced by Indigenous language speakers in accessing resources is provided by Holmes who describes the significant difficulties that both patients and clinicians encounter when a patient who speaks only an Indigenous language seeks care from a provider who only speaks English, to the detriment of the patient's health and well-being (2012, p. 877). Additionally, Spanish is the primary language used by California's agricultural industry labor force, which provides employment for a large number of recent immigrants (Aguirre International 2005). Spanish also held the promise of better pay with less physically demanding work (Holmes 2013, p. 93), providing a bridge to socioeconomic advancement for the men in el *grupo de enfoque*, their families, and their community.

Furthermore, the use of Spanish as a lingua franca has allowed groups of people from different Indigenous language groups and communities (e.g., Mixteco, Triqui, and Zapoteco) to engage at a civic level well beyond the scope of their individual language communities in

diaspora (Rivera-Salgado 1999). This enables pan-Indigenous communication and provides Indigenous communities a degree of social capital uncommon for fairly recent immigrants from low socio-economic backgrounds, whose collective voice and civic participation have historically been and remain underrepresented (DeSipio 2011, pp. 1193-1194). I discuss this issue further in relation to social capital networks later in this chapter.

4.2 Spanish proficiency and multiple language literacies in diaspora

In this section I discuss the level of Spanish proficiency of each of the four men in *el grupo de enfoque*. This background provides a starting point for understanding their language learning needs and goals. Two of the men, Fidel and Emiliano, experienced the need to improve their level of Spanish proficiency and develop literacy in Spanish in order to gain access to formal education resources for learning English. The prioritization of English learning by Fidel and Emiliano is discussed in Chapter 5. While Fidel and Emiliano could already communicate effectively in Spanish during the meetings of *el grupo de enfoque*, Cornelio and Casimiro could not, and the four men's differing levels of Spanish proficiency were manifested in the different reasons they expressed for wanting to learn or improve their Spanish. Fidel and Emiliano had a fairly high level of spoken Spanish proficiency, with Fidel having greater command of the language, and both could read Spanish with some difficulty but struggled significantly in writing. Additionally, both showed contact influence with Tu'un Nda'vi in certain elements of Spanish grammar, such as gender and number marking. Unlike Fidel and Emiliano, Cornelio and Casimiro struggled significantly with Spanish and little to no literacy in the language respectively. Below I discuss each of the four men's level of Spanish proficiency during the period of the meetings with *el grupo de enfoque*.

4.2.1 Casimiro

Casimiro spoke almost no Spanish and, while he was able to produce a few words, it was difficult for him to form basic sentences. In a meeting on January 10, 2010, which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter, Casimiro communicated, through Emiliano, his need to learn Spanish for work. In the entire interaction, the only instance where Casimiro spoke Spanish directly was to respond "puro español" 'only Spanish', when asked what language his supervisor spoke. Rebekka and I were not able to communicate effectively with Casimiro directly during the entire time we spent with the men of *el grupo de enfoque*; all our communication with him required either Fidel or Emiliano to interpret. When we tried to communicate directly, it was very labored. For example, during a discussion of health vocabulary with the group in Spanish on February 7, 2010, Casimiro pointed into his open mouth to ask the word for tonsils in Spanish, as the other members did not know the term in Tu'un Nda'vi when he tried to ask them. Although his inability to speak Spanish and our inability to speak Tu'un Nda'vi did not allow Rebekka and me to communicate with him directly, his contributions to the group were significant. As I discuss in Chapter 3, he was the most fluent Tu'un Nda'vi speaker of the four, and the other men often consulted him and deferred to his expertise when discussing Tu'un Nda'vi language topics.

4.2.2 Cornelio

Cornelio, unlike Casimiro, was able to communicate in Spanish to express simple concepts or ideas and spoke directly to Rebekka and me directly on a few occasions. However, he preferred to communicate in Tu'un Nda'vi within the group, relying on Fidel,

and to some extent Emiliano, to interpret for him into Spanish. In one instance, on December 18, 2009, he called me the night before a meeting to explain, in Spanish, that he would not be able to attend, and he was able to communicate well enough that I understood. In another instance, on December 5, 2009, when discussing the group's language-learning priorities, Cornelio and I had a brief exchange without the need for an interpreter, even though Fidel and Emiliano were present. I have included this interaction below to illustrate Cornelio's ability to speak Spanish independently. I further analyze the excerpt and its implications in Chapter 5, when discussing the men's language-learning priorities.

Excerpt 4.1

1 Miguel: ¿Usted qué quisiera explorar más, examinar más? ¿Qué es lo que le gustaría más?

What would you like to explore more, examine more? What would you like more?

2 Cornelio: Yo pienso que (inaudible) más español.

I think that (inaudible) more Spanish.

3 Miguel: ¿Y el inglés no?

And not English?

4 Cornelio: No:.

No:.

5 Miguel: ¿No?

No?

6 Cornelio: No.

No.

7 Miguel: ¿Y el mixteco: el, el aprender a escribirlo? ¿Le, le intentaría a eso, o no?

And Mixteco: the, the learning to read it? Would, would you try that, or no?

8 Cornelio: (5-second pause) (chuckle) Más es mejor que va a ser los dos.

(chuckle) More it's better that it will be both.

9 Miguel: ¿Mande usted?

Pardon me?/Come again?

10 Cornelio: Nomás que: no, no puedo: no puedo escribir en el mixteco pues.

It's just tha:t I, I ca:n't well I can't write in Mixteco.

11 Miguel: ¿Le gustaría a ap-, a aprender? O—…

You would like to lear-, to learn? Or—...

12 Cornelio: Mhm, sí.

Mhm, yes.

13 Miguel: ¿Sí le gustaría?

You would like that?

14 Cornelio: Sí. Los dos son mejor.

Yes. The two are better.

15 Miguel: ¿Los dos?

The two?

16 Cornelio: Mhm.

Mhm.

17 Miguel: ¿Y le gustaría, si los pusiéramos igual, usted estaría más interesado en el

And would you like, if we placed them the same, would you be more interested in

18 español o más interesado en el mixteco? ¿Cuál de los dos, le interesaría

Spanish or more interested in Mixteco? Which of the two, would you be interested

19 aprender más? ¿O en que nos enfocáramos un poco más?

in learning more? Or that we should focus on a bit more?

20 Cornelio: Mm: yo quiero: español.

Mm: I wa:nt Spanish.

21 Miguel: Español más.

Spanish more.

As illustrated in this example, Cornelio could communicate basic information, but he required interpreting in other meetings of *el grupo de enfoque* as well as in other settings in his personal life. In a meeting on October 22, 2009, I asked the men for topics of interest to discuss during the group and, speaking in Tu'un Nda'vi with Fidel interpreting for him into Spanish, Cornelio explained that he wanted to be able to communicate with medical providers directly, noting that he could spend hours waiting for a Tu'un Nda'vi-English interpreter. This is consistent with the experiences of other Indigenous language speakers who engage with the American health care system, as described by Holmes (2011, p. 877).

4.2.3 Emiliano

Emiliano was able to communicate effectively and independently in Spanish with some contact features. When he spoke in Tu'un Nda'vi within the group, it was during internal discussions with the other members, but he spoke directly to Rebekka and me in Spanish without the need for interpreting. Given his proficiency in Spanish, Emiliano was able to use

the language as a lingua franca. Later in this chapter, I discuss how Spanish helped Emiliano in the same way in the workplace. The excerpt below shows how Spanish also served to bridge the gap between Tu'un Nda'vi and English for Emiliano when he was a child whose family had recently emigrated to the United States. The excerpt also illustrates some of Emiliano's contact features when speaking Spanish.

During a meeting on October 11, 2009, Emiliano described his difficulties when he was first introduced to English. He described coming to the United States as a child and being placed in an English-only class in his elementary school, where he did not learn anything and was merely given busywork and eventually promoted to the next grade. It was only in the following year, with a teacher who spoke Spanish, as he describes below, that he was able to learn English with a group of Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking children. This anecdote suggests that he already had enough proficiency in Spanish to be able to communicate with his teacher and have Spanish serve as a bridge for English learning.

Excerpt 4.2

1 Emiliano: …Cuando estaba niño, ya tomé clase como tres años.

…When I was a child, I took [a] class like [for] three years.

2 Miguel: ¿De inglés?

English class?

3 Emiliano: De inglés. Pero, ah, pues, es que, estaba bien difícil porque,

English. But, ah, well, it's that, it was really difficult because,

4 pues, ya cuando, cuando

well, then when, when

5 llegué de niño no, no sabía casi no hablar ni español.

I arrived as a child, I, I didn't know almost any, not even Spanish.

6 Entonce, luego luego lo que hicieron fue, este,

Then, right away what they did was, um,

7 me metieron con los, con lo puro güeros que no hablan ni

they put me with the, with just white kids that didn't even speak

8 español y así pues, menos, ah, menos…

Spanish and that well, less, uh, less…

9 Miguel: ¿Cuántos años tenías?

How old were you?

10 Emiliano: Tenía como ocho años. Y ya después de allí pues, de yo no sé ni que.

¿Eda?

I was about eight years old. And after that well, of I don't know even know.

Right?

11 Nomás la maestra me daba puro paso, puro colorear, puro dibujar, todo eso.

Just the teacher would just give me passes, just coloring, just drawing, all that.

12 Pues ya después pues, un año haciendo lo mismo.

Then after then, a year of doing the same thing.

13 Y ya pues, como que pues, también

And then well, it's like, also

14 escuchando los niños hablando todos los días todos los días, como que se

me iba

listening to the kids speaking every day every day, it's like it was

15 pegando poquitito, ya empecé a.... Luego ya el segundo año, pues ya trajeron a una

sticking to me a little bit, then I started.... Then in the second year, well they brought

16 maestra que hablaba español. Y, pues, ella sí, nos en-, nos enseñaba inglés pues.

a teacher that spoke Spanish. And, well, she did, well she would teach us English.

17 O sea, en todo mi, eramo un grupo así como diez a doce,

Well, in all my, we were a group then of about ten to twelve,

18 eh puro eh puro, eh, puro que,

uh just uh just, uh, just that

19 hablan en dialecto. Y nos llevaron clase, pues, y ahí nos, nos enseñaba a todos.

speak in dialect. And they brought us [to] class, well, and there, she would teach us all.

20 Entonces pues sí ya con ella sí, sí, sí: sí: m:, sí aprendí un poquito mas.

Then well yes now with her, I did, I did, I did, I did um, I did learn a bit more.

21 Ya con ella pues sí aprendí, ya, todo lo que es básico también.

Now with her well I did learn, then, all the basics as well.

In lines 4 to 5, Emiliano notes how difficult it was for him to learn English when he first arrived to the United States and highlights that he hardly even knew any Spanish: "cuando

llegué de niño no, no sabía casi no hablar ni español" 'when I arrived as a child, I, I didn't know almost any, not even Spanish'. He was placed in an English-only class with a teacher who did not know Spanish, and then in lines 15 and 16, he notes that later he was placed with a teacher who knew Spanish. Although it is unclear from Emiliano's description whether his first teacher even attempted to teach him English, or to what degree, his second teacher, who spoke Spanish, was able to teach him English beyond 'the basics', as he notes in line 21. Additionally, Emiliano reports that he was not alone in his experience. He explains in lines 17 through 19 that there were other Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking children: "eramo un grupo así como diez a doce, …que, hablan en dialecto. Y nos llevaron clase, pues, y ahí nos, nos enseñaba a todos" 'we were a group then of about ten or twelve, … that spoke in dialect (i.e. Tu'un Nda'vi). And they brought us [to] class, well, and there, she would teach us all'.

Despite Emiliano's limited Spanish-speaking ability as a child, it was nevertheless sufficient for him and his Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking classmates to communicate with their teacher and, through Spanish, to begin to learn English. In this way, Emiliano's experience in learning English shared some basic similarities with that of Fidel's experience when learning Spanish at the same age, as described below.

4.2.4 Fidel

Among the four men in *el grupo de enfoque*, Fidel was the most fluent in Spanish and had the fewest contact features in his speech. While he was able to communicate effectively in spoken Spanish and understand most of what he read, he struggled when writing. In the discussion that follows, Fidel describes his limited exposure to Spanish in the home as a child and his experience with Spanish during elementary school. In an interview that Rebekka and

I conducted with Fidel on February 14, 2010, he explained that both his parents spoke Spanish, but only spoke to him in Tu'un Nda'vi.[9] He noted that he remembered his mother speaking in Spanish at the market, but her level of Spanish proficiency was unclear in his description. His father, who attended school only until the third grade, was able to read and write in Spanish and held a position as *secretario agente municipal* (municipal administrative secretary) when Fidel was six years old. Although Fidel attended a bilingual elementary school, he explained that he wasn't actually taught in his own or any other variety of Tu'un Nda'vi: instruction was almost entirely in Spanish and teachers only communicated in Tu'un Nda'vi out of school and minimally during class, only as much as needed. Fidel's description of his educational experience is consistent with the assimilationist model of bilingual education. Mar-Molinero summarizes this model as follows:

> These programmes—and they are probably the majority amongst bilingual education programmes—are designed to make the child's entry into formal education less alienating by offering the first years of schooling in the mother tongue. However, their aim is then to shift the emphasis gradually but surely away from this language by introducing more and more use of the target language, that is, the language of the state. (2000, pp. 116-117)

In Fidel's case, his first language, Tu'un Nda'vi, was used in elementary school in transitioning him into Spanish, the target language. Although not truly a bilingual education program, this class may have aided Fidel's entry into formal education, in that some degree of use of a student's home language at the very least can serve as a bridge to learning in the

[9] The first part of the interview was recorded only in fieldnotes, without any audio recording, so I summarize rather than quote Fidel's remarks here.

target language (Cummins 2000, pp. 172, 175; Brooks-Lewis 2009, p. 224). Fidel's experience was similar to Emiliano's transition to English as a target language, but differed in that Spanish, Emiliano's second language, served as a lingua franca to bridge the communication gap with his teachers to achieve the ultimate goal of transitioning him to the target language, in this case English. Although it does not appear that either Fidel or Emiliano experienced a truly bilingual experience at school, it seems that inclusion of some Tu'un Nda'vi in Fidel's case and Spanish in Emiliano's case facilitated their entry into formal education. Had Emiliano not known some Spanish to aid with this transition to school in the U.S., however, his experience would have been completely different, as the lack of support for Tu'un Nda'vi speakers in the system would have made his transition very difficult.

Fidel went to school in his hometown only until the sixth grade and did not progress beyond a basic level of Spanish proficiency and limited literacy skills. He noted that he mostly played around in school until the fourth grade and that it wasn't until fifth or sixth grade that he started to develop an appreciation for learning. Unfortunately, continuing to go to school by attending *la secundaria* (junior high school) meant moving to a boarding house in the nearest *cabecera municipal* (municipal seat or regional administrative center) where the school was located. He explained that this obstacle, in combination with his need to start work at age 12 or 13, led him to lose interest in schooling. From then until age 15, he worked in agriculture, moving back and forth between Baja California, Mexico, and Santa Maria in California. It wasn't until the age of 15 that Fidel started to develop an interest in learning Spanish again, from magazines, newspapers, and the Bible. While he was able to develop a higher level of Spanish proficiency over time, it was not sufficient to meet his language

needs at the time of the meetings with *el grupo de enfoque*. Among these language needs, as noted by Fidel at different points during our meetings, was the need to learn English.

In the short excerpt below, taken from a *grupo de enfoque* meeting on October 11, 2009, while talking about his own and Emiliano's efforts to learn English, Fidel explained that his lack of literacy in Spanish limited his ability to learn English.

> …porque yo, en personal, estaba yendo a la clase en inglés también.
>
> *...because I, personally, was going to the class in English too.*
>
> Pero:, pues, miro yo como que la barrera, me hace falta más español.
>
> *Bu:t, well, I see kind of that the barrier, I need more Spanish.*

Fidel believed that without a stronger foundation in Spanish it was more difficult for him to do well in the adult education class for English learners that he attended, which was taught in Spanish. While he was able to communicate well and understand Spanish, the barrier he faced was the heavy reliance on grammar instruction in formal English-learning classes, which assume the learner has an understanding of grammatical concepts, in this case, in Spanish. For this reason, Fidel expressed an interest in learning Spanish grammar.[10] Fidel's views are consistent with the findings of Young-Scholten, who discusses the added challenges for English learners who are not already literate in another language (2013, p. 441).

In addition to serving as a bridge to learning English, Spanish fulfilled a variety of internal and external communication needs for the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community. This allowed them to bridge the communication gap between Tu'un Nda'vi and English in their work life and in their local community to access a variety of

[10] Because our meetings were focused on exploring language concepts at different levels of proficiency and were not intended as formal language classes, we were only able to briefly discuss a few grammatical concepts in *el grupo de enfoque*.

resources. I discuss these findings in the next sections.

4.3 Internal use of Spanish

Although the men in *el grupo de enfoque* used Tu'un Nda'vi as their primary internal language for oral communication, as discussed in Chapter 3, they needed Spanish as a written language to meet a variety of internal communication needs. Because the four men were members of CBDIO, some of our discussions developed around the organization's functions and administration, in addition to discussing the needs of their cultural community. These discussions and interactions, and my general exposure to CBDIO throughout the study, provided me the opportunity to observe how the men and their community used Spanish to meet their written communication needs. Even though the men reported that members of their community held varying degrees of Spanish proficiency, as was the case with the men themselves, Spanish was used within the CBDIO Santa Maria office as an internal, administrative language in a number of ways.

One of the essential functions of Spanish was the coordination with other CBDIO centers and Indigenous communities located elsewhere in California to advertise and coordinate community events. On one occasion, Fidel showed me a poster written in Spanish advertising a basketball tournament—which I later discovered was the *XVI Copa Benito Juarez de básquetbol*, a basketball tournament commemorating the birth of Benito Juarez—that would be held at a different regional center by FIOB (Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales, 'Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations'), another organization that serves speakers of multiple Indigenous languages. While I do not have a copy or an image of

that particular poster, I have included below an image of an announcement for a previous tournament held two years earlier (Figure 4.1).

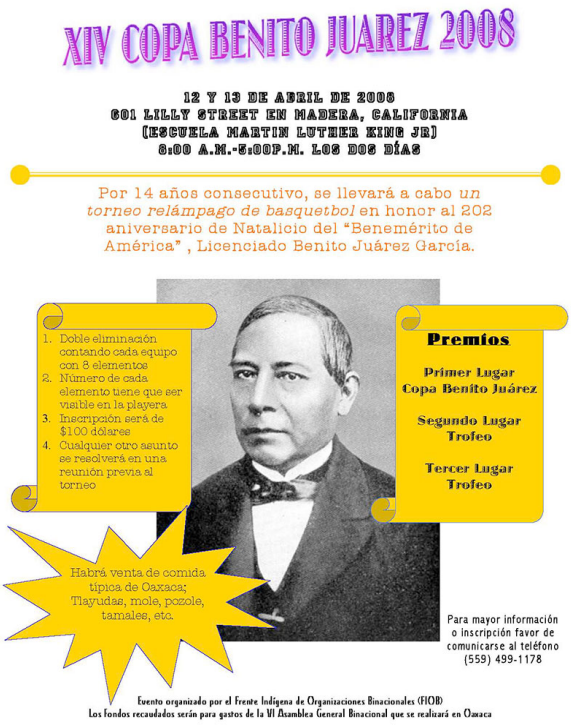


Figure 4.1. Flyer for basketball tournament sponsored by FIOB

Beyond its use for communication regarding community events, Spanish was also essential for the dissemination of information regarding safety in the workplace, state and federal laws and policies, health education, and parenting education resources, among other types of resources. The local office of CBDIO provided the men's cultural community as well as other Indigenous groups with access to educational pamphlets on work and home life in addition to other materials and resources in Spanish. A wall display was posted next to the front door of the offices of CBDIO with several informational brochures and handouts, all written in Spanish, regarding a variety of topics relevant to community members' family, civic, and work life (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2. Information displayed in the CBDIO office.

Among these items were a brochure on how to avoid heat stroke while working in the agricultural fields, a brochure from the State of California's Education Development Department (Figure 4.3), a brochure on workers' rights and pesticide health risks, and another on helping to prepare children for kindergarten (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.3. Brochures on avoiding heat stroke (left) and resources from the state Education Development Department (right).

Figure 4.4. Brochures on preparing children for kindergarten (left)

and on pesticide risk and workers' rights (right).

Spanish is also very important to diasporic community groups in the U.S. for coordination and planning with their communities of origin regarding civil works projects in Mexico. This type of work is part of diasporic communities' *tequio*, a form of Indigenous Mexican community service whereby individuals return to their communities of origin to volunteer their labor toward the construction of buildings or other infrastructure, such as roads, schools, and other community projects. Nagengast and Kearny define *tequio* as follows: "*tequio* is nonpaid communal work for projects such as constructing and maintaining public roads and buildings. It is an ancient system of obligation that has been utilized by the Aztecs and Mixtecs for community projects" (Nagengast and Kearney 1990, p. 89, note 9). It is not uncommon for Mixteco communities living in the U.S., as well as other Indigenous Mexican communities (Gabarrot Arenas, 2010, p. 70), to come together in this manner for the purpose of carrying out a specific project in their communities of origin (Fox and Rivera-Salgado, 2001. p. 107).

