

Planning language, planning identity: A case study of Ecuadorians in London

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1. Introduction

In 2008, a major shift occurred in the demographic structure of the world's population: for the first time in history, the majority of people lived in cities (UNFPA 2007: 1). With numbers of urban settlers increasing every year, new challenges arise for researchers concerned with various types of social processes, including language. The multilingual and multicultural cities pose a particular challenge to the key assumption of linguistic nationalism: the idea of 'one people, one language, one state' (Ricento 2000; Spolsky 2004; Wright 2004). This ideology originated in 18th century Europe, and had since successfully spread to other parts of the world. In global cities, however, it can no longer be upheld. Speakers of different languages live on the same street, shop in the same shops and send their children to the same school. On the other hand, it is still relevant to some extent: different linguistic and national identities continue to play an important role in delimiting urban social networks (cf. Milroy 1987).

Within the context of a multilingual city, planning minority languages – and cultures – can be viewed as a struggle for representation. The city is a 'competitive, dynamic and diverse' ecology, in which different languages compete for speakers, and for physical and symbolic space (Chríst 2007: 100-7). My interlocutors emphasised that Latin Americans in general, and Ecuadorians among them, are underrepresented in the public sphere, and that community initiatives, through maintaining the heritage language and culture, can address this lack of representation.

The issues related to multilingualism in the urban settings have recently come to the forefront of sociolinguistic research (Cadier & Mar-Molinero 2012; Chríst 2007; Chríst & Thomas 2008; Hassa 2012; Scott 2012; Shohamy *et al.* 2010). However, the pace of research can hardly keep up with the swiftly developing urban realities. Many issues deserve to be investigated in detail, and this paper focuses on but one of them: the relationship between language and identity in a national minority group in a global city. Previous research shows that in communities no longer unified by virtue of 'belonging' to the national territory, the 'sense of national sameness' is often constructed through

discourse (Wodak *et al.* 1999), or through different types of social interactions (Clary-Lemon 2010: 9).

This paper explores the construction of identity through interaction and discourse. I regard discursive construction of identity as part of language planning, that is, measures that influence language use. In sociolinguistics, language and identity are often regarded as intrinsically linked (e.g. Coupland & Jaworski 2009). The research presented on the following pages looks into the relationship between planning language and planning identity. These issues can, in my opinion, only be explored on a case-by-case basis. In this paper, I investigate the example of the Ecuadorian community in London, with the following questions in mind:

- 1) Can activities and discourse of a minority community be interpreted as instances of language planning?
- 2) Are these activities and discourse used to create the national/in-group identity of those engaged?

London is an ideal research site to explore these questions. It is the largest, and the most cosmopolitan city in Europe, where between 239 and 322 different languages are spoken on a daily basis (cf. Baker & Eversley 2000; Mehmedbegovic 2009). The British capital is home to almost half of the country's migrant population. One in three London residents was born abroad (Gidley 2011). The Ecuadorian community was chosen as a focus of this study for a number of reasons. Ecuadorians are among the most numerous group of Latin Americans in London, and the longest-established national Latino group in the UK (McIlwaine *et al.* 2011). However, it is only since the launch of the new migratory policy in 2008 that the Ecuadorian diaspora started to receive more attention from its home country's government (see Section 3). It is still too early to reach any conclusions about the policy's long-term effects. However, the new approach of the Ecuadorian government has the potential to influence the identity and linguistic choices of Ecuadorians abroad.

The first part of this paper provides basic socio-economic information about the Ecuadorian community in London, in order to contextualise the study (Section 2). Subsequently, I describe my research methodology (Section 3), and discuss the notions central to the argument developed in this paper (Section 4). Following on from that, I analyse the activities of the Ecuadorian community in London, with a view to establish an inventory of methods of language planning used within it (Section 5). Finally, I present the instances of discourse that exemplify planning the language use on different levels of society (Section 6). I conclude by answering the research questions, and discussing the relationship between language and identity planning among Ecuadorian Londoners.