Tequio was such a fundamental part of their diasporic community that illustrations of *tequio* projects carried out by Indigenous Mexican people living in Santa Maria were included in a collage displayed in the CBDIO offices; these projects included a kiosk in a plaza, a community center, and a school basketball court (Figure 4.5).[11]

[11] While the men's participation in *tequio* is a topic that deserves further exploration, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation. We did not discuss *tequio* in depth during the course of this study and I cannot ascertain to what degree it was voluntary or compulsory, how common it might have been for the men to participate in *tequios* from their respective communities of origin, to what degree their participation was limited by their ability to travel, or how this might have impacted or even disrupted their work lives within their diasporic communities (Mutersbaugh, 1994, p. 77).

Figure 4.5. Images of *tequio* projects in a Oaxacan community

A meeting Rebekka and I attended on January 17, 2010 seemed to be part of a *tequio.* This meeting demonstrated how the men used Spanish within their community organizations for complex administrative functions at a binational level and highlighted the related demand for organizations and community members to develop more advanced administrative writing skills in Spanish. In this particular case, an ad hoc communal organization involving two diasporic communities living abroad had come together to organize a construction project that would benefit their respective communities of origin. When Rebekka and I arrived at this meeting, in addition to the regular members of our group, there was also present a group of about five men from a Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking community adjacent to Fidel's community of origin. They were having a separate meeting with Fidel, which, in a phone conversation

before we arrived, Fidel had invited us to join.[12] He briefly explained to us that members of these two Oaxacan communities living abroad had created an ad hoc organization for the purpose of building a road that would connect the two communities in Oaxaca. Each community would begin road construction from their respective side, and they would unite the road in the middle.

Rebekka and I sat through the remainder of the meeting, which was conducted in Tu'un Nda'vi.[13] While Tu'un Nda'vi served for oral communication, Spanish was necessary for written communication. After that meeting was over and the meeting of *el grupo de enfoque* had begun, Fidel showed us a draft of a memo he had written in Spanish to others involved with the project and asked if we could review it. It was a general practice for Rebekka and me to ask the men at the beginning of each meeting if they had a particular topic they wanted to discuss or if they had writing samples of any kind for us to use as a jumping-off point to explore language topics. In the process of reviewing the letter, and for the duration of the *grupo de enfoque* meeting, we explored with the men the various elements of formal administrative writing, including tone, content, purpose, formal greetings, introduction and context, the body or main subject, closing and signature, and how to list attachments. We produced different versions of the memo, changing recipients and reformatting address information for different iterations of the document. We also discussed various types of organizational documents in general, such as minutes, memos, reports, and constitutions as well as parliamentary concepts like quorum. Given Fidel's role as a leader within CBDIO

[12] The other men in this meeting were not involved in this research study and, without their consent, I cannot elaborate beyond the brief description included here.
[13] While it is possible that the meeting was conducted in different but similar varieties of Tu'un Nda'vi, the members of the group did not suggest this in the conversation that followed. Consequently, my assumption is that they spoke the same language variety.

and in other settings, such as the ad hoc organization I just described, developing strong Spanish writing skills was essential for him.

However, the use of Spanish as an internal language for written communication and coordination was not consistent across the four men's communities of origin. As a point of contrast, Cornelio's community of origin carried out its administrative functions entirely through oral communication and had less need for written correspondence and, consequently, less need for Spanish as an administrative language. In a meeting on January 31, 2010, Fidel and Cornelio explained how Cornelio's community functioned in this regard. In this interaction, Fidel served as an interpreter for Cornelio, who preferred to speak Tu'un Nda'vi rather than Spanish.

Excerpt 4.3

1 Fidel: En la organización y en nuestra comunidad siempre trabajamos mucho

In the organization and in our community, we always work a lot

2 con el papeleo. Y él (Cornelio) dice que no, casi no trabajan con el papeleo.

with paperwork. And he says no, they hardly ever function through paperwork.

3 Miguel: ¿Con, cómo, por qué, en qué?

With, how, why, in what?

4 Fidel: Por ejemplo, como el acta de acuerdo, la carta de renuncia, por ejemplo,

For example, like the act of agreement, the resignation letter, for example,

5 como citatorio vencido, casi no trabajan eso ellos.

like expired summons, they hardly use such things.

6 Miguel: ¿Ellos quienes?

They who?

7 Fidel: En su comunidad de él.

In his community.

8 Miguel: Oh. ¿Y qué comunidad es esa?

Oh, and what community is that?

9 Fidel: Él es el pres… Que se presente él su pueblo, porque se va enojar si yo lo digo!

He's the pres… Let him introduce his town, because he's going to get angry if I do!

[Cornelio laughed, followed by Emiliano and Casimiro, and Cornelio gave the name of his community.]

[I repeated the name as I wrote it down, and Cornelio and Fidel help clarify the spelling of it.[14]]

10 Miguel: ¿Y a cuánto queda de [Fidel's community of origin]?

And how far is it from [Fidel's community of origin]?

11 Cornelio: Bien cerquitas.

Very close.

12 Miguel: Cerquitas.

Close.

13 Cornelio: Aha.

Uh huh.

14 Fidel: Es colendancia.

It's adjacent.

15 Miguel: Oh.

[14] The name of the community is omitted to maintain confidentiality.

[Fidel asks Cornelio a question in Tu'un Nda'vi, Cornelio answers. The exchange ends in laughter.]

16 Miguel: Ah. Entonces en su comunidad no se usan mucho los documentos esos.

Oh. Then, documents aren't used that much in his community.

17 Fidel: Ah, sí, eh, en su comunidad de ellos aquí como que no, este,

Um, yes, uh, in their community here, they sort of don't, and uh,

18 yo creo que ellos tiene otro tradición de,

I think that they have a different tradition of,

19 Miguel: Otra forma de hacerlo,

Another way of doing it,

20 Fidel: Mhm, de trabajar.

Mhm, of working.

21 Miguel: ¿Es diferente, para cada comunidad?

It's different, for each community?

22 Fidel: Sí. O son más, más unidos o, no sé, pero:, dicen que

Yes. Or they're more, more united or, I don't know, bu:t, they say that

23 cuando hay un trabajo, de todas maneras lo sacan,

when there is a job, they get it done just the same,

24 Miguel: Mhm.

25 Fidel: en la forma que trabajan. Pero yo creo que lo que hacen ellos, ya es una tradición

in their way of working. But I think that the way they do it, it's a tradition

26 ya, más antiguo. Así trabajaban los, los abuelitos.

kind of, more ancient. That's how they worked, the, the grandfathers [i.e., elders].

In lines 1 and 2, Fidel explains that in the 'organization' (i.e., CBDIO), as well as in the administrative activities of his own community of origin, paperwork is common: "En la organización y en nuestra comunidad siempre trabajamos mucho con el papeleo" 'In the organization and in our community, we always work a lot with paperwork'. 'Paperwork', as explained above, implies the use of Spanish as the administrative language for internal communication. By contrast, in line 2 Fidel explains that in Cornelio's community of origin, paperwork is not common: "Y él dice que no, casi no trabajan con el papeleo" 'And he says no, they hardly ever function through paperwork'. Although not specifically stated, this comment suggests that community members carried out their internal communication through Tu'un Nda'vi and, consequently, had less of a need for Spanish as an internal language. Fidel goes on to assert that members of Cornelio's community of origin work together in a more traditional way. In lines 17 through 20, he explains: "en su comunidad de ellos aquí tiene otro tradición, de… trabajar" 'in their community here they have a different tradition of doing it, of… working'. In line 17, Fidel seems to specifically refer to members of Cornelio's community of origin living in diaspora, but it is unclear whether he is making a distinction with how members of Cornelio's community work in Mexico. In lines 25 and 26 Fidel speculates that this traditional way of working is similar to the way Cornelio's ancestors worked: "Pero yo creo que lo que hacen ellos, ya es una tradición ya, más antiguo. Así trabajaban los, los abuelitos" 'But I think that the way they do it, it's a tradition kind of, more ancient. That's how they worked, the, the grandfathers [i.e., ancestors]'.

The excerpt above illustrates that members from different communities of origin can differ in regards to their need to communicate internally in writing. Therefore, their need for Spanish as an internal administrative language may vary as well. While Fidel noted at several points throughout the study his own need for Spanish in order to operate within his community and to meet his organizational responsibilities, Cornelio and Casimiro both focused on their need for Spanish to meet their external communication needs, as I discuss in the next section.

4.4 External use of Spanish

Given the wide use of Spanish in California and the general availability of Spanish speakers across multiple contexts, this language served as a lingua franca for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community in diaspora. By bridging the communication gap between Tu'un Nda'vi and English, Spanish provided their community with access to employment, community services and resources and, through CBDIO, enabled them to engage with a number of institutions at local, regional, state and binational levels. Additionally, Spanish also allowed communication between different Mexican Indigenous language groups and provided them access to the services available through CBDIO.

According to the 2005 California Farm Labor Force Overview and Trends from the National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) (Aguirre International 2005), Spanish was the primary home language of 96% of California farmworkers. This report was based on 2003-2004 survey data, in which only 2% of respondents reported being native speakers of an Indigenous language; however, there were no specific Indigenous language options in this version of the survey, which may have decreased response rates for this question (Aguirre

International 2005, p. 23). The survey was later updated to change its question regarding language of origin in order to more clearly elicit specific Indigenous languages spoken at home (Aguirre International 2005, p. 12). Because of this limitation, it is unclear how many Indigenous respondents reported Spanish as their primary language by default in surveys administered prior to the change. Therefore, the statistic of 96% of farmworkers reporting Spanish as their home language is likely to have overestimated Spanish as a home language. In a more recent report based on NAWS 2012 survey data (Legal Services Corporation 2015, p. 42), 76% of agricultural workers in the United States were Latino/Hispanic, with 96% of foreign-born workers originating from Mexico; however, information on respondents' primary language was not included in this report.

While the precise number of Spanish speakers working in agriculture is difficult to track over time because of changes in the NAWS survey, it is evident that a significant portion of farmworkers in California speak and use Spanish at work. For Indigenous communities whose primary avenue for employment is within the agricultural industry, a certain level of Spanish proficiency can meet their most immediate work-language needs and, consequently, help satisfy their most immediate financial needs.

4.4.1 Spanish needed for work

Accordingly, Spanish was identified as the most useful and pertinent language for exploration in *el grupo de enfoque*, both for the men's work life and for the benefit of their community. In a meeting on January 23, 2010, Fidel emphasized the need to focus on the development of Spanish within the group rather than exploring English or Tu'un Nda'vi. As the next excerpt shows, he also preferred to focus on Spanish instead of devoting time to

developing computer skills for self-directed language learning and researching language resources on the Internet, which I had just suggested to him as an area for exploration:

Excerpt 4.4

1 Sí, hay muchas necesidades de eso, pero, el problema es,

Yes, there is much need for that [i.e., developing computer skills], but, the problem is,

2 cómo te diría, que necesitamos recursos también, para poder trabajar,

how can I tell you, that we need resources too, to be able to work,

3 no es tanto de lo que, digamos, para nosotros pero para la comunidad.

it's not so much for that, let's say, for us but for the community.

4 Para que puedan ayudarse a uno mismo.

So that they can help themselves.

In line 1 Fidel acknowledges the necessity of developing computer skills but frames this in line 2 as interfering with or taking time away from the primary goal of the group, which was to focus on exploring and developing Spanish language skills: "necesitamos recursos también, para poder trabajar" 'we need resources too, to be able to work' (line 2). The implication is that Spanish proficiency leads to opportunities for employment, not only for the group, but also for their community in general: "no es tanto para nosotros pero para la comunidad" 'it's not so much for us but for the community', as he states in line 3. In line 4 he adds as his rationale: "Para que puedan ayudarse a uno mismo" 'So that they can help themselves'. Ironically, this last point was the very reason I offered to show him how to perform basic searches on the Internet; so the men could help themselves through independent learning and exploration of language concepts into the future, beyond what was possible for us to cover during our limited time within the group. I also explained that

computers could be used without cost at the public library. Nevertheless, Fidel expressed his preference quite clearly, and we did not further explore the idea of developing computer skills for this purpose.

With the exception of Fidel, Spanish was the primary language used in the men's workplaces both for communication among employees and to relay orders between supervisors and employees. On January 10, 2010, during a meeting I held primarily with Emiliano and Casimiro, we discussed language topics within the context of the men's work lives and employment development. During this meeting, Emiliano interpreted between Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish for Casimiro. In this case, Casimiro chose the topic after I had made an open-ended request for discussion topic suggestions. As with Fidel in the previous example, the fact that Casimiro suggested this topic highlights the importance and relevance of Spanish to his work life.

Casimiro explained that he worked in agriculture picking strawberries and that his supervisor spoke Spanish but not Tu'un Nda'vi. Some of the basic communication concepts that Casimiro wanted to explore in the group were expressions and phrases used when some kind of shift in work activities was required, either within a given job or function or between job locations, as well as job descriptors, assignments, and instructions. My extended interaction with Casimiro follows. Casimiro often understood my Spanish but responded in Tu'un Nda'vi, interpreted by Emiliano.[15]

Excerpt 4.5

1 Miguel: ¿La última vez que platicamos, usted nos estaba diciendo que

The last time that we spoke, you were telling us that

2 quería aprender a leer y escribir en español y en mixteco, pero no inglés,

[15] This meeting is discussed in detail through the analytic lens of language-learning prioritization in Chapter 5.

verdad?

you wanted to learn to read and write in Spanish and in Mixteco, but not English, right?

[Casimiro, after a pause, speaks in Tu'un Nda'vi to Emiliano and they have a conversation in Tu'un Nda'vi for approximately 50 seconds.]

3 Emiliano: Le gustaría platicar más en español, pero en área de trabajo.

He would like to speak more in Spanish, but in the area of work.

4 Miguel: Área de trabajo. Y, este, y entonces, usted me estaba diciendo que es la pisca.

Area of work. And, uh, and then, you were telling me that it was picking.

5 ¿De fresa?

Is that strawberries?

6 Casimiro: Mhm.

7 Miguel: ¿Y qué tipo de cosas, en su trabajo, le gustaría saber? Me acuerdo

And what kind of things, in your job, would you like to know? I remember

8 que hace tiempo estábamos hablando de direcciones.

that some time ago we were talking about directions.

9 ¿Entonces, aparte de direcciones, que otro tipo de cosas le gustaría saber?

And, aside from directions, what other type of things would you like to know?

10 ¿Por ejemplo, este, recientemente no sé si a lo mejor esta semana pasada, hay

for example, uh, recently, I don't know if maybe this last week, is there

11 algo en particular que le hubiera gustado decirle a alguien?

something in particular that you would have liked to have communicated to anyone?

12 Emiliano:¿Cómo?

How's that?

13 Miguel: Que si en esta semana, si hay algo en particular que el hubiera querido decirle

During this week, if there's anything in particular that he would have liked to say

14 a alguien en el trabajo, pero no pudo.

to *someone at work, but was unable to.*

15 Emiliano: Mm, a alguien en el trabajo.

Mm, to someone at work.

16 Miguel: Ey. ¿Hay algo que se le ocurrió que: "Ojalá hubiera podido decirle esto"?

Yeah. Is there anything that you thought:"I wish I would have been able to say this"?

[Emiliano speaks in Tu'un Nda'vi to Casimiro, who responds after a 9-second pause, and they continue a conversation in Tu'un Nda'vi for another 30 seconds.]

17 Emiliano: Quería decir, cuando hace un tipo de cambio, en el trabajo, quería preguntarle que:

He wanted to say, when there is a type of change at work, he wanted to ask that:

18 "¿A dónde se fueron los demás?" O, "¿A dónde nos vamos a ir?" Algo así dice.

"*Where did the others go?" Or, "Where are we going?". Something like that he says.*

19 Miguel: ¿Un tipo de cambio?

A sort of change?

20 Emiliano: Aha.

Uh huh.

21 Miguel: ¿Por ejemplo, un cambio de un proyecto de trabajo, un cambio a otra parte?

For example, changing to another project at work, or changing locations?

22 Por ejemplo: "Estuvimos trabajando en esta área y ahora ¿para qué área trabajo?",

For example: "We were working in this area and now what area should work in?",

23 o ¿qué función, área o función?

or what function, area or function?

[Here, Casimiro responds directly to Emiliano in Tu'un Nda'vi without first requiring Emiliano to interpret what I said. Emiliano interprets Casimiro's reply.]

24 Emiliano: Como, su patrón, pues, este, le prestó su trabajador a otro patrón y él no supo

Since, his boss, well, uh, he lent his worker to another boss and he didn't know

25 a donde iban a ir.

where they were going.

26 Miguel: Mmm, mhm, okay.

27 Emiliano: O sea, su patrón, pues le prestó a su trabajador que le fuera a

In other words, his boss, well he lent his worker so he would go

28 ayudar a otro patrón unos día.

help another boss a few days.

29 Miguel: ¿Bueno, y el supervisor habla mixteco o puro español?

Okay, and the supervisor speaks Mixteco, or just Spanish?

30 Casimiro: Puro español.

Just Spanish.

At the start of the exchange above, in attempting to elicit a topic for discussion, in lines 1 and 2, I reiterate the language priorities that Casimiro had expressed in a prior meeting on December 5, where he explained that he was interested in learning Spanish and learning to read and write in both Spanish and Tu'un Nda'vi. However, without being asked directly whether he has a discussion topic, in line 3, Casimiro notes that he wants to talk specifically about Spanish use at work. This statement, like the excerpt as a whole, highlights the importance of Spanish as a language-learning priority for Casimiro due to its relevance to his work life. Additionally, the fact that most of the exchange between Casimiro and me required Emiliano to interpret for us highlights Casimiro's lack of Spanish ability even at the most basic level.

In lines 4 and 5, I check whether Casimiro works in the harvesting of strawberries and he responds in the affirmative in line 6 (*Mhm*). Here, he replies without the need to have Emiliano interpret my question first. His ability to understand basic questions in Spanish,

while only being able to respond in very short segments of Spanish, as in this case, is illustrated again later in this excerpt and was consistent with our interactions throughout the duration of the data collection period.

After I ask Casimiro, in lines 7 through 16, the types of things he would have liked to communicate in Spanish to people at his job, in lines 17 and 18 Emiliano interprets as follows: "Quería decir, cuando hace un tipo de cambio, en el trabajo, quería preguntarle que: '¿A dónde se fueron los demás?' O, '¿A dónde nos vamos a ir?'" ("He wanted to say, when there's a type of change at work, he wanted to ask that: 'Where did the others go?' Or, 'Where are we going?'"). This statement shows that, while Casimiro could communicate very short statements in Spanish, he experienced significant difficulty in expressing himself beyond that. He needed the ability to communicate with more complex sentences at work. Otherwise, without a higher level of Spanish proficiency, at least enough to communicate where he needed to be and what was expected of him, communication at work would remain a challenge.

In line 29, I ask Casimiro what language his supervisor speaks: "¿Bueno, y el supervisor habla mixteco o puro español?" 'Okay, and the supervisor speaks Mixteco, or just Spanish?'. In this instance again Casimiro responds directly in line 30: "Puro español" 'Just Spanish' without the need for Emiliano to interpret. This once again indicates that, although Casimiro's ability to communicate is very limited, he understands more Spanish than he is able to produce. In a similar way, in response to my question to him in line 23, Casimiro responds in Tu'un Nda'vi directly, without first requiring Emiliano to interpret.

In Casimiro's case, Spanish was the primary language used in his employment. Although developing greater proficiency would have helped him communicate more

effectively at work, it is unclear to what degree this would have actually resulted in even limited opportunities for advancement within the same line of work. A report by the Migration Policy Institute states, "Most farmworkers seeking upward mobility find it easier to move out of agriculture rather than move up the agriculture job ladder" (Martin and Taylor 2013, p. 17).

Strawberry harvesting, which is done by hand, is one of the most labor-intensive among all U.S. crops (Calvin and Martin 2012) in addition to being one of the lowest-paid jobs available in California agriculture (Martin and Taylor 2013, p. 19). Although Spanish proficiency alone is not sufficient for a worker to progress to jobs outside of the agriculture industry, the lack of proficiency in the language would make it difficult to find work in other occupations where the use of Spanish is common or is even the predominant language used in the workplace and thus requires a higher level of linguistic ability. For Casimiro, learning more Spanish would be an important step on the path to attaining the resources necessary to pursue higher paid labor.