2. Ecuadorians in London: background

This section provides a brief overview of the socio-economic and political situation of the Ecuadorians in London.¹ It focuses on the policy of the Ecuadorian government towards emigrants, rather than on British policy towards immigrant groups.²

¹For an in-depth study of the socio-economic situation of Latin Americans in London (See McIlwaine *et al.* 2011).

Britain is home to approximately 40 to 50 thousand Ecuadorians (SENAMI 2010a: 10), most of whom live in the London area (IOM 2008). They first started arriving in the UK in the 1980s. However, the biggest wave of migration took place after the collapse and dollarisation and of the Ecuadorian economy in 2000 (IOM 2008: 6, SENAMI 2010a: 4). After 2003, the third wave of migration occurred, making the Ecuadorians the second most numerous Spanish-speaking Latino group in the UK after Colombians (IOM 2008: 6). Presently, most Ecuadorians come to the UK from Spain, due to the economic recession in that country (Paúl Madrid, p.c. 25.05.2011). When they arrive in the United Kingdom, the existing divisions of the labour (and linguistic) market direct them towards work in the cleaning sector, and towards living and working with other Latin American migrants (IOM 2008; McIlwaine *et al.* 2011). As I found out during focus group sessions, it is considered normal to have two or more part-time jobs, with one's working day starting at 5am, and lasting until about 10pm. Most Ecuadorians I talked to work as cleaners, and deal mostly with Latin Americans both at home and at work. As they admit, this not only limits their opportunities to learn English but also the necessity to learn English.

The economic crisis in the European Union and the recent inflow of migrants into the UK coincided with political changes in Ecuador. As mentioned above, the country's economy was dollarised in 2000. A severe economic breakdown ensued. Between 1997 and 2005, three presidents were toppled as a result of social unrests, and the country went through a period of socio-economic instability, resulting, among others, in increased migration. The current head of state, Rafael Correa, assumed power in January 2007. In October of the following year, a new constitution was approved. As a result of the constitutional reform, new presidential elections were mandated for April 2009. Correa won in the first round. He was re-elected in the recent presidential elections in February 2013.

The year Correa first assumed power, 2007, was also eventful for the London Ecuadorian community. In the British capital, two new organisations were established by and for the Ecuadorians. The Ecuadorian Movement in the UK (*Movimiento Ecuador en el Reino Unido*, henceforth MERU) is a 'independent political and social movement' (MERU 2007) established with the aim of supporting the Ecuadorian constitutional reform. In a more long-term sense, it is committed to defending the interests of the Ecuadorian workers and illegal immigrants (MERU 2007). The second organisation launched that same year is the Ecuadorian Community Association (*Asociación de la Comunidad Ecuatoriana en el Reino Unido*, henceforth ECA). Its main objectives are 'to promote cultural, social and sport events, to facilitate integration of the community, watch over the identity and civic rights of Ecuadorians in the UK and promote the initiatives to assist the poor and socially excluded in Ecuador' (*Promover eventos culturales, sociales y deportivos que permitan la integración de la comunidad(...). Velar por la identidad, cultura y derechos sociales de los ecuatorianos en el Reino Unido. (...)Planificar y ejecutar proyectos de desarrollo*

²Information on the latter can be found elsewhere (Transatlantic Council on Migration 2009; McLeod 2009) and is not central to the arguments developed in this paper.

en el Ecuador, dirigidos a personas pobres y socialmente excluidas del país) (ECA 2007).³

In 2008, the new Ecuadorian government created the National Secretariat for Migrants (*Secretaría Nacional del Migrante*, henceforth SENAMI), with the objective of ‘acting in favour of the full exercise of the rights of the migrant persons and enhancing their capacity for Good Living’ (*Propiciar el ejercicio pleno de los derechos de las personas migrantes y potenciar sus capacidades para el Buen Vivir*) (SENAMI 2011). One of the policies implemented by SENAMI was to establish a network of Ecuadorian Houses⁴ (*Casas Ecuatorianas*) in countries with significant Ecuadorian populations, including the UK.

The Ecuadorian House in the London Borough of Camden was inaugurated in September 2010. It offers a variety of free services, such as English and computer literacy classes, legal advice, the use of computers and the internet, publications in Spanish, cultural activities and assistance to ‘Ecuadorians in vulnerable situations’. It also informs about the policies of SENAMI, for instance about the voluntary repatriation programmes ‘Welcome home’ (*Bienvenidos a casa*) facilitated by the government. Another London-based Ecuadorian initiative launched in September 2010 is the Little Community School (*Escuelita Comunitaria*) in Newham, East London. It is a Saturday Spanish-medium school for children of Ecuadorian origin, aimed at teaching them parts of the Ecuadorian elementary school curriculum. The School functions under the auspices of the MERU.

These institutions are, naturally, not the only community organisations available to Ecuadorians in London. They do, however, focus specifically on this national group, and are more or less directly related with the political agenda of the current Ecuadorian government. SENAMI is its direct extension, and MERU auto-identifies itself as a ‘political and social organisation’, supportive of the 2008 constitutional reform. However, both bodies also have a London-specific agenda, which is not directly regulated by the government, and stems from the demands of the local community.

Although here I use the notion ‘Ecuadorian community’, I do not claim this study to be representative of all Ecuadorians in London. Having chosen the community centre and the Saturday school as my field sites, I focused on those who create and attend them. Ecuadorian Londoners ‘outside of formalised networks’ (Segrott 2001: 285) exceeded the scope of this study. Therefore, the notion of ‘Ecuadorian community’ as used in this paper is tantamount to those involved with the community organizations I visited and events I attended. I use the term ‘diaspora’ to refer to all Ecuadorians living abroad, or in the United Kingdom, depending on the context.

³All translations from Spanish, apart from the names of the institutions and government programmes, are my own.

⁴This is the official English name of the institution. The meaning of Spanish *casa* comprises both ‘house’ and ‘home’. This is reflected in other governmental brochure, where *Casas Ecuatorianas* are referred to as ‘Ecuadorian Homes’ (SENAMI 2010b: 6). Apart from London, they exist in Spain, Italy, Venezuela, Chile and the United States (as of September 2011).

3. Methodology

In this section, I will present my research methodology. This includes, more specifically, the location and timeframe of the study (3.1), the research methods (3.2), and some words about the participants (3.3).

3.1 Time and place

This research was carried out between May and September 2011. The data was gathered predominantly in the two institutions mentioned above: the Ecuadorian House and the Little Community School. I have also attended community-organised events, in order to interact with research participants in different contexts. Towards the middle of the fieldwork period, I was asked by some of my informants to help them practice English during their teacher's summer holidays. Those English classes have developed into interesting and informative encounters, to which I refer to below as 'quasi-focus groups'. During the research, I used Spanish to communicate at all times apart from the language lesson setting, where English was also incorporated. The research was conducted in accordance with SOAS research ethics policy.⁵

3.2 Research methods

Answering the research questions (see Section 2) required looking into linguistic and social practices across different domains of language use within the community. To capture the varied discourse contexts, a mixed-method approach to data collection and analysis was adopted. I applied what Bryman (2008: 367) calls *ethnomethodology*: a set of research methods that 'seek to understand how social order is created through talk and interaction', whilst trying to minimise the 'artificial methods of data collection' (Bryman 2008: 696).⁶

The main source of data was ethnographic: participant observation and subsequent analysis based on field notes. In order to contextualise the interactional data, I analysed the official documents made available at the community centre, and the content of community-destined websites. My approach to those texts is best described as a mix of critical discourse analysis and thematic analysis: identifying key themes relevant to the research topic. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with two community leaders: a representative of SENAMI, and one of the founders of the community school.

3.3 Participants

I met all of the participants while visiting institutions or attending community events. All the consultants with whom I interacted on regular basis were middle-aged men (mid-thirties to early fifties). The two community leaders I interviewed were also men. The School, however, had both male and female teachers. The quasi-focus groups comprised 6 men and 2 women (all middle-aged). The women, however, only participated in one meeting.⁷ Only one participant (a woman) moved to the UK directly

⁵ I explored the issues presented in this paper as part of my MA Language Documentation and Description research at SOAS in 2011. These topics no longer constitute my main research interest; At the moment, I am conducting my PhD research on evidentiality in Ecuadorian Kichwa.