Both Fidel and Emiliano, who had a higher level of proficiency in Spanish, reported having been employed in other lines of work, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 5. During the same meeting as the excerpt above, on January 10, 2010, Emiliano reported having left agriculture, at least temporarily, and having worked briefly as an electrician's assistant in a workplace where almost everybody spoke Spanish, with the exception of those at the highest levels, who only spoke English. Fidel, meanwhile, with a greater command of Spanish than Emiliano, left agriculture permanently and reported during an interview on February 14, 2010, that he worked in landscaping. As part of his reason for seeking other employment, he explained that harvesting strawberries was very arduous work, much more

so than landscaping, and noted, “Me acabo, y la fresa no se va a acabar”. ‘I’ll be done [i.e. I will waste away], and the strawberry won’t ever be done.’ Holmes shared a similar perspective with regard to strawberry harvesting (2013, p. 93). In sum, for all the men in the group, developing proficiency in Spanish could lead to resources that, in turn, could lead to better opportunities outside of the agriculture industry: a better job, a higher quality of life, and greater financial benefits for them and their families.

4.4.2 Spanish to access services

In addition to providing an avenue for alternate employment opportunities, because of the prevalence of Spanish speakers in their local community, Spanish could provide the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community with the means to access a variety of local resources and services, both directly and indirectly. In the 2011 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 28.8% of people in California aged 5 years and over reported speaking Spanish. As context for comparison, 56.2% reported speaking only English during the same year (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). Especially in California communities with larger concentrations of Spanish speakers, many community service agencies have Spanish speakers on staff providing direct services to the community. Many other institutions have Spanish-speaking staff in ancillary positions who can serve as interpreters. In such cases, Spanish-English interpreters serve indirectly to help a Spanish speaker to communicate with a service provider who only speaks English. However, because of the scarcity of Indigenous language interpreters, a speaker of an Indigenous language would not have access to resources and services without the aid of someone to interpret from their language into English (Holmes 2011, p. 877) or Spanish.

The role of Spanish as a lingua franca, and the need for members of the men's community to learn Spanish in order to bridge the communication gap between English and Tu'un Nda'vi, was illustrated in a meeting on October 22, 2009, where Fidel interpreted a discussion between Cornelio, Rebekka, and me. In discussing possible themes for the exploration of Spanish that would be most useful and immediately applicable to the men in the group, Cornelio, as a father, suggested the need to communicate with medical professionals during pediatric visits.[16] He explained that, while many people could help interpret from Spanish to English in communicating with doctors, there are very few Tu'un Nda'vi-English interpreters, and patients often needed to wait for two hours for an interpreter to become available. In the process of exploring the vocabulary associated with medical visits in Spanish—including terms for various body parts, types of pain, associated symptoms, and health concepts—the group members volunteered equivalent concepts in Tu'un Nda'vi, and we discussed the nuances of these terms and semantic differences between Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish. While the medical concepts in the men's culture may differ significantly from those of traditional Western medicine (Bade 1993, p. 23), for Tu'un Nda'vi speakers in California communities seeking medical services, attaining a certain level of Spanish proficiency would allow patients the ability to communicate with service providers more effectively and in a more timely manner, which is crucial when seeking medical care, especially during an emergency. In the absence of effective communication through a Spanish-speaking interpreter, the communication gap between patients who speak an Indigenous language and English-speaking health providers could cause gross misunderstandings resulting in misdiagnoses, loss of wages, and unnecessary tests, incurring

[16] The recorder from the October 22, 2009 meeting malfunctioned, and the data are inaccessible. However, Cornelio's suggestion was referenced in at least one other meeting, on December 10, 2009.

increased medical costs and causing additional financial and health burdens for these patients (Holmes 2013, p. 142).

In addition to serving as a bridge for accessing valuable community resources, Spanish allowed the men's cultural community to have a voice and be represented in broader civic issues. Furthermore, Spanish allowed members of different Mixteco language varieties as well as those from other Oaxacan-origin Indigenous language groups (e.g., Triqui and Zapoteco) to communicate and coordinate efforts around common interests. Without Spanish, and absent an alternate language to serve as a lingua franca, communication and coordination between different Indigenous language groups would, at the very least, be extremely difficult.

A report by the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous People (Comissión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, CDI) (Trejo, Hope, and Acosta 2008, p. 14) found that over 20 Indigenous languages are spoken in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. Furthermore, each language may have a number of varieties, some of which are so distinct that they are not mutually intelligible. Additionally, as with Tu'un Nda'vi, many of these language varieties do not have written forms that are accessible to the general population. The combination of all these factors makes Spanish the most accessible option as a lingua franca for many Indigenous Mexican groups seeking to organize and communicate broadly: binationally, across different Indigenous language groups, and among different language varieties. In the men's diasporic community, Fidel noted the presence of Tu'un Nda'vi, Triqui, and Zapoteco Oaxacan speakers, with Tu'un Nda'vi being the largest group. Spanish was therefore the main language used for communication between these speakers, as well as with non-Indigenous people in their local community.

Spanish was the language through which the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and other community members could engage with their diasporic community at an individual level, but it also provided the means through which the voice of the community could be heard and its needs represented in a broader stage. In one particular case, several communities joined forces with social justice organizations to express a unified voice in protection of farmworkers. During an interview on February 14, 2010, Fidel described an event where representatives from Oaxacan Indigenous communities, along with other organizations from their local community, met with the local city council.[17] Through Spanish, community and social justice representatives requested the relocation of particular DUI checkpoints, which were placed on the outskirts of town and situated so as to only stop traffic entering the city. The concern was that the traffic being stopped originated in areas in which there were no bars or other establishments that sold alcohol, only agricultural fields. Thus, the majority of drivers who were stopped at the checkpoints were farmworkers returning home from the fields at the end of the day. Any worker stopped at these DUI checkpoints, because of their undocumented immigration status, did not have a driver's license and therefore had their car impounded, even if they had no DUI violation. Such workers faced thousands of dollars in fines and impound fees. The practice of placing DUI checkpoints in this area ignored the purported intent of capturing drivers under the influence of alcohol and instead resulted in harm to agricultural workers at the lowest socioeconomic levels (Holmes 2011, pp. 444-445), in the form of automobile impounds that were in no way related to DUI arrests.

Some community members from the organizations involved in the discussions with the city council expressed concern that the process was racially motivated and was deliberately

[17] The organizations mentioned by Fidel were FIOB (Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations), PUEBLO (People United for Economic Justice Building Leadership through Organizing), and MAPA (Mexican American Political Association).

targeting farmworkers. Fidel explained to me and Rebekka, however, that he and others representing his community were not trying to address the broader racism underlying this practice and that they simply wanted to have the DUI checkpoints placed in areas where there would be a plausible reason to suspect drunk drivers. He noted that, at first, representatives from the city council misinterpreted their intent: "pensaban que estábamos en contra de la policía, pero no, estamos con la policía" 'they thought we were against the police, but no, we support the police'. He explained that they simply wanted the DUI checkpoints appropriately placed and that, eventually, the city council acquiesced and had these particular checkpoints relocated. This incident illustrates the importance of Spanish as a lingua franca for this Indigenous diasporic community to have their needs represented beyond the limits of their language community; it also exemplifies the use of social capital as representation, as discussed in Chapter 3. In the following sections, I discuss the crucial role of Spanish in how social capital was manifested for the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and their diasporic community.

4.5 Social capital manifested through Spanish

Having discussed the different ways in which Spanish was used within the language community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque,* I now analyze the use of Spanish within their community through the lens of social capital. I discuss how social capital was manifested through Spanish across the six elements introduced in Chapter 3 and how the scope of their social capital was extended beyond the limits of the diasporic language community through this language.

4.5.1 Spanish as a secondary source of social capital

In the previous chapter, I defined the source of social capital as the element through which social capital originates and which is at the core of what defines a unit of social capital. While Tu'un Nda'vi was the main source of social capital for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community, their ability to function with this language in their diasporic setting was limited to internal, oral communication between Tu'un Nda'vi speakers. Because of the lack of Tu'un Nda'vi speakers outside of their language community, members of this community needed to speak Spanish, the common language used in most, if not all of their diasporic settings, including work, local businesses, social and medical services, and public institutions such as schools. In other words, if Tu'un Nda'vi was the language through which social capital originated for the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and their community, then Spanish was the language through which the source of social capital was effected and, in this way, it became a secondary or complementary source of social capital.

4.5.2 From a unit to a network of social capital connected through Spanish

In Chapter 3, I framed CBDIO as the unit of social capital for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their local Indigenous community—that is, an entity or network of people defined as narrowly as possible and in meaningful ways. Tu'un Nda'vi was at the core of this unit of social capital and provided cohesion to this unit. Although it was the primary language used within the offices of CBDIO, it was, however, only one language within a broader Oaxacan community in Santa Maria with many commonalities in their diasporic setting that perhaps they did not share in their communities of origin. CBDIO made its services available to other

to other Indigenous language groups and communities, making Spanish essential for pan-Indigenous communication, as noted previously. Additionally, it was through Spanish that CBDIO members connected with a broader network of social capital beyond their individual unit and beyond their geographic region at local, regional, and binational levels.

Through Spanish as an external community language, various communities and organizations were able to come together around specific issues, such as the relocation of DUI checkpoints. In this case, this issue was the cohesive element that united these groups into a larger network until the DUI checkpoints were relocated and their shared need was satisfied. In this case, various communities and organizations were able to combine their social capital with that of others, albeit temporarily, and thus to exert an even greater force of persuasion in expressing their needs and goals around this issue. At a regional level, Spanish, as an internal administrative language, allowed the local CBDIO organization of Santa Maria—the unit of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*—to advertise regional events to their local community to connect smaller units with other diasporic units into a larger community network of social capital. This process was exemplified by the advertisement for the annual Benito Juarez basketball tournament in Figure 4.1 above.

Transnationally, Spanish as an internal administrative language allowed CBDIO as a unit of social capital to combine with other units working both locally and abroad. This level was exemplified by the ad hoc *tequio* group discussed above, which came together for the purpose of building a road between two different Indigenous Oaxacan communities.

4.5.3 Resources made accessible through Spanish

In the model of social capital introduced in Chapter 3, I discussed resources as the products generated by social capital which are made available to its members. Resources can come in many forms relative to the needs and socioeconomic circumstances of the individuals in a given unit of social capital. For those on the more affluent side of the socioeconomic spectrum, resources can include a wealth of financial resources, power, and influence. Alternatively, for those on the opposite side of the spectrum with very limited forms of physical, educational, and linguistic capital, such as the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their diasporic community, resources take the form of information in order to access community services and meet basic needs. As discussed above, resources provided under the auspices of CBDIO were made available through Spanish either as direct services provided by members of the organization or indirectly through information sharing. Direct services included helping members to fill out forms for school, providing a form of identification that would be recognized by local authorities and social service entities, and interacting with the Mexican consulate to obtain birth records that could be used to generate such identification documents. Indirectly, these resources included readily available information regarding workers' rights and safety, health education resources, and information about children's care and education. In every instance, these resources were made available in Spanish, the only administrative language that community members had available to engage with the world outside of their language community.

4.5.4 The process of generating social capital through Spanish

In Chapter 3, I characterized the process for generating social capital as the conversion of individual human capital to social capital, which is made accessible to others in a unit of

social capital through the social practices embedded within that unit. To take Fidel as an example, if he had used all the skills, information, and resources he had accumulated over the years to his own benefit, to improve his own circumstances, these would have remained as his personal repertoire of tools that formed part of his individual human capital. However, through his leadership position in CBDIO and the practices of the organization, he and others made these resources available to share with other members of their community, thus generating social capital. The primary language through which these resources were made available in print, was through Spanish.

If Spanish was the primary language with which this bridge to resource access was built, then Fidel and other leaders of the organization were the bridge builders, and the practices used to build this bridge for others were part of the process for generating social capital. Without Spanish as a lingua franca embedded in every aspect of CBDIO's operations, Indigenous language speakers who used its services would not have accessible means to engage with the broader world. This focus on the process addresses the "how" of generating social capital, but it does not address the "why" or "to what end." Below, I discuss the benefits rendered by social capital for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community.

4.5.5 Benefits of social capital garnered through Spanish

In Chapter 3, I defined the benefits of social capital as the ways that members of a given unit of social capital improve their circumstances by accessing the products, or resources, made available through that unit. In the discussion that follows, I argue that the benefits garnered by the community of *el grupo de enfoque* were accessible through Spanish, as the

essential lingua franca that allowed this community to meet their internal and external communication needs in diasporic settings.

In the California Central Coast community of Santa Maria, where the primary language was English, the basic needs for a family or community, generally speaking, included access to employment for financial resources, health care, and education for children. Consequently, it may seem that learning English would be the most direct route for recently arrived immigrants to access community resources. However, this was not the case for the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*. In regards to employment, agriculture is the largest and most accessible California industry for recent immigrants coming from Mexico's lowest socioeconomic sectors, who have few resources and low levels of education, and the primary language used this industry is Spanish. Therefore, being able to communicate in Spanish and accessing Spanish language resources would provide the most practical benefits under these circumstances.

In regards to health care and education, Spanish was a ubiquitous second language in Santa Maria, with most, if not all, basic documents required to access these systems available in Spanish as well as English. However, because of the prevalence of bilingual Spanish speakers, compared to the small number of bilingual or trilingual speakers of English in the community of *el group de enfoque* who could serve as interpreters, Spanish provided the greatest benefit in accessing basic resources for the community. Additionally, all of the printed resources available through CBDIO were printed in Spanish. Spanish, then, was the most practical language for members to meet their external communication needs and through which the benefits of social capital were attained, albeit indirectly in cases where

these resources needed to be interpreted into Tu'un Nda'vi by Spanish-speaking members of CBDIO, family members, or other members of the language community.

As noted above, Spanish was also the only internal administrative language used by the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*. None of the members of the group knew of anyone in their community who could read or write in Tu'un Nda'vi, but many could read and write in Spanish. Thus, Spanish allowed members of their unit of social capital to come together with other units both in their diasporic communities and in their communities of origin to combine their resources toward a greater goal. Without Spanish to satisfy their internal administrative communication needs, such goals would be very difficult to achieve, given the large number of participants and the great distances involved. Overall, whether it was used to meet their internal or external communication needs, Spanish provided the greatest and most accessible benefits for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community.

4.5.6 Representation through Spanish as social capital

The sixth element of social capital that I presented in Chapter 3, representation, is the ability of a unit of social capital to express a collective voice and have the needs of the community represented in broader contexts beyond what would be possible for an individual. There were several examples in my data in which CBDIO, as a network and unit of social capital, was able to represent the needs of its community, which I have discussed elsewhere in this dissertation and summarize briefly below. In all instances, communications between community leaders and outside agency representatives were conducted in Spanish. Fidel described four instances in particular that illustrated the role of CBDIO in either representing

the needs of the community or having the legitimacy to represent the community in an official capacity:

1) Representatives from the U.S. Census contacted the organization to garner its help in promoting the community's participation in the 2010 Census.
2) CBDIO representatives joined forces with several other community organizations to request that DUI checkpoints be moved away from agricultural fields where no businesses that sold alcohol were situated.
3) CBDIO worked with representatives from the Mexican consulate on behalf of community members to obtain official Mexican documents, such as birth records, to create usable forms of identification.
4) CBDIO worked with local public and health organizations, such as the local police department and local clinics, to recognize these identification documents, at a time when obtaining state-issued identification through the Department of Motor Vehicles was not possible.

Without Spanish, this level of communication and collaboration might not have been possible. In working with the Mexican consulate, for example, Spanish was necessary because it is the language of the Mexican state. And, in CBDIO's interactions with English-speaking entities in the U.S., the prevalence of Spanish speakers made it feasible to bridge the Tu'un Nda'vi-English communication gap. Otherwise, attempting to broker all exchanges

through a much more limited number of Tu'un Nda'vi-English interpreters would have been very impractical.

The form of social capital possessed by the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and the members of their community who accessed CBDIO services was based on the ability to share resources and information within their community as well as to connect with basic services and meet their most basic needs. Spanish was an essential language that was at once most accessible to the community as an external language and ubiquitous among employers, social services providers, and businesses. It was the means through which the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their community could engage with non-Tu'un Nda'vi speakers at an individual as well as a community level and through which they ultimately attained social capital.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on the role that Spanish played in the lives of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* at work, to access community services, to engage broadly with entities in Santa Maria, and to coordinate with their communities of origin abroad. Through the course of the meetings with these four men, I was exposed to CBDIO, the community organization to which they belonged, and the services made available to their Indigenous communities through Spanish, despite the lack of Spanish proficiency among some members of the group as well as many others in their Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking community. These wide-ranging levels of Spanish ability notwithstanding, Spanish served as an internal, administrative language for the men and their community to communicate in writing with diasporic communities in other regions of the U.S., with other Indigenous language groups, and with their communities of origin in Mexico. Spanish also served as an external language to

interact with local entities and national agencies in the U.S. and Mexico, and to access most, if not all, of the basic services available in their local community. Furthermore, the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* had access to a source of social capital beyond what would typically be expected from a fairly recent immigrant community composed of individuals with extremely limited resources and having attained low levels of education in their home country before migration. While Tu'un Nda'vi was the source of this social capital and was the language that bound their community together, Spanish served as the vehicle to effect this social capital and make it manifest, and thus, became a secondary source of social capital in its own right.

Many members of the men's community were monolingual Tu'un Nda'vi speakers. With Tu'un Nda'vi-English interpreters in short supply in Santa Maria, this made accessing resources and services in English very difficult for Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking people that emigrated there. However, due to the prevalence of Spanish speakers in Santa Maria, a community with a strong agricultural industry, Spanish was ubiquitous and many services were available in the language through Spanish speakers providing direct services, through accessible Spanish-English interpreters, and through standard forms and related resources that were available in Spanish across various institutions and social service entities.

Because of the community's exposure to Spanish in Mexico, there were Spanish speakers within the diasporic community with varying levels of proficiency. This made Spanish a much more accessible language than English and much easier to learn; essentially, it provided a greater and more immediate benefit with a lower expenditure of time and energy while it simultaneously served to bridge the significant communication gap between Tu'un Nda'vi and English in Santa Maria.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the need for the Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking community in Santa Maria to develop Spanish proficiency was brought to my attention during the summer of 2009 by Julián, the community leader from CBDIO, I approached about working with this community. The four men that ultimately joined the *el grupo de enfoque* had varying degrees of Spanish proficiency. For Fidel and Emiliano, who had already attained a level of Spanish proficiency sufficient for them to communicate effectively with other Spanish speakers, this language allowed them to find employment outside of agriculture: on a temporary basis for Emiliano and permanently for Fidel. Additionally, having attained a sufficient level of spoken Spanish proficiency, the two men sought Spanish literacy skills in part because they felt that, with a better grasp of Spanish, they would be more effective in their use of English-learning resources. Casimiro and Cornelio, on the other hand, did not have a level of proficiency in Spanish sufficient to move outside of agricultural employment. Casimiro spoke almost no Spanish and expressed a need to speak Spanish in order to communicate effectively with his employers in agriculture. Cornelio was limited to simple phrases in Spanish and was uncomfortable using the language within the group, relying on Tu'un Nda'vi-Spanish interpretation by Fidel or Emiliano.

In discussing the role of Spanish in satisfying the most basic and immediate language needs for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their diasporic community, I introduced the concepts of internal and external language use. I defined internal language use as that which people use to communicate within their language community, and an external language as one that is used to engage with speakers of other languages. Fidel reported that all oral communication within the men's language community, at least with adults and within the context of CBDIO operations, was exclusively in Tu'un Nda'vi, their internal language.

However, without literacy in Tu'un Nda'vi, this language could not satisfy the diasporic community's writing or administrative language needs. Given that a significant number of people in their community had varying degrees of Spanish literacy, Spanish was the most accessible language to meet both their internal and their external administrative language needs for both oral and written communication. In the U.S., Spanish allowed the community to communicate either directly or indirectly through interpreters with governmental agencies such as the U.S. Census Bureau, the Mexican consulate, local city officials, public service providers, employers, and health care providers. Additionally, through Spanish, other Indigenous language groups could access CBDIO services, allowing pan-Indigenous communication. Overall, Spanish was the most readily accessible language for the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and served to bridge the gap between Tu'un Nda'vi and English to meet their most basic and immediate needs.

At the end of this chapter, I implemented the model of social capital I developed in Chapter 3 to show the role of Spanish as a secondary source of social capital for the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, through which their social capital was manifested. Spanish provided the community with access to social capital beyond what would normally be expected for a recent immigrant community with limited educational, linguistic, and physical capital. Their particular form of social capital was based on information sharing to connect members to local resources to enable them to meet their basic needs in the diasporic setting of Santa Maria. Additionally, through Spanish, leaders of the organization were able to engage with official entities and represent their community in arenas beyond the sphere of their language community. While Tu'un Nda'vi was the source of social capital that provided a foundation for their language community to come together, it

was through Spanish, as a secondary source of social capital, that this capital was extended at local, regional, and binational levels. Thus, despite the fact that Spanish was imposed on Indigenous Mexican people as the colonial language of the Mexican state and despite an assimilationist Mexican educational system, in the United States Spanish came to satisfy a new and complex set of needs for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community living in diaspora. In this environment, Spanish was not imposed on the four men or their community by the state; rather, it became a language of necessity, allowing them to bridge the significant gap between English and Tu'un Nda'vi. Nevertheless, Spanish is imposed by necessity within this diasporic context. Moreover, given the considerable resource limitations within the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, Spanish as well as English could displace Tu'un Nda'vi as a result, as I discuss in Chapter 5.

Having discussed the Spanish language needs for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community, in the next chapter I discuss the complexity of discerning the language-learning priorities for the four men in the group and how members' levels of Spanish proficiency influenced their language-learning priorities.

Chapter 5. Tu'un Nda'vi, Spanish, and English:

Language-learning prioritization and constricted agency

5.0 Introduction

In Chapter 3, I discussed the significance of Tu'un Nda'vi for the four men in *el grupo de enfoque* to meet their internal communication needs: that is, spoken communication within their language community. Then, in Chapter 4, I discussed how Spanish was used in the men's community to meet internal, written communication needs as well as external language needs to communicate with others outside their language community. In this chapter, I examine the conditions under which English was identified as a language-learning priority by two of the men, Fidel and Emiliano, both of whom were already strong Spanish speakers. I also examine the relationship between the four men's level of Spanish proficiency and their language-learning prioritization of these three languages.

In regards to adult immigrants with little or no schooling in their native language, Young-Scholten writes, "These adults face considerable challenges in acquiring the linguistic competence and literacy skills that support participation in the economic and social life of their new communities" (2013, p. 441). For the men in *el grupo de enfoque,* Tu'un Nda'vi served to meet their internal communication needs within their cultural community, while Spanish allowed them to extend the benefits of the social capital generated through Tu'un Nda'vi beyond the scope of their cultural community. However, there was still a need for them to learn the primary language of their broader receiving community. Only English would permit access to all resources available in their immigrant community, including greater opportunities for socioeconomic advancement beyond what Spanish could provide.

In section 5.1, I discuss the relevance of English to Fidel's home life and his attempts to support his child's education, which he found very challenging. Chavez-Reyes writes, "[M]any children of immigrants come from home situations that necessitate resources and information to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap and access social and economic capital to navigate U.S. schools" (2010, p. 478). Fidel relied on Spanish to engage with his son's school, administrators, and teachers, but this language was only helpful to a point. He expressed a desire to learn English, in part, so he could better support his son when doing his homework. Additionally, the time he had available to devote to assisting his son with his homework was limited after coming home from work. This time restriction to assist school-age children with schooling, combined with limited resources, is common for immigrants with low-paying jobs because they must work much harder than most non-immigrants just to attain the most basic necessities for their families (Rubin et al. 2012, pp. 6-7). The role of time and energy as functional resources and their relationship to constricted agency are discussed later in this chapter.

In section 5.2, I consider the factors behind all four men's language-learning prioritization across the three languages—Tu'un Nda'vi, Spanish, and English—and the conditional relationship between these language-learning priorities. I observed that the men's prioritization of English on the one hand or Tu'un Nda'vi literacy on the other was conditional upon each member's level of Spanish proficiency. Fidel and Emiliano, who had a higher level of Spanish proficiency than the other two men, included Spanish and English as language-learning priorities, but not the development of Tu'un Nda'vi literacy. Conversely, Casimiro and Cornelio, who had a lower level of Spanish proficiency, included Spanish and

the development of Tu'un Nda'vi literacy as language-learning priorities but were not interested in learning English.

In 5.3, the last section of this chapter, I explore the various factors that had an impact on the men's language-learning prioritization, their goals, the implications of these for language development across the three languages, and how the men's agency in setting their priorities was restricted by their personal circumstances. I discuss a discrepancy that Rebekka and I observed between the stated language-learning priorities for the group, as Fidel communicated these to us, compared to our observation of the men's interests and priorities in practice. I argue that this discrepancy is a manifestation of what I term *constricted agency*, whereby language-learning priorities are limited in large part by what I frame as the men's functional resources within their diasporic environment.

Finally, I introduce the concept of sacrifice as a key concept that both reconciles this discrepancy between stated and observed language-learning priorities and serves as a lens to view and understand the connections between constricted agency, the complexity of the men's language-learning needs, and how these are reflected in their language-learning priorities in diaspora.

5.1 English as a language-learning priority

Two members of *el grupo de enfoque* expressed an interest in learning English, noting that they needed it for advancement in their employment: Emiliano and Fidel. They were the only two men in the group who already had a good working level of Spanish proficiency.

5.1.1 Emiliano: English at work

Emiliano, who worked primarily in agriculture during the data collection period, explained to Rebekka and me that he had previously worked as an electrician's assistant, or *ayudante*, for a short time until he was laid off due to the downturn in the economy. In the excerpt below, he explains that, although the majority of people with whom he worked as an electrician's assistant spoke Spanish, those in charge only spoke English. Because of the length of this excerpt, I break it up into three parts. In excerpt 5.1, the conversation focuses on Emiliano's level of English proficiency in general. In excerpt 5.2, he reports having moved outside of agriculture to work for a period of time as an electrician's assistant. And in the last segment of this conversation, excerpt 5.3, he addresses his exposure to English through this employment.

Excerpt 5.1

1 Emiliano: Yo hablo [inglés] bien poquito, ¿edá? Así como preguntar o algo así,

I speak very little, right? Just like asking things or something like that,

2 ya lo puedo entender. Pero, o sea, este, como para platicar con la, así puro inglés,

that I can understand. But, well, um, in speaking with the, like just English,

3 con unos amigo o con alguien que no habla nada de español, entonces ahí es

with some friends or with someone that doesn't speak any Spanish, then that's

4 donde, donde batallo pues.

where, where I struggle then.

5 Miguel: ¿Pero cuando ellos le hablan a usted, usted entiende lo que están diciendo?

But when they speak to you, you understand what they're saying to you?

6 Emiliano: Pues no toda pero nomás lo, los, bueno pues, cuando ello me hablan

Well not all, but only th-, the, well like, when they speak to me

7 no todo pero, sí entiendo unas que otras si me dice que: "está bien" o,

not everything but, I understand one thing or another if they tell me tha:t "it's okay" or,

8 "vete allá" o "trae eso." Es nada más eso pero como entender todo, todo no.

"go over there" or "bring that." Just that but understanding everything, everything no.

9 Miguel: ¿Y cuando platica con ellos, de qué cosas platica usted?

And when you speak to them, what kind of things do you talk about?

10 ¿Qué tipo de cosas, de trabajo, o de,?

What kind of things, about work, or,?

11 Emiliano: Sí, de trabajo.

Yes, about work.

In lines 1 through 4, Emiliano explains that he speaks very limited English. While he could understand English at the basic level of instructions spoken to him, he had trouble speaking English, and he had even more difficulty with more advanced conversation. In lines 2 through 4 he specifically notes that he has difficulty interacting with people who speak no Spanish. Additionally, his English vocabulary was likely limited to terminology used at work, as suggested in lines 23 through 26 in excerpt 5.3 below, where he briefly code-switches into English or uses English loanwords. This suggestion is reinforced in lines 5 through 11 when I ask Emiliano how much English he understands. More specifically, in lines 6 through 8, he clarifies that he does not understand everything, but only a few brief expressions.

In lines 9 through 11 Emiliano describes the types of things he discusses in English and explains that these are mainly work-related. In line 9 I ask him. "¿Y cuando platica con ellos, de qué cosas platica usted?" 'And when you speak to them, what kind of things do you talk about?' However, when I ask him a follow-up question in line 10, I add a leading segment rather than leaving it open-ended: "¿Qué tipo de cosas, de trabajo, o de,?" 'What kind of things, about work, or,?' He simply replies to the leading question without clarifying further: "Si, de trabajo" 'Yes, about work'. Although this topic is not developed further, it seems that it would be difficult for him to carry on a conversation about non-work-related topics.

Up to this point, Emiliano still has not specified what type of work he is referring to or the context of his use of English. In the next segment, in lines 12 through 19, Rebekka and I learn that he previously worked outside of agriculture, as an electrician's assistant.

Excerpt 5.2

12 Miguel: ¿Y que tipo de trabajo hace?

And what kind of work do you do?

13 Emiliano: Ah, (8-second pause) pues donde, donde se ocupaba más inglés

Um, (8-second pause) well where, where there was more need for English

14 es cuando yo andaba en la electricidad.

is when I was in electricity.

15 Miguel: ¿Y de vez en cuando trabaja en la electricidad?

And you work in electricity every once in a while?

16 Emiliano: Sí, de vez en cuando. Últimamente cuando se bajo todo en la construcción,

Yes, every once in a while. Lately, when work started to decrease in construction,

17 entonce pues ya también, me des-, me descansó ahí mi patrón.

then well also, my boss also la- laid me off there.

18 Miguel: ¿Pero piensa volver a trabajar en la electricidad?

But you plan on working again in electricity?

19 Emiliano: S-, sí.

Y-, yes.

After I ask Emiliano what type of work he does in line 12, he explains in lines 13 and 14 that, while working as an electrician he really needed English; this is the first time he mentions this line of work: "pues donde, donde se ocupaba más inglés es cuando yo andaba en la electricidad." 'well where, where there was more need for English is when I was in electricity.' The implication of this statement is that English was not entirely necessary in other aspects of Emiliano's life or the other spaces in which he operated. A related implication is that, given his limited level of English proficiency, he was likely limited to operating in the spaces that his English and Spanish proficiency allowed. In line 15, I ask him how often he worked in electricity: "¿Y de vez en cuando trabaja en la electricidad?" 'And you work in electricity every once in a while?' Despite my having again asked a leading question, here Emiliano elaborates beyond simply restating the question. In lines 16 and 17 he explains that he no longer works as an electrician's assistant because he was laid off when work started drying up. It is expected that those with the lowest level of seniority in a given field will be among the first individuals laid off when work becomes scarce. But Emiliano confirms in line 19, in response to my question in line 18, that he intends to return to that line of work in the future. His restart ("S- sí" 'Y- yes') suggests hesitance in his response, as opposed to a lack of understanding or proficiency.

Unfortunately, I did not ask Emiliano how long he worked as an electrician's assistant. This information would have been helpful to determine how much exposure he had had to English, even if this exposure was limited, as discussed in the next part of the excerpt. In the next segment, in lines 20 through 28, the conversation focuses on Emiliano's use of English in his job.

Excerpt 5.3

[1:34 minutes later in the same conversation]

20 Miguel: ¿Y cuando trabajaba en esto, habían personas que hablaban español también?
And when you worked in that, were there people that spoke Spanish too?

21 Emiliano: ¡Oh sí! Casi la mayoría de todo.
Oh yes! Almost the majority of all.

22 Miguel: ¿Entonces, pero, habían personas que solamente hablaban inglés?
Then, but, were there people that only spoke English?

23 Emiliano: Sí, como le, como lo encargado del proyecto, *yeah*, eso pues como *like*,
Yes, like th-, like the ones in charge of the project, yeah, *it's well* like,

24 no[s] manda este, com-, cuando ha(y) un problema pues a un foco o a un *switch*
they send us, lik(e), when (th)er(e's) a problem well with a light bulb or a switch

25 que no funciona, viene y no[s] dice, "(ah)o(r)a, si puede arreglar est-, este,
that doesn't work, they come and tell us, "(n)ow if you could fix th-, this,

26 este numero y este *union*, en una foco no funciona el *switch* o,
that number or that union, *in that light bulb the* switch *isn't working or,*

27 no hay corriente," algo así. Y pues an-, (5-second pause)

there's no current," something like that. And well an-, (5-second pause)

28 e-, como ello pues son puro ah, no hablan nada de español.

e-, because they are all uh, they don't speak any Spanish.

In lines 20 through 28 we discuss the use of both Spanish and English in Emiliano's work as an electrician's assistant, with lines 22 through 28 focusing on English. In line 20 I ask whether there were people who spoke Spanish in his workplace, and in line 21 he answers expressively that almost everybody did: "¡O sí! Casi la mayoría de todo" 'Oh yes! Almost the majority of all'. As I discussed in Chapter 4 regarding the importance of Spanish for attaining employment in the immigrant community of the men in *el grupo de enfoque*, the fact that the majority of people with whom Emiliano worked as an electrician's assistant spoke Spanish allowed him access to this work. This line of employment would have otherwise been unattainable for him.

In line 22 I ask about the use of English at his job. In Emiliano's response, he elaborates without further probing from me more than he had previously in the entire segment. In line 23 he clarifies that the person or persons in charge spoke English, and in lines 23 through 27 he offers examples of the type of English communication that took place.

In this segment Emiliano also code-switches, as indicated in italics in the Spanish text, using the English words *yeah* and *like* in line 23, *switch* in lines 24 and 26, and *union* with English phonology in line 26. From my personal experience with several Spanish-speaking construction workers in my family, this type of code-switching at work to refer to specialized objects in English when speaking Spanish is common in work sites where Spanish is used. However, it is striking that Emiliano uses the discourse marker switches *yeah* and *like* at the

start of his description in line 23, especially given that he had never code-switched during our previous exchanges in Spanish. It could have been because he was discussing his work space and using the language he would hear and use in the setting he was describing (see Gumperz 1977, pp. 2-3 on metaphorical code-switching). Unlike grammatically integrated code-switching (Zentella 1996), this code-switching is not a sign of English fluency but an indication of Emiliano's contact with English speakers.

In lines 27 through 28, Emiliano clarifies that his English-speaking supervisors at his job did not speak any Spanish: "como ello pues son puro ah, no hablan nada de español" 'because they are all uh, they don't speak any Spanish'. Thus, English was essential to gain access to greater advancement opportunities in this workplace. Moreover, given his self-repair, it appears that the supervisors were not only monolingual English speakers, but also white Americans. I draw this reference because in another part of the conversation discussed in the previous chapter, Emiliano referred to his white classmates when he was in elementary school by saying "eran puros güeros" 'they were all white'. In line 28, it seems as though he is about to use a similar expression to describe his supervisors but instead chooses to say that they didn't speak any Spanish.

For Emiliano, although a minimal level of communication ability in English along with Spanish proficiency was sufficient to gain access to this Spanish-speaking work domain, it would be difficult for him to advance in this industry without a better command of English, which was required for supervisory roles. This illustrates the importance of Spanish proficiency for Tu'un Nda'vi speakers as a bridge to employment beyond agricultural labor as well as the importance of English for access to better employment opportunities.

5.1.2 Fidel: English at work

Throughout the time I worked with *el grupo de enfoque,* the importance of learning English for the workplace was emphasized only by Emiliano and Fidel. The following two excerpts are from the interview conducted with Fidel on February 14, 2010. In excerpt 5.4 Fidel describes the importance of English in enabling him to find better employment that also afforded him—and consequently his family—a better quality of life. In excerpt 5.5, approximately three minutes later in the conversation, he briefly discusses his focus on work-related subjects during English classes.

In excerpt 5.4 below, Fidel illustrates the importance of English for him in his job at the time. Before the excerpt begins, he described his limited ability to communicate with his employer when he started a short-term job that he had found through an employment agency. This employer knew almost no Spanish, and because Fidel knew almost no English, communication was very difficult between the two. As an example of these difficulties, prior to the excerpt below, Fidel described miscommunications with his employer: "El señor me pedía pala y yo llevaba martillo, me pedía metro y pos yo llevaba pico" 'The man would ask me for a shovel and I would bring a hammer, he would ask me for a measuring tape and I would bring him a pick'. In the excerpt below Fidel goes on to note that, after a modest improvement in his English by taking adult English as a second language (ESL) classes through a local community college, he was able to continue with the same employer in landscaping, a much better employment opportunity than working in agriculture. The excerpt begins after Fidel notes that his immediate supervisor in the landscaping job, who spoke a little Spanish, didn't like him because he didn't speak English. However, the owner, or *patrón,* who spoke almost no Spanish at all, liked him because he did good work.

Excerpt 5.4

1 Miguel: O, pero con su poquito español, no era suficiente para comunicarse con él [supervisor].

Oh, but with his small amount of Spanish, it wasn't enough to communicate with him.

2 Fidel: Ajá, pero el que era patrón, casi nada. Entonces es donde dije, "Me voy a la escuela."

Uh huh, but the one who was the boss, almost nothing. That's where I said, "I'm going to school."

3 Y ya empecé a ir al colegio en otros lugares comunitarias y así comencé a ir.

And I started going to college and other community places and so I started going.

4 Y pues, ponle, no hablo inglés bien, pero de todas maneras, ya cuando me dijeron

And, granted, I don't speak English well, but just the same, then when they told

5 una cosa ya, ya lo entiendo, nomás el problema es que no lo puedo pronunciar muy bien.

me something then, then I understand, but the problem is that I can't pronounce it very well.

6 (3-second pause) y es cuando ya, en el trabajo, ya agarré un, un trabajo, entré de

(3-second pause) *and that's when, for work, I got a, a job, I started with*

7 jardinería, entonces ya la fresa la dejé. Dije, "La fresa, da buen dinero, pero no me deja nada bueno aquí.

landscaping, and so I left the strawberry. I said, "The strawberry, it's good money, but it doesn't leave me anything good here.

8 Me acabo, y la fresa no se va a acabar."

I'll waste away, and the strawberry won't ever be done."

9 Miguel: Entonces, la fresa es buen dinero, pero es mucho, mucho trabajo.

Then, the strawberry is good money, but it's a lot, a lot of work.

10 Fidel: Mucho trabajo. Entonces ya entré acá en el *landscaping*, y mi patrón tampoco

A lot of work. Then, that's when I started over here in landscaping, and my boss also

11 no habla español. Puro en inglés y, así, y así me voy agarrando y de todas

doesn't speak Spanish. Just English and, just like that, like that I keep going

12 maneras en mi trabajo.

anyway in my job.

In lines 2, 10, and 11 Fidel notes that his employer, *el patrón,* spoke almost no Spanish, which was not enough for the two men to communicate effectively. Spanish served to provide access to this new employment opportunity, as the employment agency where he found this job—as he noted prior to this excerpt—provided resources in English and Spanish but not Tu'un Nda'vi. However, Spanish was an ineffective bridge for direct communication between Fidel and *el patrón*. While he was able to communicate with his direct supervisor, who spoke some Spanish, Fidel felt it was not enough to maintain his job, so he decided to learn English. In line 2, after noting that his employer in this landscaping job spoke almost no Spanish, Fidel says, "Entonces es donde dije, 'Me voy a la escuela'," 'That's where I said, "I'm going to school".' In line 3, he adds, "Y ya empecé a ir al colegio en otros lugares comunitarias" 'And I started going to college and other community places.' I later confirmed

that here he is referring to adult ESL classes through his local community college and community organizations.

Having briefly described why and how he started to learn English, Fidel describes his present level of English development in lines 4 and 5, conveying the sense that even his limited grasp of English was an improvement. English, for Fidel, represented the opportunity to leave agriculture. In lines 7 through 8 he describes leaving the strawberry fields, which involve much more labor-intensive work than landscaping: "entonces ya la fresa la dejé. Dije, 'la fresa, da buen dinero, pero no me deja nada bueno aquí. Me acabo, y la fresa no se va a acabar'" 'and so I left the strawberry. I said, "The strawberry, it's good money, but it doesn't leave me anything good here. I'll waste away, and the strawberry won't ever be done".' For Fidel, English represented an opportunity for economic advancement and an improvement in his quality of life.

Both Emiliano and Fidel discussed how they used English in the workplace, stating their need for further English development to attain better employment opportunities. These examples show that, beyond meeting their most immediate needs through the use of Spanish, they also needed English to advance socioeconomically. While Spanish first served to meet their most immediate employment needs, and also served as a bridge to communicate with English speakers to a certain degree, its socioeconomic benefits within their communities and work contexts were still limited. Ultimately, the only language that would provide access to most economic resources was English.

Having mentioned that he sought out ESL classes, Fidel went on to discuss how he prioritized his English learning in school. The brief excerpt below, which occurs 1 minute and 50 seconds after excerpt 5.4 above, shows how Fidel prioritized his English learning by

focusing his attention on those aspects of the language that he could apply in his work environment, thus meeting his most immediate communication needs in that context.

Excerpt 5.5

1 Fidel: De la escuela, pues digamos, trato más de, de, de, de buscar nomás las palabras que

Of school, well let's say, I try more to, to, to, to find only the words that

2 se usan en esa área, eh, y eso es lo que estoy tratando, grabar más rápido lo que se pueda.

are used in that area, um, and that is what I'm trying, to record what I can more quickly.

3 Miguel: ¿La terminología en español, digo, en inglés referente al, al trabajo de *landscaping?*

The terminology in Spanish, I mean, in English regarding the, the work of landscaping?