⁶ In this particular context, 'artificial data' can be understood as elicited discourse constructed for research purposes.

⁷ The under-representation of female participants need not be regarded as a bias. On the contrary, it provides additional information about the gender structure of those involved in community activities. The

from Ecuador. All the others arrived from Spain, between a week and 11 months prior to our encounter, and had Spanish passports. All those who have families, had left them behind. Among the participants of community events, the gender imbalance was not as striking: both men and women participated.

4. Some definitions

This part of the paper introduces the theoretical concepts used in the data analysis. Firstly, I discuss the notion of language planning, and the different ways in which it has been defined to date, as well as its sub-categorisations (4.1). Secondly, I define the notions of different types, or levels, of discourse and social interaction, which I used for structuring and analysing the data (4.2).

4.1 Planning and policy

The two notions central to the arguments developed in this paper are *language planning and policy* (LPP). Although both concepts lack universally accepted definitions, here, for the sake of brevity, I ignore the theoretical debate that surrounds them. My understanding is that *language policy* encompasses top-down, official positions, principles, decisions and strategy regarding language (Sallabank 2011:1). *Language planning*, on the other hand, refers to concrete, but not necessarily explicit measures and practices that influence language use (Sallabank 2011:1). In the light of these definitions, many community-oriented activities undertaken by a linguistic minority can be regarded as instances of language planning.

The essence of language planning research is to establish ‘*who plans what, for whom and how*’ (Cooper 1989: 29-31). In order to better grasp these issues, different domains of language planning were introduced (Ager 2005; Baldauf 2006; Cooper 1989: ch.2):

- (1) corpus planning (about language),
- (2) acquisition planning (about learning)
- (3) status planning (about society), and, more recently
- (4) prestige planning (about image).

Corpus planning has to do with developing language as a system: devising/adapting orthography, coining new terms, adopting loanwords, establishing the standards of grammatical language use. *Acquisition planning*, or *language-in-education planning* (Baldauf 2006), is concerned with language teaching and learning, development of school curricula for the language and in the language, and teaching it to second-language learners. *Status planning* deals with the domains of use, and the standing a language has within a given society. *Prestige planning*, finally, aims to influence how the language is perceived, both by speakers, and non-speakers, and the respect that is accorded to it. These domains point towards activities that can be undertaken to meet specific goals within LP, helping us understand *what* is planned and *how*.

The issue of *who* plans for *whom* was not considered in detail in the early language planning theory (cf. Baldauf 2006). Rather, it was assumed that planning language was

fact that partners and children of the UK migrants stay in Spain also potentially contributes to gender imbalance.

the domain of the official institutions, most often on the national level. Recently, however, it has been convincingly argued that the assumptions of power and agency as exclusive to the state need to be reconsidered (e.g. Rosenau 2007; Scholte 2005). Authority has become decentralised, and multiple agencies play out on different levels of social interaction. The same was argued specifically for language planning and policy. In accordance with the changing conception of agency, the notions of *macro-*, *mezzo-* and *micro-language planning* (Kaplan & Baldauf 1997) were introduced, pointing to different actors of language planning. The macro level refers to national and supra-national bodies. The mezzo level encompasses organisations operating on regional scope. Finally, the micro level refers to entities acting locally, or to individuals. These distinctions are not always clear-cut, as the levels are intrinsically linked. Micro-planning originates in the local community, but ‘can only be interpreted within the wider scope of macro-level planning’ (Hatoss 2006:287).

4.2 Structuring discourse and interaction

This section explains the classification of the levels of discourse, which I used in the analysis of the data. I applied a three-way distinction into 1) public, 2) semi-public and 3) quasi-private discourse, drawn from Wodak *et al.*(1999). The three levels of discourse correspond roughly to the 1) formal, 2) semi-formal and 3) informal types of social interaction (Clary-Lemon 2010). Below, I provide a short description of each discourse level, including the types of data I collected. For the sake of clarity, for each discourse level I list the corresponding types of interaction.