4 Fidel: Mhm.

In line 1, Fidel refers to his ESL classes as "la escuela" 'school,' which he referred to in excerpt 5.2 as "el colegio" 'college'. In lines 1 and 2, he explains that in these classes he focuses 'only' "nomás" on the words that will help him at work. This suggests that Fidel considers work to be his most immediate English-learning need. Furthermore, the next part of his utterance, in which he conveys a sense of urgency, is a reflection of the limited time he has available to devote to learning English in school: "y eso es lo que estoy tratando, grabar más rápido lo que se pueda," 'and that is what I'm trying, to record what I can more quickly." Although less physically demanding than working in the fields picking

strawberries, landscaping is still arduous and low-paying work, which required him to work long hours to be able to meet his basic financial needs. Therefore, any time not devoted to work was precious and costly, a point that was apparent throughout the entire research project. Relatedly, Fingeret describes "practitioners in effective ESL literacy programs" as follows: "Their work naturally focuses on literacy as practices, because their students' immediate needs often have to do with social situations such as work, housing, food, health care, and child care" (Fingeret 1992, p. 6). Consistent with this remark, the implication of the excerpt above is that the most useful English-learning skills are those that Fidel can directly apply in his work environment. However, as I discuss below, Fidel's need for English was not restricted to his work environment but extended to his home life as well.

5.1.3 Fidel: English at home

As important as English was for Fidel's employment and thus for his and his family's financial stability, he also addressed the importance of English in other facets of his life. In excerpt 5.4, which immediately follows excerpt 5.3 above, Fidel, who was married and had a son, connected the relevance of English to his family life, and in particular to the need to support his son in his education, as he had tried to help his nephews years earlier.

Excerpt 5.6

1 Pero es muy importante, también que, me doy cuenta de que no nomás en tu trabajo
But it's very important, also that, I realize that it's not just in your job
2 te pueda servir el inglés, sino que, como a mí, hace como diez años vivía con
that English will help you, but that, like me, something like ten years ago I lived with
3 mi hermana, ella tiene dos niños, y los niños llevaban las tareas, y no lo podían hacer.

my sister, she has two kids, and the kids would bring their homework, and they couldn't do it.

4 Y, me lo enseñaba a mí, y era puro en inglés y no lo hacía, no, no podía ayudarlo.
And, they would show it to me, and it was all in English, and I couldn't do it, I couldn't help.

5 Menos mi hermana, porque ella no sabe ni leer ni escribir el español.
Much less my sister, because she can't even read or write in Spanish.

6 Y así, nomás regresaba(n) los, los, las hojas. Pero ahora, ah, me di cuenta de que
And so, they would only return the, the, the pages. But now, uh, I realized that

7 eso me puse un poquito más a, a, digamos, a, la, la enfocación sobre el inglés
that I started a little bit more to, to, let's say, to, the, the focus on English

8 y, y, ya tengo un niños de ya casi de diez y pues así el comenzó a sus, su, la escuela,
and, and, now I have a boy who's almost ten and well then he started his, his, the school

9 entonce ya llevaba su tarea y todo, entonces, ya, nos poníamos ahí a ayudar a hacer
then he would have his homework and everything, then, we would sit and help to do

10 las tareas también. Sí y, y, nos ayuda con los hijos, y nos ayuda en el trabajo, en las tiendas…
the homework too. Yes, and, and, it helps us with the children, and it helps us with work, and in the stores…

In regards to the relevance of learning English in his personal life, in lines 1 and 2, Fidel says, "Pero es muy importante, también que, me doy cuenta de que no nomás en tu trabajo te pueda servir el inglés" 'But it's very important, also that, I realize that it's not just in your job that English will help you'. This statement implies that that he might not have always felt this

way and that he came to realize the importance of English after the experience he is about to describe. As noted in Chapter 4, Spanish would have satisfied Fidel's immediate needs for employment and access to basic resources within the Santa Maria community. Nevertheless, English was needed to access additional resources. Furthermore, in saying that the language does not only with work, Fidel implies that he sees the need for English beyond the monetary benefits it provides for him and his family. In lines 2 and 3 he addresses the importance he places on education, not just for himself, but for the children in his family, as illustrated when he tried to help his sister's children with their homework. Homework places an additional burden on immigrant parents, who are expected to understand the school curriculum and help their children with it at home, even though many lack the time, educational background, or even the language ability to do so (Torres & Hurtado-Vivas 2011). Furthermore, the assignment of homework presupposes that parents "share or at the very least understand the teacher's normative framework for engaging in and assessing children's learning" (Figueroa 2011, p. 265), which is often not the case.

Additionally, difficulties with homework arise for parents who, like Fidel's sister, do not have literacy skills, as he notes in lines 4 and 5. Despite having some Spanish literacy skills, Fidel explains that, because school assignments were in English, he could not help the children and their homework would remain undone, as he notes in line 6: "Y así, nomás regresaba los, los, las hojas 'And so, they would only return the, the, the pages.' This situation would have had a negative impact on the children's grades and learning, to say the least.

In line 6 through 10 Fidel moves forward in time to describe how after learning English 'a little bit more' he was then able to help his almost-ten-year-old son: "entonce ya llevaba su

tarea y todo, entonces, ya, nos poníamos ahí a ayudar a hacer las tareas también" 'then he would have his homework and everything, then, we would sit and help to do the homework too.' Having struggled to help his sister's children years earlier, after gaining some understanding of English, he was then able to help his own son with his homework to some degree.

In the following excerpt, which occurs 35 seconds after the previous excerpt, Fidel elaborates on the benefits of helping his son with his homework in English. Here, he is no longer speaking in the first person or just about himself. Rather, he generalizes his experience and the benefits that others in his community might gain: specifically, adults may learn English in the process of supporting their children's learning by helping them with their homework.

Excerpt 5.7

1 …ponle que no, no lo hablamos [el inglés] así completa todo, completo así como está,
granted, we don't, don't speak it [English] like that, complete all, complete as it is,

2 pero ya, algo a algo, ya nos ayuda. Y, y miré que sí, las tareas de mi hijo pues,
but it, bit by bit, it helps us. And, and I saw that yes, my son's homework well,

3 no, no lo quiero dejar ni uno en blanco. Eh, ya tratamos pues esto y esto, ya agarramos
I don't, don't want to leave any blank. Um, we now try this and this, now we use,

4 diccionario, ahora ya que agarramos computadora pues, sí no señor, ya [le] entramos ahí.
a dictionary, now we use a computer then, yes no sir, we're jumping in there.

5 Entonces ya, o sea, hay muchas ventajas. Ah, aprendemos nosotros también, y
And now then, there are many advantages. Um, we learn too, and

6 aprenden los niños eh, ponle que no, no aprenden ellos como uno quiere pero de todas

maneras

the children learn um, granted they don't, don't learn how we would like but even so

7 está uno al empuje de, de, de que ellos hagan sus trabajos o sus ejercicios de la escuela,

one pushes on to, to, to have them do their work or their school exercises

8 es buenísimo eso. En cuenta a eso que sí, sí nos ha ayudado [el inglés] bastante.

that's very good. In regards to that yes, yes it [English] has helped us plenty.

In lines 1 through 2, Fidel explains that even a little English has been helpful to him: "ponle que no, no lo hablamos [el inglés] así completa todo, completo así como está, pero ya, algo a algo, ya nos ayuda" 'granted, we don't, don't speak it [English] like that, complete all, complete as it is, but it, bit by bit, it helps us.' Here, Fidel uses the first-person plural. In doing so, he generalizes his personal experience to those members of his community who, like him, might have started learning or at least picking up some English, enough to attempt to help their children with their homework. By contrast, in lines 2 through 3, he speaks about his own experience in the first-person singular: "Y, y miré que sí, las tareas de mi hijo pues, no, no lo quiero dejar ni uno en blanco" 'And, and I saw that yes, my son's homework well, I don't, don't want to leave any blank.' As in the previous excerpt, this sentence shows the importance Fidel places on his son's education by demonstrating that he takes personal responsibility for making sure that his son does not go to school with unfinished work.

In the next segment, in lines 3 through 4, Fidel again speaks in the first-person plural to discuss the tools that he and his son use when working on his son's homework. He mentions using both a dictionary and a computer and exhibits a bit of pride in doing so by adding emphasis with the expression, "si señor" 'yes sir' in line 4. In line 5, he again switches to the rhetorical first-person plural, generalizing his experience to that of others in his community

when speaking about the advantages of helping children with homework. Although in lines 6 through 8 Fidel expresses regret for the fact that parents can only help their children so much, he also expresses determination in that, despite parents' limited ability to help their children with homework, they know that they must still try and carry on.

As in previous instances throughout the study, in this excerpt Fidel shows that he values the educational system in general and that he sees homework and being able to help with it as a 'very good' thing. He also shows his willingness to work within whatever parameters are placed before him, despite his limited ability to meet the needs set by those parameters. In this sense, for Fidel, the practice of assisting with homework is successful in the sense noted by Figueroa: "Homework completion is a recurrent educational activity during which family members both acquire and impart a set of normative expectations about what it means to be a successful student" (2011, p. 264). Despite his limitations with English and the difficulties he experienced in helping his son with his homework, Fidel was very committed to the academic success of his own child and other children in his community and saw homework assignments as an opportunity both to help his son with his education and to learn English in the process: "aprendemos nosotros también, y aprenden los niños" 'we learn too, and the children learn' (lines 5-6).

Fidel and Emiliano both expressed an interest in learning English throughout the study because of the relevance of the language in the lives of these two men. As shown above, Emiliano was exposed to English at work, where people in the highest positions were monolingual English speakers. This implied that Emiliano required at least a functional level of English in order to move up in that work environment. Fidel, meanwhile, explicitly noted that he pursued learning English as a direct result of his communication difficulties with his

current employer, a monolingual English speaker. Additionally, he addressed the relevance of English to his personal life, in helping his son with his homework and supporting his education, despite his own limited grasp of English at the time.

However, neither Fidel nor Emiliano arrived at English learning directly. They first developed a certain level of Spanish proficiency before progressing to English. By contrast, Casimiro and Cornelio, who did not yet have a basic or functional level of Spanish proficiency, expressed no interest in learning English. As I discuss in detail in the next section, Spanish proficiency has a significant role as a bridge to English learning and is a key factor for understanding the language-learning prioritization dynamics for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* within their diasporic contexts.

5.2 Language learning and literacy priorities

The original purpose of creating *el grupo de enfoque* was to support the development of Spanish language and literacy skills for the participants, but as noted in Chapter 3, the focus soon expanded to include exploring language concepts in both Tu'un Nda'vi and English. In this section I discuss how the men in the group established their language priorities by considering each member's level of Spanish proficiency and its relationship to how they prioritized their language-learning needs across the three languages. However, the men's individually stated language priorities did not entirely match up with either Fidel's expressed priorities for language exploration for the entire group or with my observations regarding his own interests.

In Chapter 3, I discussed the second group meeting on October 18, 2009, when we discussed directions from our meeting location to a local store exploring Spanish language

concepts, some of the men observed that they did not know certain words in Tu'un Nda'vi. After a lengthy discussion in Tu'un Nda'vi, where Casimiro explained the Tu'un Nda'vi equivalents of *east* and *west* to the other men, we discussed adding the exploration of Tu'un Nda'vi language concepts to the group's agenda alongside English and Spanish. However, after two additional meetings where we discussed topics related to the three languages, Fidel expressed to me in a phone conversation on November 11, 2009 that henceforth the group should focus exclusively on Spanish. He explained that, despite the need to explore Tu'un Nda'vi and English, the men had a greater need for Spanish for their work; he later emphasized the need to focus on Spanish for the same reason at least once more, in a meeting on January 23, 2010.

However, in our very next meeting on November 15, where he was the only one of the men present, Fidel brought several books in a variety of Tu'un Nda'vi similar to his own and led a discussion on Tu'un Nda'vi language concepts with Rebekka and me. This meeting, which I discuss further later in this chapter, illustrates the disparity between Fidel's observed and stated language goals. This disparity ultimately led to a meeting where we directly asked each of the members to state their individual language-learning priorities. On December 5, 2009, realizing that we had not asked the men to explicitly state their language-learning priorities, Rebekka and I asked if they could let us know their interest in exploring each of the three languages: Spanish, Tu'un Nda'vi, and English. In the following section, I briefly relate each man's language-learning priorities and analyze our discussion with Cornelio in detail to illustrate the conflict between members expressed interest in developing Tu'un Nda'vi literacy and discussing this within the group.

Fidel, with the strongest command of Spanish, prioritized Spanish literacy and learning English, noting a specific interest in learning grammar in both languages. Having previously taken formal ESL courses at the local community college, he noted at different points throughout the data collection period that he felt that learning grammar was necessary for him to develop his Spanish literacy skills as well as to learn English. Moreover, despite having led the discussion of Tu'un Nda'vi language concepts with Rebekka and me in the previous meeting on November 15, 2009, he did not list Tu'un Nda'vi as a language priority, noting his concern about the time it would take, although he acknowledged interest in it later in the conversation. As a community leader with significant administrative responsibilities, Fidel viewed a higher level of Spanish literacy as very useful in the diasporic contexts I discussed in Chapter 4.

Emiliano also had a good command of Spanish and was primarily interested in exploring English and Spanish literacy; when asked about his interest in exploring each of the three languages, he said, "Español e inglés poquito más" 'Spanish and English a little more.' As he would later discuss in a meeting on January 10, 2010, despite having had some K-12 schooling in the U.S., he could not communicate very well in English, noting that he could not carry on a conversation in English either at work or in personal settings and that his primary communication at work was in Spanish. He also expressed some interest in Tu'un Nda'vi as a learning priority, but not as much as English and Spanish

Cornelio's Spanish language skills were very basic, and he had difficulty expressing himself beyond a few words. He said he was interested both in learning Spanish and in Tu'un Nda'vi literacy. However, he prioritized Spanish language and literacy over developing Tu'un Nda'vi literacy, and excluded learning English completely. As discussed previously, in

our meeting on October 22, 2009, one of his reasons for wanting to learn Spanish was so he could communicate directly with medical providers, without the need to wait long hours for a Tu'un Nda'vi-English translator to become available.

Of the four men, Casimiro was the least fluent in Spanish. He prioritized learning Spanish and developing Tu'un Nda'vi literacy equally and, like Cornelio, excluded learning English completely. His primary interest, as he would later relate through Emiliano in a meeting on January 10, 2010, was to be able to communicate directly with supervisors at work who spoke Spanish. Both Casimiro and Cornelio, who worked in agriculture, were able to communicate with other Tu'un Nda'vi speakers, but the great majority of agricultural workers spoke Spanish and did not speak Tu'un Nda'vi. Therefore, learning Spanish would allow Casimiro and Cornelio to communicate directly with other workers and supervisors without the need for a Tu'un Nda'vi-Spanish speaker to serve as an intermediary.

Table 5.1 summarizes each group member's relative level of Spanish proficiency as well as their interest in developing their Spanish language skills, their interest in learning English, and whether they listed Tu'un Nda'vi literacy as a learning priority. Their interest in each language is noted with either Y or N for *yes* or *no*.

Table 5.1: Relative level of Spanish proficiency and language-learning priorities

Group Member	**Spanish Proficiency**	**Language and Literacy Learning Priorities**		
		Spanish	**English**	**Tu'un Nda'vi**
Fidel	Moderate to high	Y	Y	N
Emiliano	Moderate	Y	Y	N
Cornelio	Low	Y	N	Y
Casimiro	Lowest	Y	N	Y

The following excerpt is from the conversation with Cornelio where he related his learning priorities within the group. While he tended to communicate with Rebekka and me

indirectly, relying primarily on Fidel or secondarily on Emiliano to interpret for us between Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish, this is one of several instances where he communicated with us directly in Spanish. This excerpt is particularly significant because it illustrates the disparity between the stated needs for the group as communicated to us by Fidel and the individual interests of the men in the group. In this excerpt, I ask Cornelio about his own language priorities.

Excerpt 5.8

1 Miguel: ¿Usted qué quisiera explorar más, examinar más? ¿Qué es lo que le gustaría más?

What would you like to explore more, examine more? What would you like more?

2 Cornelio: Yo pienso que (inaudible) más español.

I think that (inaudible) more Spanish.

3 Miguel: ¿Y el inglés no?

And not English?

4 Cornelio: No: .

No: .

5 Miguel: ¿No?

No?

6 Cornelio: No.

No.

7 Miguel: ¿Y el mixteco: el, el aprender a escribirlo? ¿Le, le intentaría a eso, o no?

And Mixteco: the, the learning to read it? Would, would you try that, or no?

8 Cornelio: (5-second pause) (chuckle) Más es mejor que va a ser los dos.

(5-second pause) (chuckle) More it's better that it will be both.

9 Miguel: ¿Mande usted?

Pardon me?/Come again?

10 Cornelio: Nomás que: no, no puedo: no puedo escribir en el mixteco pues.

It's just tha:t I, I ca:n't well I can't write in Mixteco then.

11 Miguel: ¿Le gustaría a ap-, a aprender? O—

You would like to lear-, to learn? O—

12 Cornelio: Mhm, sí.

Mhm, yes.

13 Miguel: ¿Sí le gustaría?

You would like that?

14 Cornelio: Sí. Los dos son mejor.

Yes. The two are better.

15 Miguel: ¿Los dos?

The two?

16 Cornelio: Mhm.

Mhm.

17 Miguel: ¿Y le gustaría, si los pusiéramos igual, usted estaría más interesado en el

And would you like, if we placed them the same, would you be more interested in

18 español o más interesado en el Mixteco? ¿Cuál de los dos, le interesaría

Spanish or more interested in Mixteco? Which of the two, would you be interested

19 aprender más? ¿O en que nos enfocáramos un poco más?

in learning more? Or that we should focus on more?

20 Cornelio: Mm: yo quiero: español.

Mm: I wa:nt Spanish.

21 Miguel: Español más.

Spanish more.

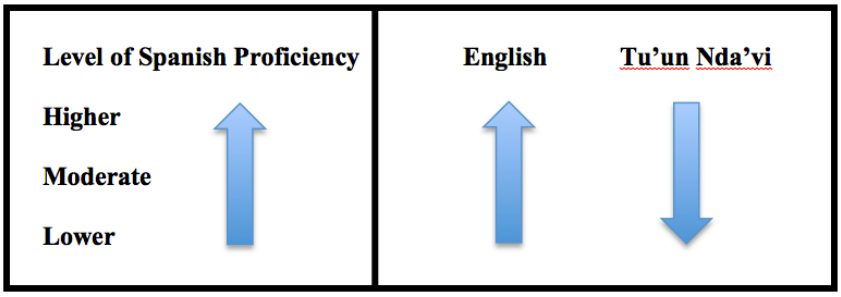
In line 1, I ask Cornelio about his language learning priorities. As noted previously, while Fidel had, up to this point, spoken on behalf of the group when stating what the priorities of the group should be, this meeting was the first time I specifically asked each member about their individual learning priorities. In line 2, Cornelio states his interest in Spanish, then, in lines 3 through 6, he clarifies that he is not interested in English. In line 7, I ask whether he would be interested in learning to write in Tu'un Nda'vi "Mixteco". Given that Fidel had already stated he did not want to explore Tu'un Nda'vi literacy, and Emiliano had indicated only a slight interest, in combination with Fidel's statements that we should focus exclusively on Spanish within the group, I expected that Cornelio would reject a focus on Tu'un Nda'vi as well. However, in line 8, after a 5-second pause and a chuckle, he states that he would be interested in both Mixteco literacy and Spanish. He may have chuckled at this point because he knew this to be a departure from the stated priorities of the other group, which Fidel had stated in the presence of the other group members at various times. Or perhaps he chuckled because he only realized his own interest in Tu'un Nda'vi literacy for the first time at that moment, or even the possibility of writing in his own language. Regardless of the reason for Cornelio's laughter, his response marked a definite turning point, in that this was the first time any of the members stated a clear interest in exploring Tu'un Nda'vi, although they had implied their interest through previous interactions. My

surprise in hearing Cornelio's answer is evident in lines 9 through 16 as I ask several clarifying questions.

In lines 17 through 19, I continue to ask Cornelio how he would prioritize his language learning interests: "¿Y le gustaría, si los pusiéramos igual, usted estaría más interesado en el español o más interesado en el Mixteco? ¿Cuál de los dos, le interesaría aprender más? ¿O en que nos enfocáramos un poco más?" 'And would you like, if we placed them the same, would you be more interested in Spanish or more interested in Mixteco? Which of the two, would you be interested in learning more? Or that we should focus on more?' Although I ask at the start of the question whether he would prioritize his interest in both languages equally, the remainder of my question may have come across as leading, forcing him to pick one over the other. Regardless, it is important to note that, despite expressing his interest in both Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish, in his answer in line 20, Cornelio prioritizes Spanish over Tu'un Nda'vi and excludes English entirely.

When the men's stated learning priorities across the three languages are compared, a pattern emerges: there is a conditional relationship between an individual's level of Spanish proficiency and his interest in either learning English or exploring Tu'un Nda'vi literacy. More specifically, there is a direct relationship between level of Spanish proficiency and interest in learning English, and an inverse relationship between level of Spanish proficiency and interest in exploring Tu'un Nda'vi literacy, as indicated in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1: Spanish proficiency in relation to English or Tu'un Nda'vi prioritization



Of the four men, Fidel, with the highest level of Spanish proficiency, stated a clear interest in learning English as well as developing Spanish literacy and expressed the least interest in Tu'un Nda'vi literacy. Emiliano, who was the second most fluent Spanish speaker of the four, also expressed a clear interest in expanding his English literacy skills. He expressed some interest in Tu'un Nda'vi but stated a clear priority of both Spanish literacy and English language development over Tu'un Nda'vi. Cornelio, who spoke very little Spanish within the group and mostly relied on Fidel and Emiliano to interpret for him between Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish, expressed no interest in English at all and expressed an interest in learning Spanish and Tu'un Nda'vi literacy, but prioritized the former over the latter. And Casimiro, who spoke no Spanish within the group, with the exception of an occasional word, equally prioritized learning Spanish and developing Tu'un Nda'vi literacy skills, showing the greatest interest in Tu'un Nda'vi literacy of the four men in their statements of their language-learning priorities. Similar to Cornelio, Casimiro expressed no interest in learning English.

This relationship suggests that, in the specific diasporic context of the men in *el grupo de enfoque*, learning English became a priority only after their more basic and immediate need to develop a sufficient level of Spanish proficiency had been met. Cornelio and Casimiro had not yet attained a sufficient level of Spanish proficiency to meet their most immediate language needs, and therefore they had no interest in learning English at that point. I propose that the conditional relationship between Spanish and the men's language-learning priorities was a result of their socioeconomic circumstances combined with the heavy restrictions on the time and energy they had available to meet their most basic and immediate language needs.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, the men in *el grupo de enfoque,* as well as others in their diasporic community with a certain level of Spanish proficiency, even those without literacy, had the ability to meet an array of basic communication needs. Among these were communication at work and in their local community as well as access to community education and health resources available through Spanish speakers in their community, either as direct service providers or through English-to-Spanish interpreters. Additionally, the greater number of Spanish speakers than English speakers in their own language community, and their greater overall exposure to this language as opposed to English, made Spanish a more accessible language for the men to learn. This greater accessibility is particularly important given the significant restrictions on their time because of their intense and long hours at work. The greater accessibility of Spanish over English for Cornelio and Casimiro, in particular, meant that they could devote less time and energy to learning Spanish than the time it would take to learn English. Furthermore, spending their limited time attaining at least a certain level of Spanish proficiency over English was more directly relevant to their circumstances, given that English was not spoken to any significant degree, if at all, in their workplaces.

Having asked the men in the group directly to state their individual language priorities gave Rebekka and me a better understanding of their individual interests. However, Fidel's statements in particular conflicted with some of our observations throughout the data collection period and with our conversations with him about what the focus of the group should be. In the meeting on December 5, 2009, Fidel expressed a clear interest in learning English and did not want to explore Tu'un Nda'vi within the group. Furthermore, he suggested at different times before and after this meeting that we should focus strictly on

Spanish within the group, not English or Tu'un Nda'vi. And yet, at different times when Tu'un Nda'vi topics came up during the group meetings, he was very engaged, bringing up Tu'un Nda'vi concepts himself as much as the other men in the group.

Why did Fidel list English and Spanish as his learning priorities on December 5, 2009, despite having led a discussion with Rebekka and me exclusively about Tu'un Nda'vi during the preceding meeting? Why did he state before and after the December 5, 2009 meeting that the group should focus exclusively on Spanish despite his and Emiliano's interest in English and Casimiro and Cornelio's interest in Tu'un Nda'vi? Essentially, what are the reasons for what appears to be a conflict between the stated and observed language priorities and between the individual men's priorities and those of the group as communicated to Rebekka and me by Fidel throughout the course of *el grupo de enfoque*? In the following section, I discuss how examining the restrictions that the men faced across multiple settings or domains resolves the discrepancy between their stated and observed language-learning needs and priorities.

5.3 Sacrifice and constricted agency

Using the framework of individual agency, I propose that the apparent discrepancy or conflict between stated and observed language-learning priorities is a manifestation of constricted agency and that this conflict can be reconciled with the added introduction of the concept of sacrifice. Both constricted agency and sacrifice are key components for understanding language-learning prioritization for the men of *el grupo de enfoque*. The concept of sacrifice in constricted agency provides a lens for understanding the relationship

between the men's allocation of scarce resources and their language-learning prioritization in meeting their most basic needs in diaspora.

5.3.1 Individual versus structural agency

I conceptualize constricted agency as a form of human agency (Emirbayer & Mische 1998, p. 970)—more specifically, individual agency (cf. Kabeer 1999, p. 438, on 'sense of agency' and 'power to'; Hitlin and Elder 2007, pp. 181-183, on 'life-course agency'; Hitlin and Long 2009, pp. 140-146). Individual agency contrasts with structural agency primarily in the way that choices are either enabled or restricted. In structural agency, choices are governed by the rules of a given structural domain and an agent's positionality within that domain. Meanwhile, in individual agency, the capacity for an agent to make choices within individual or personal-life domains is either enabled or constricted by the functional resources they possess. Structural agency is insufficient to describe the types of dynamics operating at an individual level in the language-learning prioritization of the men in *el grupo de enfoque*. The basis of structural agency is the level of control or power that an agent has over the rules of a given domain, their level of authority, or how much power they exert over others. Dietz and Burns state, "*[t]here can be no agency without power.* The greater the influence an actor has on either the behavior of others or the content of the culture, the greater their agency" (1992, p. 191, original emphasis). This is what Kabeer refers to as "power over": "the capacity of an actor to override the agency of others" (1999, p. 438). On the other hand, as I discuss in the analysis below, the men's decision-making process was influenced by individual agency, which is more closely related to what Kabeer describes as "power to" or "people's capacity to define their own life choices and to pursue their own

goals" (1999, p. 438). Similarly, Hitlin and Elder define life-course agency, which can be framed as individual agency, as follows: "the ability of individuals to make choices at turning points in the life course" (2007, p. 183); they note that this form of agency "involves individual orientations toward potential self-capacities for constructing and engaging in successful long-term plans" (p. 184). Moreover, in their discussion of individual agency, Hitlin and Long highlight "the individual's sense of possessing an ability to influence their lives, that they are not passive victims of circumstance" (2009, p. 142).

I submit that the capacity of an individual to make their own life choices within a variety of settings or domains is neither unlimited within domains of structural agency, nor unrestricted within domains of individual agency. In the next section, I introduce the concept of *functional resources* as the factor that either enables or constricts individual agency.

5.3.2 Functional resources and individual agency

I discuss three types of functional resources that enable individual agency: financial resources, practical language resources (that is, the basic ability to communicate in a language that provides access to employment and additional financial resources), and educational resources (prior schooling and independent learning), which serve as a foundation for future learning. Furthermore, the time and energy a person has at their disposal can be framed as functional resources and are crucial for understanding the language-learning prioritization for the men of *el grupo de enfoque*.

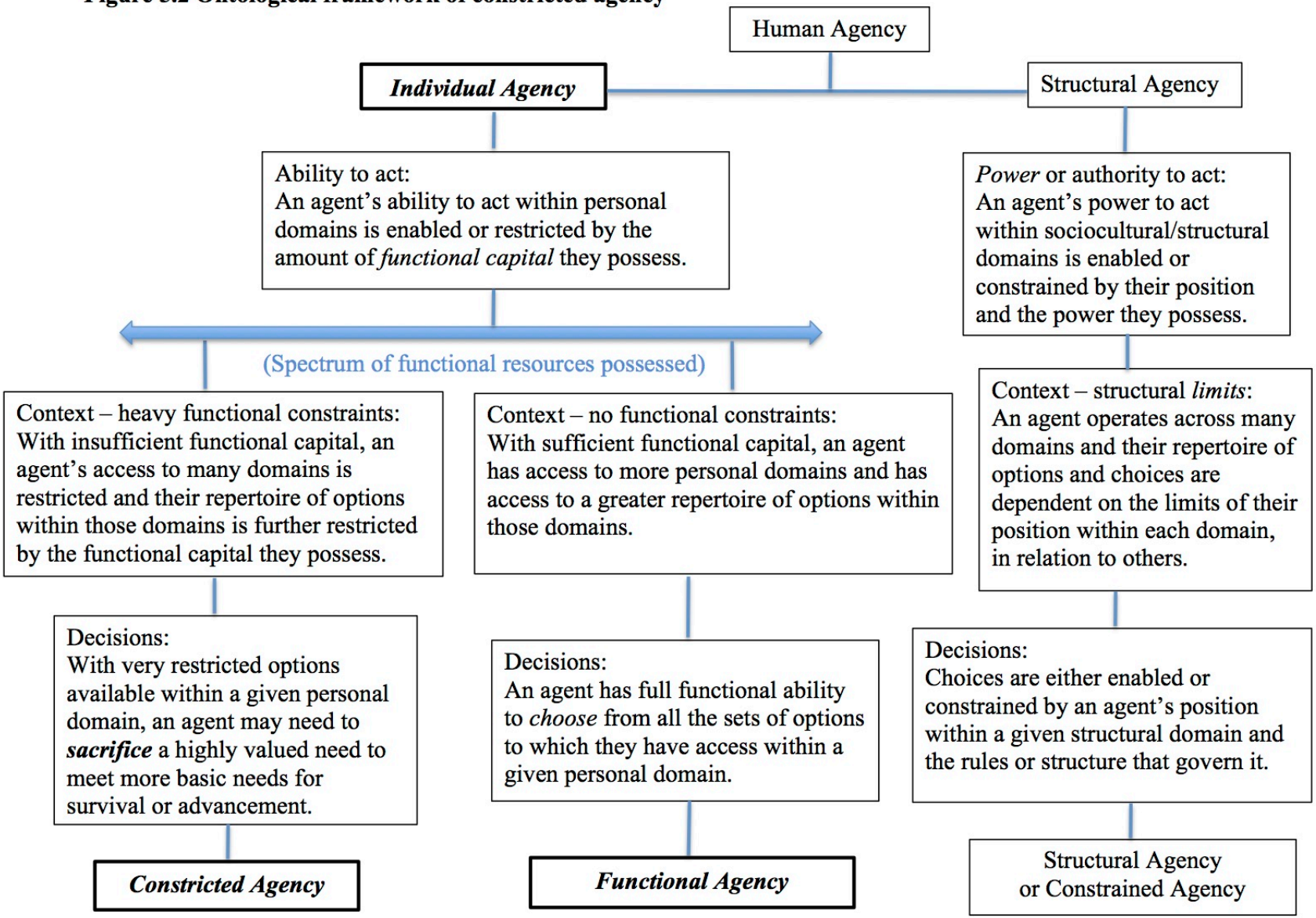
My view of the effect of functional resources on an individual's capacity to choose echoes Kabeer's discussion of the impact of material resources on agency, which, in addition to human and social resources, "serve to enhance the ability to exercise choice" (1999, p.

437). In the case of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, I propose that severe restrictions in their functional resources significantly constricted their agency, which, in turn, affected their language-learning prioritization. In addressing individuals "sense of agency", Kabeer, quoting Sen (1985), writes, "[r]esources and agency together constitute…capabilities: the potential that people have for living the lives they want" (1999, p. 438). This statement serves to highlight an important point about constricted agency within the context of this study: language learning is not an end goal in and of itself—as can often be the case when people learn a prestige language. Instead, it is the attainment of a tool, an additional functional resource that serves to connect the agent with additional resources to aid them in achieving something better for themselves, to be able to lead the lives they want. This, in the end, is the ultimate "meaning, motivation and purpose" (Kabeer 1999, p. 438) embodied in individual agency.

5.3.3 An ontological framework of constricted agency

Figure 5.2 below contrasts individual agency with structural agency at three levels: 1) an agent's ability to take action, 2) the contexts or factors that provide access to certain domains and to a repertoire of options from which to choose, and 3) how agentive decisions are governed under individual versus structural agency. Under individual agency, I illustrate how the spectrum of functional resources that a person possesses can result in either constricted or functional agency.

Figure 5.2 Ontological framework of constricted agency



The first level of Figure 5.2 contrasts an agent's general ability to act under individual versus structural agency. Under individual agency, an agent's ability to act is determined by the functional resources they possess. In contrast, under structural agency, an agent's ability to act is limited by the rules and structure of a given domain. Within individual agency, functional resources exert differential effects, thus placing agents at opposite ends of a hypothetical spectrum. At one end of the spectrum is what I term *constricted agency*, whereby a person's agency is constricted by the extremely scarce functional resources they possess. At the opposite end of the spectrum is functional agency, which is relatively unconstricted when an agent has access to a wealth of functional resources.

The second level of the figure refers to the access that an agent has to certain domains and the repertoire of options available to the agent within those domains. Under constricted agency, severe restrictions in the functional resources possessed by an agent make certain domains inaccessible and also limit the repertoire of available options from which to choose. Conversely, a person whose individual agency is relatively unconstricted has ample functional resources at their disposal and greater access to various domains along with a greater repertoire of available options. By contrast, within structural agency, the repertoire of available options within a given structural domain depends on the agent's position within that domain in relation to others and the level of authority they possess, which, in a sense, demarcates or even severely constrains their operational limits.

The third level focuses on how an agent's decision-making process is impacted by the functional resources they possess. Under constricted agency, with very restricted functional resources, an agent is not free to choose from an already restricted set of available options. In some cases they must sacrifice one highly valued option for another that meets a more basic

and urgent need. Kabeer refers to these as "first-order choices", which she frames as critical, particularly for people living in poverty (1999, p. 437). However, at the opposite end of the spectrum, with a wealth of functional resources and relatively unrestricted individual agency, an agent is not concerned with their ability to meet either basic needs or higher-level needs, allowing them the freedom to choose from a greater repertoire of available choices. Kabeer refers to these as "second-order choices", which are not critical for survival, but nevertheless meaningful and significant to a person's quality of life (1999, p. 437).

At opposite ends of the spectrum the decision-making process for each agent in meeting their needs looks very different: here sacrifice is to constricted agency as choice is to functional agency. By contrast, under structural agency, an agent's decision-making process is influenced by their position within a hierarchy as well as by the power they hold within the structure of a given domain: the greater their power or position, the fewer the barriers to limit their choices or decision-making process. Conversely, the lower their position or power, the more constrained their agency.

Having introduced the concepts of constricted agency and sacrifice under individual agency as well as clarifying their ontological position under the broader concept of human agency, in the discussion below I discuss how this model helps explain the language-learning prioritization of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*.

5.3.4 Constricted agency in context: Reconciling conflict

I discuss constricted agency in reference to the men in *el grupo de enfoque* within the context of second and third language acquisition and the men's language-learning prioritization across Tu'un Nda'vi, Spanish, and English. Additionally, with regard to

sacrifice, I focus on the men's interest in learning to write their variety of Tu'un Nda'vi and the factors that affected their prioritization of this language goal in comparison to learning Spanish and English. I start with the most striking example of the discrepancy between stated and observed language-learning priorities recorded throughout the data collection period by describing two previous interactions with Fidel through the lens of constricted agency.

As noted above, on November 11, 2009, I called Fidel so we could discuss the logistics of our next meeting. However, Fidel communicated to me during that phone conversation that the group should focus strictly on Spanish. He explained that, rather than exploring language concepts across the three languages, it was crucial for the community to learn Spanish because it was essential for their work and economic advancement. I relayed this to Rebekka and we both understood very well the reasons behind this decision; Fidel's rationale seemed clear and we were prepared to immediately shift the focus of the group completely back to Spanish. However, when we arrived at the November 15, 2009 meeting, only Fidel was present because the other men had other commitments. He coordinated attendance within the group and tended to know whether the other men would be present for a meeting and would often explain the reasons for their absence or if they would be late. Although I do not know if he knew he would be the only one in attendance in advance of the meeting, as we did not record that meeting and I did not address this in my fieldnotes, I would expect this was the case based on prior experience. As described above, Rebekka and I were surprised to find that he had brought several books in a Tu'un Nda'vi variety from Guerrero that was close to, but differed from, his own variety of the language. During the entire meeting, he led the discussion, focusing entirely on Tu'un Nda'vi literacy topics, ranging from words that differed between his language variety and others to the Tu'un Nda'vi number system.

Rebekka and I couldn't understand what had caused such a drastic change in Fidel's language-learning priorities between our phone conversation a few days earlier and the November 15 meeting. We interpreted this and other incongruences throughout the data collection period as mixed messages that we could not reconcile during the entire course of the meetings with *el grupo de enfoque*. This example was emblematic of many throughout the data collection period where stated and observed language priorities were seemingly in conflict.

I propose, however, that what Rebekka and I originally interpreted as a conflict between stated and observed language-learning priorities is reconciled when viewing the decision to pursue one direction over another as driven not necessarily by choice, but by sacrifice. *Choice*, enabled by sufficient levels of functional resources, implies there are feasible options available from which to choose, as well as the freedom to make any choice from a repertoire of available choices and within a given domain or set of domains available to an agent. *Sacrifice*, however, implies that there are fewer forms of functional resources available to an agent and, consequently, decisions are restricted in part by the availability of significantly fewer options. When an agent is compelled to choose to meet their most essential and basic needs under these circumstances, other highly valued and personal needs may remain unmet or may be sacrificed: what results is constricted agency. In Fidel's case, when considering his seemingly contradictory decisions—first to exclude Tu'un Nda'vi for a greater focus on Spanish and then to explore Tu'un Nda'vi—based on my later analysis I eventually realized that he was not simply changing his mind: choosing to pursue strictly Spanish in one instance, then choosing to discuss only Tu'un Nda'vi in another. Instead, Fidel's desire to continue to explore his own language was sacrificed in favor of pursuing Spanish, which, in

addition to improving his ability to serve in his leadership position, held the promise of greater access to opportunities for the men in *el grupo de enfoque* and for his community.

It is important to note both that this meeting with Fidel on November 15 was the only meeting where Tu'un Nda'vi language concepts were discussed exclusively and that no other members of the group were present at the time. Considering how much Fidel took into account the needs of the other men, it seems that without them present he was free to pursue his personal interests. Otherwise, he made efforts to focus on the needs of the other men in the group. As the most fluent Spanish speaker among the men of *el grupo de enfoque,* Fidel had already experienced some of the benefits that a greater proficiency in Spanish could afford in his own work life, having attained better employment and being able to communicate in Spanish in other settings, such as in dealing with teachers and school administrators regarding his son's education. He made it clear in both individual and group meetings that the other men and his community in general needed Spanish. Again, this was the purpose of creating *el grupo de enfoque* in the first place. Without the other men present, however, Fidel did not need to worry about their need to learn Spanish, so he was free to explore Tu'un Nda'vi language concepts with Rebekka and me without sacrificing the time of the other men within the group in doing so.

During the course of the data collection period, Rebekka and I were keenly aware that the men's time was a precious commodity. At the start of another meeting, on January 23, 2010, while discussing logistics, Fidel noted, "cuando llueve es cuando descanso y cuando no llueve es cuando trabajo" 'when it rains is when I rest and when it doesn't rain is when I work'. Much of the men's time was devoted to making a living in physically demanding jobs. As noted previously, Fidel had gained employment in a better sector, landscaping, in

large part because his proficiency in Spanish gave him access to that opportunity. In a very real sense, with greater Spanish proficiency and better employment, he had attained greater functional resources than the other men in the group, who still worked in agriculture, which was even more physically demanding and required longer hours of work for greater earnings, although both lines of work paid very little. Given the significant amount of time and energy the men spent to attain basic resources, those things that provided the greatest benefits to them, their family, and their community were given highest priority. And, as noted previously, Spanish was the language that provided the greatest benefit to the men of *el grupo de enfoque* across a variety of domains.

5.3.5 Language learning prioritization and constricted agency

Having discussed the different language needs for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their diasporic language community, their stated and observed language priorities, and my ontological framework of constricted agency, in this section I discuss the intersection of these issues along the three levels of constricted agency that I have identified: 1) the ability to act or the options available to an agent based on the functional resources they possess, 2) the domains to which functional resources provide entry to an agent, and 3) sacrifice, as an alternative to choice, under constricted agency. Additionally, I use Kabeer's concept of first-order/second-order needs concept to frame language-learning prioritization for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* as a conditional reasoning sequence through the lens of constricted agency. The men prioritized their first-order needs, those most critical for survival, while sacrificing their second-order needs, which, while significant and meaningful in their contribution

toward their quality of life, were not necessarily critical for survival (Kabeer 1999, p. 437). Table 5.2 below illustrates these combined dimensions.