4.2.1 Public discourse/formal interaction

Public discourse is best described as that employed by the national institutions and other official bodies. It is highly formalised, and consists of top-down communication of official decisions/policies/opinions.

Types of interaction: official events, formal meetings, national celebrations, speeches, written communication: reports, brochures, leaflets, posters, websites.

Types of data collected: print publications available at the Ecuadorian House: newspapers, bulletins and brochures for migrants, internet pages of SENAMI, MERU and ECA.

All of the consulted media were in Spanish, or bilingual in Spanish and English (promotional brochures of the Ecuadorian House).

4.2.2 Semi-public discourse/semi-formal interaction

This type of discourse also occurs in official settings, but is less formalised than the public one. It applies in settings such as schools, community centres or other organisations, when the speakers communicate in their official, rather than private capacities. By the same token, it applies to those aspects of discourse of official institutions that are not directly regulated by the government, or those which are not a formulation of the official policy of the institutions.

Types of interaction: community and cultural events, classroom interactions, business meetings, assemblies, plenary meetings, formal interviews, written documents.

Types of data collected: semi-structured interviews with community leaders, participant observation and field notes taken on the occasion of public events organised for and by the community, classes in the Saturday school, informal documentation

regarding the Community School, made available courtesy of one of my consultants (Escuela Comunitaria 2010).

4.2.3 Quasi-private discourse/informal interaction

This level encompasses informal discourse occurring in private contexts. However, I use the notion *quasi-private*, first proposed by Wodak *et. al* (1999), to reflect the fact that gaining access to truly private discourse is not feasible for an outside researcher, irrespective of the context.

Types of interaction: gatherings of family and friends, informal discussions of any type, interactions between classmates, housemates, colleagues.

Types of data collected: participant observation during community events, unstructured interviews, quasi-focus group discussions, informal conversations.

The above paragraphs provide an inventory of discourses and interactions I encountered during fieldwork. They also point to parallels between the classifications of discourse and interaction, and the macro-, mezzo- and micro-levels of language planning (see Section 4.1).

5. Language planning in the London Ecuadorian community

This section analyses activities and discourses mentioned above in the context of language planning, with the aim of answering the research questions asked in Section 1. Firstly, I discuss community activities as means of planning different domains of language use (5.1). Secondly, I look at how language planning and, potentially, identity planning, surface in actual instances of discourse (5.2).

5.1 Planning language through action

It is evident from the previous sections of this paper that the Ecuadorian community in London is well organised. Its members have access to a variety of services and activities, encompassing education, culture and leisure. At the beginning of this article, I posed a question of whether such activities can be analysed as language planning efforts. In the light of what has been said about the domains of language planning in Section 4.1, I devised a classification of actions and events, according to the language planning function they fulfil. This classification is presented in a form of a Table 1, followed by a short discussion.

Table 1. Community activities according to the levels and domains of LP

Type of discourse/ interaction	Actor	Level of LP	Domain of LP	Action taken
Public/ Formal	Ecuadorian Government	Macro	Status	Adopting the new migratory policy
			Corpus/ Acquisition	Development of school curriculum and teaching materials
		Mezzo	Status	Founding of the Ecuadorian House in London
Semi-public/ Semi-formal	The Ecuadorian House	Mezzo	Prestige	Linguistic Landscape of the Ecuadorian House
			Status	Spanish as medium of communication in the House
			Status	Organising/hosting Ecuadorian cultural events
		Status/ Acquisition	Hosting Spanish-medium traditional dance classes.	
	The Community School	Mezzo	Status/ Acquisition	Spanish-medium schooling for children
Quasi-private/ Informal	Individuals in their non-professional/ family roles	Micro	Status	Decisions about which language to use for social interactions
			Acquisition	Decisions about the language(s) spoken and taught to the children

Table 1 shows clearly that most of the activities on all levels of the Ecuadorian community are geared towards planning the status for Spanish. In my view, any initiative that expands the domains of language use should be viewed as planning its

status. This is, for example, the case of establishing the Ecuadorian House by the government. My interlocutors recognised that thanks to governmental involvement, the situation of an Ecuadorian migrant is now very different from how it used to be when no support existed, apart from diplomatic missions (Interviewee 2, 25.06.2011). The fact that an institution has been put in place to support the migrants enhances the possibilities of development for the London Ecuadorian community. The first bulletin published by the Ecuadorian House reveals that objective, referring to the institution as a ‘space for the strengthening of national identity’ (*Un espacio para el fortalecimiento de la identidad nacional*) (SENAMI 2010a). In linguistic terms, this translates into the emergence of a public space where Spanish, the first language of most Ecuadorian migrants, can enjoy the status of the official language within the host country.