Table 5.2 Language-learning prioritization under constricted agency

	1st-order need critical	1st-order need less critical	2nd-order need sacrificed	Not an option
Fidel	Spanish	English	Tu'un Nda'vi	N/A
Emiliano	Spanish	English	Tu'un Nda'vi	N/A
Cornelio	Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish	N/A	N/A	English
Casimiro	Tu'un Nda'vi and Spanish	N/A	N/A	English

Given the usefulness of Spanish and the number of needs it satisfied for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their Tu'un Nda'vi-speaking diasporic community, as discussed in Chapter 4, I frame Spanish as a first-order language need within this contexts. When this most basic language need was satisfied, Spanish opened access to work domains that would not have been possible through Tu'un Nda'vi alone. Fidel was able to find his job in landscaping through a community service agency that used Spanish to engage with the community. However, he found it necessary to learn English as well in order to be able to operate in and retain that job, and even basic phrases in English, in combination with the little Spanish spoken by his supervisors, enabled him to do that. For Emiliano, Spanish allowed him to find work, at least temporarily, as an electrician's assistant, where his understanding of basic terms in English allowed him to function and he also reported developing greater English proficiency as a means to operate effectively in this job. Therefore, for both Fidel and Emiliano I frame English as a first-order need, but conditional or subordinate to their attainment of Spanish as a functional language resource. The two men had already attained a practical or functional level of Spanish proficiency, which allowed them to meet their most important communication needs in a variety of diasporic settings,

and only then were they in a position to move on to English learning, the next critical language for socioeconomic advancement. Nevertheless, the two men could be seen to exhibit constricted agency with regard to developing Tu'un Nda'vi literacy. That is, for both men, as important as Tu'un Nda'vi was for them, which was evidenced by their engagement during Tu'un Nda'vi discussion topics, their personal yearning to develop Tu'un Nda'vi literacy was sacrificed as a second-order language need—not any less valuable, but not critical for survival in their diasporic settings. English proficiency, then, met the next most critical language need in their diasporic settings after Spanish. In terms of the first-order/second-order needs dichotomy, Tu'un Nda'vi, did not satisfy an immediate critical need for communication in their diasporic work settings, since both Emiliano and Fidel could speak either Tu'un Nda'vi, or Spanish at work as well as in the other diasporic settings described in Chapter 4.

However, for Casimiro and Cornelio, as monolingual speakers of Tu'un Nda'vi, this language remained critical, as it was the only language through which they could engage with the world around them. This was particularly true for Casimiro, who only knew a few words in Spanish and could not form basic sentences in the language. Therefore the two men only had access to domains where Tu'un Nda'vi was spoken. For Casimiro and Cornelio, the critical need for Tu'un Nda'vi was reflected in both their observed and stated language priorities. Nevertheless, learning Spanish was also a critical, first-order need for the two men, in particular with regard to learning Spanish for work, as explained by Casimiro, and to access basic services such as medical care, as emphasized by Cornelio—in other words, to access domains that were critical to their lives in their diasporic settings. Their constricted agency was also manifested in that learning English was not an option for them; it did not

even register as a second-order need in their language learning priorities. Unlike Emiliano and Fidel, who already had a practical level of Spanish proficiency as a basic functional resource, which enabled English learning as an option, Casimiro and Cornelio had not attained a practical level of Spanish proficiency as the functional resource that would allow them even to consider English as a language learning option.

Therefore, the attainment of Spanish as a basic, first-order, functional language resource either enabled or restricted access to different domains for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and led to conditional language-learning and literacy prioritization of either learning English or developing Tu'un Nda'vi literacy under constricted agency.

5.4 Conclusion

In the first two sections of this chapter, I discussed the relevance of English for two of the men and the impact of the development of Spanish proficiency on the language-learning prioritization for all of the men in *el grupo de enfoque*. In the third section of the chapter, I examined the men's language-learning prioritization through the theoretical lens of individual agency, more specifically, through the concepts I introduced here as *functional resources*, *sacrifice*, and *constricted agency*. The three specific functional resources I discussed here—financial resources, educational resources, and practical language resources—provide the foundation for understanding the dynamics influencing the language-learning prioritization of the men of *el grupo de enfoque* in their specific contexts in their diasporic community.

I proposed that the greater the functional resources possessed by a person, the greater their availability of options and, consequently, the greater their functional agency. Conversely, with very limited functional resources at their disposal, a person's available options are significantly

restricted and their potential for agency is constricted. Constricted agency implies that an agent struggles to meet their most basic needs, restricting their ability to take certain actions. In this situation, an agent may need to sacrifice highly valued needs in order to meet more basic needs for survival or to make inroads for advancement beyond their current socioeconomic conditions. Under these circumstances, with very limited options from which to choose and with restricted means for doing so, decisions are driven by sacrifice instead of being determined by choice. Nevertheless, under the conceptual model of constricted agency, despite serious restrictions in functional resources, a person is still able to make agentive decisions that can have a significant impact on their personal circumstances. Therefore, constricted agency does not imply that a person's agency is in any way diminished. On the contrary, it highlights the remarkable accomplishments of an agent, their perseverance and human spirit as they use whatever resources they have at their disposal to make a better life for themselves and their families.

I close this chapter by returning to a statement that Fidel made in except 5.7 where he describes the difficulties he and other Mixteco parents faced in helping children with homework: "ponle que no, no aprenden ellos como uno quiere" 'granted they don't, don't learn how we would like', but, undeterred, he states, "…pero de todas maneras, está uno al empuje" 'but even so, one pushes on'. This statement exemplifies Fidel's and his community's resolve, which can be paraphrased as the following summary statement about constricted agency: we do as much as we can, with whatever we have available to us.

For researchers working with marginalized communities with limited functional resources, constricted agency may serve as a useful analytical tool to understand the difficult and often competing demands that people must balance to meet their most basic needs and pursue their

goals. Furthermore, constricted agency may provide additional insight into the decisions that individuals make at the micro-level, where analysis strictly through the lens of structural agency; from the strict perspective of societal and cultural structures from a macro-level, may fall short. While human beings are affected by structural conditions inherited from their past to varying degrees, not all decisions in the present are made in direct relation to structures or cultural norms. Agents also make decisions in personal realms that are not directly in response or opposition to their position within a structure, but in order to affect their circumstances in their present and future.

An important consideration for researchers analyzing situated complex decision-making dynamics through the lens of constricted agency is that this conceptual model involves not only identifying the restrictions on individual agency, but also recognizing the resolve demonstrated by agents when pursuing their goals despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

In the next chapter, I summarize the key arguments of this and the previous chapters while also highlighting the potential implications of these findings as well as considerations for future research and community partnerships.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

The goal of this dissertation has been to examine the complexity of language-learning prioritization for the men of el *grupo de enfoque,* which was heavily influenced by their limited functional resources and driven by their personal, employment, and socioeconomic advancement goals. Grounded in the situated context of these men as informed through my data analysis, the primary theoretical contributions I have made in this dissertation are the six-element model of social capital that I presented in Chapters 3 and 4 and the introduction of constricted agency as part of individual agency, as I discussed in Chapter 5.

The ethnographic research for this dissertation was based on a small group of four men. whose individual circumstances cannot be generalized to other communities or contexts. However, the depth of my participation within the group provided a detailed understanding of their situation. My analysis revealed the connections between their situated settings and their conditions, which in turn led to the development of the conceptual models I used to explain their community life through the lens of social capital and their language-learning needs and priorities through the lens of constricted agency. In this chapter, I show how these models, grounded in the ethnographic research that I conducted with the men of el *grupo de enfoque,* can serve to inform future research. This approach is consistent with analytic generalizations in qualitative research (Firestone 1993, p. 17), where analysis in small ethnographic studies is discussed in connection to particular theories (Yin 2009, p. 44).

Below, I discuss the implications of my conceptual models for future research, particularly those involving community-centered work and the development of disenfranchised communities. Additionally, I discuss the implications of this dissertation for

multilingual language development for adult Indigenous-language speakers across linguistic settings and related connections to decolonization and Indigenous language maintenance in diaspora.

6.1 Implications for theorizing and usage of social capital

The reframing of social capital as discussed in chapter 4 has implications for future research and collaboration with groups or organizations that serve marginalized communities. First is the ability to recognize previously unrecognized forms of social capital, especially in low socioeconomic communities. Such recognition can lead to research into a group or entity in order to gain an understanding of the specific forms of social capital that are generated and how these are collected and made accessible for members as well as the specific benefits for members of that unit of social capital. The ability to recognize and reframe social capital in this way can help to further build on existing forms of social capital for the benefit of these groups and, consequently, the communities in which they are situated and which they serve. Ultimately, the elaborated concept of social capital that I present in this dissertation has the potential to lead to new avenues of research and understanding of the value of social capital, not just for some sectors of society, but across all socioeconomic sectors and, thus, be more reflective of the human experience.

In the following section, I describe the use of Spanish for the men of *el grupo de enfoque* in their diasporic community, despite its oppressive history during colonization and its use for assimilation as the legacy of colonization.

6.2 Learning from the mistakes of the past: Decolonization and heritage language reclamation and maintenance in diaspora

As discussed in Chapter 4, whether by design or because of their structure and implementation, L2 and L3 programs for Indigenous communities have served to assimilate cultures and move learners away from their first or heritage languages. In some bilingual programs, heritage languages serve as a means to reach learners and engage with them, but when implemented, ultimately only promote dominant language development (Mar-Molinero 2000, pp. 116, 117; Martinez Novo 2006, p. 82).

Despite centuries of linguistic genocide, following colonialism and often brutal assimilation policies and practices, many Indigenous languages all over the world have endured (Skutnab-Kangas 2000; Nicholas et al. 2008), though their speakers remain marginalized. In most cases, however, as with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* and their language community, Indigenous speakers do not have access to literacy resources in their language.

In a sense, second-and third-language literacy development programs can work in the opposite direction of assimilationist policies by serving as stepping stones for the promotion of first-language literacy development and enrichment. This may be particularly useful for communities for which literacy resources in their own language may not be available and could serve as a tool for heritage language maintenance in diasporic settings.

The process of reversing dominant language assimilation and language shift as well as reclaiming and maintaining Indigenous languages can serve as a tool for decolonization. In the broadest sense, decolonization refers to the processes and practices of Indigenous

communities to reverse the negative effects of colonialism, leading to self-determination and the survivance of their culture (Smith 1999; Corntassel 2012; Tuck and Yang 2012). Decolonization has been approached at multiple levels. Smith discusses the importance of decolonizing research itself, by approaching research from the point of view of Indigenous people and moving away from Western approaches that further the agenda of researchers instead of the needs of Indigenous peoples (Smith 1999, pp. 3, 15, 35-37, 115-118). Corntassel, meanqhile, approaches decolonization through the resurgence and reclamation of Indigenous cultures through everyday practices within Indigenous communities (Corntassel 2012, pp. 87-89, 97-99).

A body of scholarship increasingly connects decolonization to first-language literacy through language revitalization/reclamation and language maintenance (Grenoble and Whaley 2006; McCarty and Nicholas 2014; McIvor 2020). The term *language revitalization* encompasses similar concepts referring to the revival, renewal, reclamation, resurgence, or regenesis of endangered or sociopolitically oppressed Indigenous languages, which are a fundamental part of Indigenous cultures and identities (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, pp. 12-19; McCarty and Nicholas 2014, pp. 106-116; McIvor 2020, pp. 78-93). *Language maintenance* refers to sustaining current levels of language use within Indigenous language communities with a high level of first-language vitality and intergenerational transmission (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, p. 13). Much of this research centers around the reclamation or maintenance of Indigenous languages in school settings or other educational enrichment contexts, which implies the availability of literacy resources as well as a certain level of curricular development and support. However, much of this scholarship does not explicitly address teaching learners who lack literacy skills. Nearly all Indigenous communities,

especially in the Americas, lack a literacy tradition; consequently, this has a significant impact on reclamation and maintenance efforts. Grenoble and Whaley note that literacy, which is required for schooling, "is yet another marker of language vitality" and that the attainment of full literacy is at one end of a spectrum of language vitality, with the lack of literacy on the other end (2006, p. 10). Additionally, they note that in cases where language attrition may be taking place within a community, parts of the community may only be literate in a dominant language, but not their own (2006, p. 11). The authors' concepts of radical versus gradual attrition (2006, p. 16) are directly relevant to this dissertation as these relate to concerns about language shift, intergenerational transmission, and the implications for trilingual literacy programs.

Grenoble and Whaley describe the process of radical attrition as an act of self-defense whereby Indigenous people, who are subjected to repression, may stop using their language to avoid persecution, resulting in the eventual loss of proficiency (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, p. 16). Language repression as part of the legacy of colonialism is a manifestation of racism that many Indigenous peoples experience in their countries of origin. When Indigenous people migrate, the prejudice and discrimination that they experienced previously can take both similar and new forms in their new communities. In my research, Fidel related examples of the type of prejudice that he and other Indigenous community members experienced from Latinx in Santa Maria who derogatorily referred to Indigenous people as *oaxaquita* 'little Oaxacan' because of their cultural practices, conservative dress, and physical appearance. Similar experiences have been reported by others about Indigenous groups originating from in and around the Oaxaca state of Mexico and have also been found to be directed at Indigenous children in their U.S. school settings (Rivera Salgado 2015, pp.

131, 132). As a means of self-defense to avoid bullying, discrimination, and repression, students may hide their cultural origins, including the suppression of their Indigenous language, which can stifle intergenerational transmission and lead to eventual language shift (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, p. 16; Baquedano-López and Janetti 2017, pp. 4-5).

In addition to these forms of radical attrition, which is closely tied to cultural trauma, Indigenous language may undergo gradual attrition. Grenoble and Whaley define gradual attrition as the "relatively slow loss of a language due to language shift away from the local language to a language of wider communication, whether that be a regionally dominant language or a national lingua franca" (2006, p. 16). Even in communities where children of Indigenous speakers are able to retain their home language as much as possible despite facing strong assimilation forces, I argue that the risk of gradual attrition is much greater for diasporic communities that do not have literacy resources in their language to support intergenerational transmission and long-term maintenance. For the community of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*, the large number of monolingual Indigenous language speakers in Santa Maria will most likely support the vitality of their spoken language among adults speakers of the current generation. However, given the strong assimilation forces combined with the lack of literacy in their community to support intergenerational transmission, trilingual literacy programs that support first-language literacy development may be the only means of ensuring long-term language maintenance within diasporic Indigenous communities. In the following section I discuss a potential strategy for implementing Indigenous language literacy development as part of trilingual literacy programs for intergenerational language transmission and language maintenance in diaspora.

6.3 Implications for trilingual program development

As discussed in Chapter 5, my work with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* revealed the complexity of their learning needs in the diasporic setting of their language community. My analysis revealed a conflict between their stated versus observed language-learning priorities. While each member's stated interest in exploring either English or Tu'un Nda'vi literacy was conditional on their level of Spanish fluency—with the two Spanish speakers leaning toward English fluency and Spanish literacy development and the two non-Spanish speakers stating an interest in Spanish and Tu'un Nda'vi literacy development—observational data showed that all members exhibited an interest in exploring Tu'un Nda'vi. This apparent conflict was resolved when viewed through the analytic lens of constricted agency that I have presented in this dissertation, whereby the decision-making process of an agent with very restricted functional resources at their disposal is driven by sacrifice rather than choice.

While understanding the conditions of learners and their situated settings is important, it is just as important to understand the deeper motivations behind their language-learning decisions, their hidden or unstated language learning desires, and the significant sacrifices they might be making in order to meet their most basic needs. By viewing individual agency as a spectrum in which the potential for agency is enabled by the availability of functional resources—with a focus on recognizing the conditions that lead to learners' constricted agency—researchers, educators, policymakers, and community advocates, activists, and allies can examine the relationship between conditions and motivations leading to responsive language program development for a given community.

Whether through ethnographic or other methods, more work is needed that focuses on the relationship between language learning for Indigenous minority-language-speakers and the sacrifices they make due to individual agency restrictions. The conceptual framework of constricted agency has the potential to provide insight into learners' decision-making priorities along with their stated and unstated language-learning needs and desires either in advance of language program development or during implementation. Additionally, this would allow program developers to embed spaces for trilingual language exploration and develop complementary trilingual language pedagogies, which may lead to further empowerment of individuals to pursue multiple needs simultaneously, to address not just learners' financial needs, but also personal ones.

Furthermore, trilingual language program development could conceivably support Indigenous language maintenance in diasporic settings through language transfer (Gonca 2016) by using concepts learned through L2 and L3 language programs to promote L1 literacy. As hypothesized by Cummins (1979), and demonstrated by abundant research, the positive effects of language learning are transferable between a first and second language, where concepts learned in one language can be transferred to another and in either direction, from L1 to L2 as well as from L2 to L1 (Francis, 2000; Toloa and McNaughton, 2009; Gonca, 2016). This research on multidirectional language transfer, however, has been conducted within the context of bilingual education programs for school-age children. Separately, there has been a focus in more recent years on research on multilingualism partly in response to globalization and increased migration (Garcia-Mayo 2012, p. 130). While this research focuses on adult language learning, it considers only the unidirectional effect of L1 and L2 on L3 acquisition (Keshavarz and Astaneh 2004; Rothman 2011; Garcia-Mayo 2012).

There is less research focused on multilingual language development with a focus on language maintenance and L1 literacy.

Such language programs could be designed to assist in the transferring of second and third-language resources to first-language development, maintenance, and enrichment, whether by providing tools that learners can pursue on their own or by providing spaces within the structure of new or existing trilingual education programs. Approaching trilingual education in this way could act to reverse the effect of assimilation-focused language programs of the past and present and, with direct involvement of learners in the design process, as a tool for decolonization.

One particular study highlights the importance of creating true multilingual programs that focus on language maintenance and literacy development from L1 to L3 (Kosonen, Young, and Malone, 2006). Although it addresses the use of minority languages as a bridge to multiliteracy, this study assumes that learners already have L1 literacy through the promotion of multiliteracy in the earliest stages of education.

Research shows that a learner's first language can serve as a bridge not only to second language acquisition, but also third language acquisition (Keshhavarz and Asteneh 2004; Rothman 2011; Garcia-Mayo 2012). However, the practice of using second-and third-language literacy for first-language maintenance and literacy development requires further research, as there has been little work in this area. In one study analyzing a family literacy program for Guatemalan Maya families in south Florida, researchers used four elements to assess its effectiveness: *critical literacy potential*, serving as a catalyst for self and social empowerment; *emancipatory potential*, through which "students become literate in their own histories, experiences, and cultures; and they appropriate the code of cultures of power";

multiliteracy, in this case Maya, Spanish and English; and *guarding against assimilationist potential*, that is, avoiding a focus on functional literacy that disregards the culture and language of learners and is intended to transition them to a dominant language or languages (Schoorman and Zainuddin 2008, pp. 177-181). While this particular program served to satisfy the needs of the diasporic Maya community by supporting second- and third-language literacy development, one of the concerns of the researchers was the overall lack of focus on first-language development because there was little interest from instructors in providing first-language literacy, save for one trilingual instructor who developed their own curriculum for Q'anjob'al Maya literacy (Schoorman and Zainuddin 2008, pp. 179, 181). Even in this instance, the researchers noted little interest in participation from learners (Schoorman and Zainuddin 2008, p. 181). This response is consistent with Fidel's statements in this dissertation about the need to focus exclusively on Spanish for the sake of *el grupo de enfoque* and his concerns about taking time away from Spanish and English learning. However, as I noted in previous chapters, this viewpoint was not reflected in either Fidel's or other members' actions as observed during group meetings, which revealed a strong personal interest in first-language literacy.

Notably, the south Florida program, as a family literacy program, was focused on supporting children's literacy, and a significant portion of classes for parents was focused on parenting and the needs of their children, but not on their own literacy development. There are, thus, additional important considerations in designing family or children's literacy programs compared to adult literacy programs. Children's triliteracy programs would need to consider public school demands, adding a layer of complexity that would not be present if a trilingual literacy program were focused exclusively on the needs of adults and their situated

language-learning needs. The south Florida program showed success with the Spanish and English components of instruction, with benefits for learners in their situated settings, which is consistent with outcomes of language-learning priorities discussed in this dissertation. However, the researchers lamented the lack of focus on Maya and what this implied for the community that was the focus of this program: "If the children are not encouraged to acquire literacy in the Maya languages, this could be the last generation in the United States to use them" (Schoorman and Zainuddin 2008, p. 184).

Based on the considerations noted above and the language-learning prioritization exhibited by the men of *el grupo de enfoque,* I propose that new and existing trilingual language programs for diasporic Indigenous language speakers consider three concurrent goals. First, should programs should directly provide learners with the functional linguistic resources needed to meet their most basic needs for subsistence while providing a stepping stone to further socioeconomic advancement. In the case of *el grupo de enfoque*, Spanish provided this primary need. Second, for learners who are ready to take the next step in their trilingual language development, taking into account their self-assessed readiness, incorporating English should be done in stages: with Spanish first for those that need it and want it, or Spanish and English instruction combined for those who have attained a practical level of Spanish fluency to meet their needs. To assess conditional language-learning prioritization, the concept of constricted agency may be helpful in taking into account the needs and goals of learners. Third, if first-language literacy resources are available, formal instruction in the language should be provided, with the goal of first-language maintenance and support for intergenerational transfer. However, in cases where Indigenous language literacy resources are not available, spaces could be provided for learners to transfer second

and third language concepts to literacy development in their first language with the same ultimate goals. Using Spanish and/or English language instruction and literacy concepts to support the development of Indigenous language literacy may be necessary for minority Indigenous languages for which there are no literacy resources available, as is the case for the language variety of the men of *el grupo de enfoque*. In cases where literacy resources in a given language are more readily accessible or can be developed through collaboration with linguists, direct instruction in the language can be provided. But the promotion of Indigenous language literacy in such a program should be foundational and should not only serve as a bridge to Spanish or English, as this would risk becoming assimilationist in practice.