Therefore, the establishment of the Ecuadorian House should be viewed as an instance of status planning. By the same token, community events such as picnics, football leagues and carnivals are instances of status planning, in that they introduce Spanish into London’s public space, and people who decide to attend those events could be seen as making a status-planning decision on the macro-level.

The undertakings contributing to both status and acquisition are classified as such because they involve young second-generation migrants, whose natural language of interaction with most of their peers is English. Corpus planning is virtually absent from the activities of the community. The teaching materials used in the Community School are, for the most part, developed for children attending school in Ecuador.

5.2. Planning language through discourse

This section is concerned with the second question I ask in Section 1: whether the discourse of language planning activities creates or reinforces in-group/national identity. Due to spatial and thematic constraints, data presented here hardly does justice to the patience of my consultants, and the amounts of time and energy they devoted to helping me in carrying out this research. More data, and a detailed discussion of discursive means of identity formation can be found in my previous work (Grzech 2011)⁸. In it, I adhere more strictly to the methodology of discourse analysis proposed in other studies of migrant communities (Clary-Lemon 2010; Wodak *et al.* 1999).

The instances of discourse presented here are only those directly relevant to language planning. The sub-sections are organised according to the domains of LP: planning status, acquisition, corpus, and prestige. For each domain, I chose to discuss only one topic, the one that surfaces most often throughout the data (cf. Wodak *et al.* 1999), and how it is realised on the different levels of discourse.

5.2.1 Status planning: Spanish as the official medium of communication

The standing a language has in society depends on many factors, but one of the most important of them is the legal status it enjoys, determined through legislation: a form of public discourse. In Ecuador, Spanish dominates over all other Ecuadorian languages, due to the provisions made for it in Article 2 of the Ecuadorian Constitution (2008):

(1)

⁸ Available upon request.

(...) Castilian is the official language of Ecuador; Castilian, Kichwa and Shuar are the official languages of intercultural relations. Other ancestral languages are of official use for the indigenous peoples in the zones which they inhabit and in terms established by law. The State will respect and stimulate their conservation and use.

(...)El castellano es el idioma oficial del Ecuador; el castellano, el kichwa y el shuar son idiomas oficiales de relación intercultural. Los demás idiomas ancestrales son de uso oficial para los pueblos indígenas en las zonas donde habitan y en los términos que fija la ley. El Estado respetará y estimulará su conservación y uso.

In the Ecuadorian Constitution (2008), languages other than Spanish are regarded as a part of national cultural patrimony, rather than fully-fledged systems of communication that could be used nationally and internationally. Consequently, Spanish is also the dominant language of the Ecuadorian minority in London, its institutions and activities.

In semi-public discourse, the symbolic domination of Spanish is reinforced by the *linguistic landscape* of the Ecuadorian House. The notion of linguistic landscape is concerned with the visibility of certain languages in the public sphere (Extra & Barni 2008) It is a 'scene where the public space is symbolically constructed through (...) marking of objects (material or immaterial) with linguistic tokens' (Shohamy *et al.* 2010: xi). The use of such tokens exceeds their informative function, indicating the symbolic ownership of a given space (Landry & Bourhis 1997).

However, in the case of groups that cannot claim exclusive ownership over a language, linguistic marking is not sufficient to successfully assert symbolic power (Bourdieu 1991) an identity. Non-linguistic, group-specific symbols also have to be employed to that end. In case of national groups, such symbols include flags, maps and other visual indexes of national identity. Therefore, I propose that it would be more adequate to refer to the resulting make-up of the public space as *ethnolinguistic landscape*.