Models for first-language literacy development are already being successfully implemented (Bax et al. in preparation), through partnerships between university linguists and community members that are consistent with community-based research models (CBR). Strand et al. proposed that a CBR model should be one "that is genuinely collaborative and driven by community rather than campus interest; that democratizes the creation and dissemination of knowledge; and that seeks to achieve positive social change" (2003, p. 5). While I did not initiate the work with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* with this model in mind, some of my research practices, thought not all, overlap with CBR. The purpose of creating the group was suggested by Julián, a CBDIO community leader, the topics for discussion were driven by the men in the group, my research practices during the data collection period were designed around the needs of the group, and the line of inquiry on language-learning prioritization emerged through my analysis from the perspective of the men in the group; all these are consistent with the CBR model proposed by Strand et al. However, as I discussed in Chapter 2, beyond the work within *el grupo de enfoque* and after

my earlier analysis focused on an emic perspective, further analysis with regard to social capital and agency, was decidedly from an etic perspective informed by academic scholarship. Nevertheless, the implications for trilingual literacy program development stemming from my research can be applied to future CBR, as I discuss below.

One of the challenges in diasporic settings is providing first-language literacy in a way that makes sense for learners. Otherwise, as noted in Chapter 5 in regards to constricted agency, learners may feel compelled to sacrifice their personal language needs and desires in favor of satisfying their more urgent and immediate, or functional, language needs in diaspora. More generally, with regard to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, beyond weaving Indigenous-language literacy practices into the mode of instruction with a focus on satisfying basic or functional-resource needs, one possible approach could be to focus Indigenous-language literacy exploration separately, or even exclusively, on satisfying learners' "self-actualization needs" (Maslow 1943, p.382). While there is a need for English and Spanish instruction to focus on situated, functional resource needs for diasporic Indigenous language speakers from Spanish-speaking countries in the U.S., first-language literacy exploration can, instead, focus on the writing of oral histories and stories, poetry, and articles or blogs by and for the community, or it could focus on the performing arts, such as music or film. Choral poetry[18], performed in groups, is a combination of various forms that can be easily prepared by community members and adapted for intergenerational participation within families and communities, while, in the process, having community members develop first-language literacy skills. This, in itself, is not CBR, which focuses on producing research, but a *community-based project* (CBP) model focused on the development of Indigenous language

[18] Choral poetry originated in ancient Greece and is performed in groups (Tribulato, O. 2010, p. 388; Lardonious, A. 2011 p. 162 [citing Stehle E. 1997]). In Mexico, it is performed in schools and regional competitions as well as community and civic events.

literacy practices within the community, although these are not mutually exclusive and could be conducted together. The potential benefits of a community project involving choral poetry are that it can be developed by community members without a significant time commitment; by individuals within the community or in groups; and it can be intergenerational, involving all segments of the community, from the youngest to the most senior members and with a much lower time commitment than would be required for CBR. Furthermore, the writing of poems of various lengths can be done collaboratively between community members and university faculty and students for support as needed. The short writing of poems, however, is only one component of literacy development. Perhaps the most important and inclusive component would be in the dissemination of written poems within the community for participants to read, or learn to read, as part of the process and preparation for a choral poetry performance by and for the community. Similar CBP models using poetry and storytelling have been implemented by Indigenous communities in other parts of the world (Iseke and Moore 2011; Genis 2019; Manathunga et al. 2020). However, in these cases, the focus was not on first-language literacy development within a community, as writing systems for these communities' language varieties were already developed and many members could already read and write in their first language. Moreover, CBR can be conducted in tandem with CBP. However, while CBR could restrict participation to only certain members of the community who are trained and have the time and energy to devote to such a project, the CBP component can be much more inclusive of other members of the community with less effort but potentially with a very significant impact.

The potential impact of implementing a CBP of this kind is suggested in an interview with Fidel on February 10, 2010, in which he described having found a poem written in a

variety of Mixteco that he could neither read nor identify but which he was able to read in its Spanish translation. Fidel recited an excerpt of that poem which he had memorized, "Dondequiera que yo vaya o dondequiera que esté, la sangre mixteco recorre en mis venas" 'Wherever I go or wherever I am, Mixteco blood runs in my veins'. There was no functional reason for him to have written down and learned this poem and there did not need to be. Nevertheless, once he found it, it spoke to him, he copied it down, and he carried the words with him to the point that these became, at least in part, a way to express to himself the significance and meaning of his heritage. A focus on self-actualization needs, as a strategy for first-language literacy development as a component of a multilingual language literacy program, may have the potential for greater success in cases where members might otherwise feel they must strictly focus their limited time and energy on Spanish-or English-learning to satisfy their most immediate functional needs in diaspora. In other words, engaging the heart, in the case of first-language literacy development, may be more pertinent than rationalizing the need based on functional considerations, as was the case for second- and third-language development for two of the men in the group.

In one example of the use of art for self-actualization and language maintenance in a CBR project, a student youth group under the auspices of an Indigenous community organization, with the support of two UC Santa Barbara graduate students, created a multilingual documentary film in Mixtec, Zapotec, Spanish, and English that share "their experiences of living in multiple languages" (Bucholtz, Casillas, and Lee, 2019, p. 170). While addressing learners' Spanish and English language needs is extremely important for the socioeconomic advancement of Indigenous diasporic communities, approaching first-language literacy from a different perspective, one that meets participants' self-actualization

needs, can serve as an additional strategy for communities to develop first-language literacy, maintain their language, and more easily be able to transmit it to future generations born in the United States.

With a focus on satisfying both functional and self-actualization literacy needs, adult trilingual literacy programs for Indigenous communities could serve to reverse the process of language shift among Indigenous groups after migration, stemming both the strong assimilation and functional-need-based forces that drive language loss while bolstering first-language maintenance for Indigenous minority languages in diaspora.

6.4 Conclusion

Everyone deserves the opportunity to read and write in their own language, to express in their own ways and their own words to their future selves, their community, and the world the meaning and purpose in their minds and hearts. Literacy is an aspect of culture that is increasingly recognized as a "fundamental human right" (UNESCO 2012), but literacy in their own language remains inaccessible to many Indigenous peoples. For generations, Indigenous languages have been the target of outright eradication by dominant cultures during colonization, and these brutal policies have evolved into the neglect and disenfranchisement of Indigenous languages and cultures in the present. Moving forward to a future where all languages and cultures are valued as part of the whole of human experience, it is imperative that researchers extend beyond the theories, pedagogies, and epistemologies derived by and for Western societies when working with Indigenous communities. Open-ended research protocols that prioritize the perspective and the situated needs and desires of Indigenous people with whom we do research should be used in order to provide the space

for Indigenous participants to direct research practices and lines of inquiry. Community needs and circumstances should determine the research direction and how researchers can be a source of support, working in tandem and in true collaboration with Indigenous communities, rather than having them be the subject to Western-perceived and derived needs and solutions. My use of ethnography and a modified grounded-theory approach throughout my work and research with the men of *el grupo de enfoque* was an effort to listen and learn as much as possible first, before attempting to find out what they revealed to be an important and necessary area of research. While I did not set out to do a decolonizing dissertation, I came to this approach through my work with the community, my analysis, and subsequent research. Nevertheless, as I move forward, like other non-Indigenous researchers, I must always be aware of my role as an outsider and a perpetual learner in approaching future collaborative work with Indigenous communities.

Epilogue: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-immigrant policies on Indigenous diasporic communities

While my work with *el grupo de enfoque* took place in what seems like a different world from the fall of 2009 through the spring of 2010, I completed this dissertation in the midst of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Given the massive impacts of the virus on Indigenous Mexican communities in California, I would be remiss if I did not discuss these effects from a linguistic, economic, and health standpoint.

The COVID-19 medical crisis has had a worldwide effect on all sectors of society and at all socioeconomic levels. However, people at the lowest socioeconomic levels already living in extreme poverty, including many Indigenous peoples with the fewest resources and protections, suffer some of the greatest effects (Buheji et al. 2020). The impacts are affecting Indigenous peoples at a global level (Power et al. 2020); however, in this discussion I focus on the impact on Indigenous Mexican diasporic peoples within the U.S. context.

Access to healthcare for Indigenous farmworkers in the United States has been a multilayered problem related to affordability and lack of insurance, as with other immigrant communities, plus the added significant language barriers for Indigenous language speakers in combination with a lack of cultural awareness on the part of many medical providers.

The California Farm Labor Force Overview and Trends from NAWS (the National Agricultural Workers Survey), with 2,344 California participants, reported based on 2003-2004 survey data that 41% of farmworkers paid for medical expenses out of pocket (Aguirre International 2005, p. 52). This figure, however, includes all agricultural workers and does not specifically address Indigenous farmworkers. Additionally, these figures have changed over time. A different survey conducted a few years earlier, the California Agricultural

Workers Health Survey (CAWHS) conducted with 970 households in 1999, found that 73% of women and 74% of men who responded to the survey lacked any kind of health insurance. However, these figures include all participants, those with and without citizenship or permanent resident status. The figures do not reflect insured status specifically for undocumented farmworkers, which is likely to be significantly lower. The financial burden to uninsured farmworkers and their families who live below the poverty line is a significant barrier to accessing proper healthcare (Kresge 2007, pp. 2, 3; Mines, Nichols, and Runsten 2010, pp. 73, 88).

6.5 Structural conditions affecting the economic, occupational, living conditions, and health of Indigenous farmworkers

One of the many challenges faced by families living below the poverty line, as are most Mexican Indigenous diasporic communities living in the U.S., is affordable housing. As a result, Indigenous farmworkers tend to live in substandard and cramped housing conditions (Kresge 2007, pp. 2-3; Farquhar et al. 2008, p. 1; Farquhar et al. 2009, p. 95; Mines, Nichols, and Rusten 2010). These living conditions place Indigenous farmworkers at a high risk of contracting COVID-19, as there is no space to quarantine a household member if needed. Additionally, given the necessity for farmworkers, as essential workers, to continue to work to meet their economic needs as well as the nation's need for food production (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2020), not only individual farmworkers but also their entire households and those of their coworkers are at risk.

As noted in a recent report by the Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies regarding the support and protection of farmworkers, "farmworkers continue to work to maintain the

country's food supply during a period of critical need" while remaining "economically and medically vulnerable to repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic" (Mora, Schickler, and Haro, 2020). Despite finding broad public support for farmworker protections in many parts of California, the authors reported that those protections are inadequate or absent in many worksites. In her testimony during a 2020 hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary on examining liability during the COVID-19 pandemic, Rebecca Dixon, Executive Director of the National Employment Law Project, stated that the irresponsibility and failure of employers to provide basic safety protections has allowed the virus to spread, "particularly in Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities, and other communities of color, including immigrant communities" (Dixon, 2020). The spread of the virus has the potential to be particularly devastating among farmworker communities, which are already heavily impacted by structural inequalities that affect their health and financial well-being. A *New York Times* article addressing COVID-19-related concerns for farmworkers noted the absence in many cases of hand-washing and disinfection areas as well as the absence or lack of enforcement of distancing protocols (Jordan 2020). Additionally, in cases where protective protocols for COVID-19 exist, the article noted language barriers as an impediment to workers receiving information they could understand. Added to the occupational hazards that farmworkers are currently facing at work is the restricted access to healthcare available to many Indigenous diasporic communities.

The current pandemic exacerbates the substantial health risks among Indigenous farmworkers as a result of hazardous working conditions. The same issues that have placed Indigenous farmworkers at a greater health risk at work in the past (Farquhar et al. 2008;

Farquhar et al. 2009) also place them at a greater risk with regard to COVID-19 at work in the present.

6.6 Linguistic and cultural sensitivity: Barriers to seeking healthcare

A significant barrier to Indigenous Mexicans seeking health services in the U.S. is the inability to communicate directly with providers. As I discuss in Chapter 4, monolingual Indigenous patients often have to wait for hours for an Indigenous language interpreter to become available, if one is available at all. Even when interpreters are available, communication may be difficult as interpreters and patients may speak very different varieties and much of the medical terminology may not exist in their Indigenous language. Crucial words such as 'virus' do not exist in many Indigenous languages, such as Mixteco (Méndez, Flores-Haro, and Zucker 2020, p. 58). It therefore requires a great deal of patience, tact, and cultural sensitivity on the part of an interpreter to communicate to a patient what a medical provider is saying in ways that the patient can understand (Mines, Nichols, and Runsten 2010, p. 77). A related factor is the discrimination that Indigenous people can experience when accessing care from healthcare workers who do not have the patience or cultural competence to engage humanely with Indigenous patients (Mines, Nichols, and Runsten 2010, pp. 75, 76; Maxwell et al. 2015, pp. 4, 8).

6.7 Anti-immigration policies and healthcare changes during COVID-19

At a time when testing for COVID-19 and treatment was crucial for the health of all communities across the country, and the world for that matter, the barriers for Indigenous and other immigrants seeking healthcare were magnified. Increasingly restrictive anti-immigrant

policy changes under the Trump administration terrorized immigrant communities, such as the zero-tolerance policy for border apprehensions that separated and brutalized families (Lee 2019) and a shift in immigration enforcement from employer audits and compliance to raids focusing on deportation of workers by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) (Kitroeff 2018). At the outset of the pandemic, the fears of Indigenous and other immigrants needing healthcare were magnified by the harsh policies, which culminated in the implementation of the public charge rule by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on February 24, 2020. This policy served as a deterrent for immigrants applying for a change in status from seeking public benefits, including the use of Medicaid and supplemental nutritional services, by making them ineligible if they used those benefits. Even though children's benefits and Medicaid emergency room benefits were excluded from the public charge rule, this policy had an overall chilling effect on enrollment in programs, even by those who would not necessarily be affected.

Running counter to this trend, on January 1, 2020, California became the first state in the nation to offer Medicaid services, Medi-Cal, to income-eligible young adults up to the age of 26 regardless of immigration status, through the California Department of Healthcare Service Young Adult Initiative. This change was expected to provide insurance coverage to approximately 90,000 potential new enrollees for full Medi-Cal coverage. While this program only covers young adults under the age of 26, the COVID-19 Presumptive Eligibility Program, passed by the U.S. Senate through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201, 2020), provides uninsured U.S. residents regardless of immigration status with "access to COVID-19 diagnostic testing, testing-related services, and

treatment services, including all medically necessary care such as the associated office, clinic or emergency room visit" (DHCS 2020).

However, starting with the announcement of the proposed implementation of the changes to the public charge rule in 2018, many immigrants disenrolled from Medi-Cal/Medicaid and other services such as supplemental nutrition assistance programs, for fear of negative consequences (Kim et al. 2019; Raphael et al, 2020; Bernstein et al. 2020; Page et al. 2020) such as the loss of permanent residency (Kamps 2020). Soon after the implementation of the public charge final ruling of February 24, 2020, lawmakers, the legal community, and advocacy groups called for the DHS to reverse its position amid COVID-19 pandemic concerns (Gonzales 2020; Massey and Sands, 2020). Subsequently, on July 29, 2020 the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York issued an injunction suspending the implementation of the February 24, 2020 expanded public charge rule. This effectively reverted the application of the public charge rule to what was in place as of 1999, but only while there was a declared national health emergency.

Beyond concerns regarding their future immigration status, many undocumented immigrant workers worry about accessing health services for fear of deportation and family separation when seeking services. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) continued raids even as parts of the country started to go into lockdown due to COVID-19 (Dyer 2020; Lopez and Holmes 2020), exacerbating long-standing fears in accessing medical care during this crucial time (Marshall et al. 2005, pp. 918, 930, 931; Kresge 2007, p. 4; Mines, Nichols and Runsten 2010, p. 83; Pérez-Escamilla, Garcia, and Song 2010, pp. 47, 48, 51; Cleaveland and Ihara 2012, pp. 774-777, 780; Lopez and Holmes 2020; Page et al. 2020). Amid concerns over immigrants' fear of seeking medical services during the COVID-19 pandemic,

Immigrations and Customs Enforcement issued the following statement on March 18, 2020, citing the safety of the general public and its own agents, so as to not discourage people from seeking testing or treatment:

> ICE will not carry out enforcement operations at or near health care facilities, such as hospitals, doctors' offices, accredited health clinics, and emergency or urgent care facilities, except in the most extraordinary of circumstances. Individuals should not avoid seeking medical care because they fear civil immigration enforcement (ICE 2020).

However, this statement did not assuage immigrants' long-standing fears or restore trust in an environment of increasing anti-immigrant policies (Page et al. 2020). In an April 10, 2020 fact sheet, the National Employment Law Project noted that DHS was continuing raids and deportations as usual, exacerbating fears in immigrant communities (NELP 2020). In response to these fears, advocacy groups continued outreach efforts encouraging immigrants to seek medical care (CCALAC, 2020).

Under the Biden administration, the public charge changes were further amended to extend beyond a declared state of national emergency, as stated in the following alert: "[United States Citizenship and Immigration Services] USCIS stopped applying the Public Charge Final Rule to all pending applications and petitions on March 9, 2021. USCIS removed content related to the vacated 2019 Public Charge Final Rule from the affected USCIS forms and has posted updated versions of affected forms" (DHS 2021).

The roll out of the COVID-19 vaccinations coincided with the start of the Biden administration and reverting of the public charge rule, along with other policy changes, seem to be having an effect on immigrants seeking care. A study conducted from November

through December 2020 with farmworkers in the Eastern Coachella Valley of California tested attitudes toward COVID-19 testing and vaccination (Gehlbach et al. 2021). Mistrust against government and misinformation where cited as contributing factors to farmworkers hesitancy with regard to testing and future vaccinations. They concluded that delivering accurate health information in a way that was accessible to vulnerable communities and building trust through outreach from trusted providers was essential to improving attitudes toward vaccinations.

A broader study on English- and Spanish-speaking adult immigrants in California found that, despite higher levels of trust in public health providers and vaccines among California immigrants as a whole, as compared to non-immigrant adults, Latinx adults were both uninsured at higher levels and were "underrepresented in the vaccinated population" (Gonzalez, Karpman, and Bernstein 2021). Furthermore, they noted that immigrant Latinx and other people of color were receiving their vaccinations in public clinics and health centers which where hard hit and understaffed as a result of the pandemic. However, an influx of $992 million to California health centers and additional funding for vaccine distribution from the Biden administration was intended to help reduce inequities in vaccination rates for low-income communities most affected by the pandemic. This study also concluded that outreach to dispel fear of deportation or jeopardizing immigration status and mitigating misinformation was critical for increasing vaccination rates and addressing inequalities.

6.8 Outreach to Indigenous immigrant communities

For Indigenous immigrant communities, concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic were magnified due to the significant language barriers many face. In a *Los Angeles Times* article, the associate director of the Mixteco/Indígena Community Organization Project (MICOP) in Oxnard noted the difficulties Indigenous communities face in getting needed and up-to-date COVID-19 information (Castillo 2020). The associate director reported that MICOP worked to translate information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to transmit over the organization's Indigenous-language radio station and post it on their website as videos in Mixteco, Zapoteco, and Purepecha as well as Spanish (MICOP 2020). These online videos covered various safety and public service announcements, including consumer warnings regarding price gouging, clarifying that the implementation of the public charge rule was temporarily suspended—following the injunction on July 29, 2020—and encouraging anyone experiencing symptoms resembling those of COVID-19 to seek medical care. The videos also included information about mental health support, resiliency and wellness practices, K-12 remote instruction and social distancing needs, and making and using masks, as well as hand-washing precautions and instructions. As this example illustrates, the work of community advocacy organizations like MICOP—and CBDIO in this dissertation—are essential for the welfare of Indigenous diasporic communities as well as the broader communities in which they are situated; language access is an especially crucial service that they provide. While the regional office of CBDIO in Santa Maria closed since I completed the ethnographic work for this dissertation, MICOP is now satisfying many of the same community services that CBDIO provided.

6.9 Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic called attention to the fact that the farmworkers who maintain this country's essential food supply work under harsh conditions, in low-paying jobs, and tend to live in crowded conditions. These essential farmworkers are disproportionately from Indigenous communities that are especially vulnerable and have extremely limited functional resources to meet their basic needs. Beyond access to resources, access to healthcare during this crucial time has been made increasingly difficult because of the inability of many Indigenous people to communicate directly with medical professionals, or even through an interpreter. It is crucial that services, especially medical care, be delivered in a respectful and culturally responsive way that takes into account the significant language barriers that Indigenous people face, especially but not only during the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has highlighted the urgent need for linguistic access and support for Indigenous diasporic communities.

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