The Ecuadorian House in London provides a good example of such ethnolinguistic landscape. Located in the city centre, just a short walk from St. Pancras Station, the House constitutes a hispanophone enclave in the heart of the British capital. Before entering, visitors can see a big Ecuadorian flag in the window. The colours of the flag - yellow, red and blue - are included in the design of posters decorating the walls of the House, and appear on promotional materials and information leaflets available inside. Written texts available in the House are at all occasions accompanied by indexes of Ecuadorian national identity: the colours of the flag and the flag itself. At a community picnic I attended, even beer provided by the organisers was colour-coordinated. It was not an Ecuadorian product, but one of the brands popular in the UK, cans of which are blue, yellow and red.

The place of Ecuadorian minority languages in this linguistic landscape is marginal. They occupy a place assigned to them in the 2008 Constitution: of the vessels of

cultural patrimony, rather than fully developed systems of communication. On the map of Ecuador hanging on the wall of the Ecuadorian House, the indigenous nations are pictured alongside images of the Ecuador's biological and cultural diversity, and grouped around the map of Ecuador according to the ecosystem they inhabit: the Pacific coast, the Andes, or the Amazon. Their languages are listed, but no more information is available about them. This reinforces the priority of Spanish in the House.⁹

5.2.2 Corpus and Acquisition planning: Spanish as a cultural value

This section focuses on teaching and learning the language in the diaspora. In the examples below, Spanish is rhetorically constructed as a common good, common heritage. If the future generations of migrants are to preserve their identity, the language needs to be safeguarded. One of my interviewees pointed to the relationship between language and identity, when talking about the UK-born children of migrants. He lamented that they 'forget the Latin American cultural traditions, that is, the language' (*se olvidan de las tradiciones culturales Latinoamericanas que es el lenguaje*). He expands on this idea in (2) below:

(2)

(...) Apart from supporting them in the language, so that they can express themselves, write, read and so that they can fully express themselves in the Castilian language, which is our language of communication, so...we want to also maintain the traditions, where we come from... the living traditions... (...) [F]or instance, we have done videos of what it means to be Latin American, what it means to be from Ecuador. We do traditional games with the kids, traditional children's songs, traditional children's dances. We try bit by bit (...) to revive these experiences we had as children in Latin America. So we want to transmit [them] to the new generations, because there are children who have no idea what a traditional Latin American story is, or a Latin American tradition.

(...) A parte de apoyarles en el lenguaje (...) para que se expresen, escriban, lean y se pueden expresar plenamente en el lenguaje Castellano, que es nuestro lenguaje de comunicación, entonces...queremos mantener las tradiciones también, de dónde venimos...tradiciones vivas... (...) por ejemplo, hemos hecho vídeos de lo que significa ser latinoamericano, lo que significa ser de Ecuador. Hacemos juegos populares con los niños, canciones tradicionales infantiles, danzas tradicionales infantiles. Tratamos poco a poco (...) de revivir estas experiencias que habíamos tenido como niños en Latinoamérica. Entonces queremos transmitir a las nuevas generaciones porque hay niños que no tienen ni idea que es un cuento popular latinoamericano o una tradición.

(Interviewee 2, 25.06.2011)

The desire to maintain the culture and the customs, expressed in the excerpt above, was translated into a mezzo-level language planning effort: the establishing of the Little Community School. As stated in its working papers, [one of the objectives of the

⁹ On the other hand, it has to be said that some Ecuadorian Houses in Spain, where Spanish as the community language is not under threat from English, do organise classes of Kichwa.

community school is to] ‘encourage the Ecuadorian and Latin American culture, promote the elements of our culture and the Castilian language’ (*Impulsar la cultura Ecuatoriana y Latino Americana, promover elementos de nuestra cultura y el idioma Castellano*). (Escuela Comunitaria 2010). Apart from promoting language acquisition, the School introduced a new domain of language use, thereby adding to the status of Spanish in East London. This, in turn, brought about changes in how the community is perceived:

(3)

The MPs (...) are also acknowledging us. They asked us to be present, through our traditional dances and our music, at various events organised by the municipality (...) when [the children] will see that the parents, the friends are dancing in the streets in the name of the Latin American community, with our music, our culture, it will affect (...) so that the little ones have more motivation to success and identify, identify with the Latin American culture.

Los diputados (...) nos están reconociendo también. Nos han pedido que a través (...) de nuestras danzas folclóricas y nuestra música que representemos en diferentes eventos que el municipio está llevando a cabo (...) Cuando [los niños] vean que los padres de familia, los amigos están danzando en las calles al nombre de la comunidad Latinoamericana con nuestra música, nuestra cultura, esto va a repercutir (...) para que (...) estos muchachos tengan más ganas de superarse e identificarse, identificarse con la cultura Latinoamericana.

(Interviewee 2, 25.06.2011)

The discourse of maintaining the heritage culture is intrinsically linked to language planning. However, as evident from (3) above, and (4) below, the language is not necessarily regarded as an issue in its own right. Rather, the community members seem to take it for granted that if the heritage culture is sustained, the future generations will also keep speaking their heritage language.

(4)

So this as well, we want to (...) demonstrate to them [the children] for instance what an Ecuadorian dance is, what a Colombian dance is, how is it to live in Ecuador, what are the traditions, customs, the history of our country, a history that is very rich; When it comes to literature as well, we try to tell them stories, traditional Latin American stories.

Entonces eso también nosotros queremos (...) demostrarles por ejemplo lo que es una danza Ecuatoriana, lo que es una danza Colombiana, como se vive en Ecuador, como son las costumbres, tradiciones, la historia de nuestro país, una historia muy rica; En la cuestión de literatura también, tratamos de contar cuentos...sobre todo los cuentos tradicionales Latinoamericanos.

(Interviewee 2, 25.06.2011)

The other aspect of acquisition planning in the community is planning the acquisition of English for adults who recently migrated. Different institutions, including the Ecuadorian House, provide English language classes. However, recent migrants often postpone attending them, as they find jobs and accommodation within the Latino Spanish-speaking networks. One of my interlocutors underlined this.

(5)

Obviously, the matter of integration is of the utmost importance. The language, as I was saying, is the main obstacle, so the classes address these issues, so that the people could this way or the other overcome this obstacle and integrate into British society.

Claro, el tema de la inclusión es importantísimo. El idioma como te digo es la barrera principal, entonces los cursos van dirigidos hasta allá para que las personas puedan de una u de otra forma vencer esta barrera e integrarse en la sociedad británica.

(Interviewee 1, 25.05.2011)

In my opinion, this quotation, in conjunction with what was said above, highlights an issue that is important for minorities around the world. Discourse and initiatives they engage in are aimed at enhancing group cohesion and maintaining the heritage culture, so that the community can progress as a group. At the same time, there is a widespread conviction that individual progress can only be achieved through full integration with the host country's society, which includes adopting its language and culture.

5.2.3 Prestige planning: talking about paradise

In the domains of language planning discussed above, the discourse was always embedded in, or followed by certain actions. This is, however, not the case in prestige planning, which is entirely realised through discourse. The strategy that best illustrates the case is the discursive creation of idyllic place: the Ecuadorian homeland. Strikingly, this is a recurrent topic on all levels of discourse. Linguistic means of realisation of this strategy are also similar across the all levels, and comprise rhetorical devices such as hyperbole and use of superlatives, with the objective of depicting Ecuador as a mythical land, diverse and beautiful.

(6)

Ecuador is home to rainforests, cloud forests, mountains, marshes, islands, beaches, deserts, valleys and snow-capped summits. Its rich biological diversity is only equalled by its cultural diversity. Many indigenous groups inhabit its regions. This diversity - accompanied by the short distances which one has to travel from one region to the other - converts Ecuador into a paradise for travellers.

Ecuador alberga bosques lluviosos, bosques nublados, montañas, páramos, islas, playas, desiertos, valles y picos nevados. La rica diversidad biológica es solamente igualada por su diversidad cultural. Muchos grupos indígenas habitan sus regiones. Esta diversidad, acompañada de

las cortas distancias necesarias para ir de una región a la otra, convierten al Ecuador en un paraíso del viajero. (MERU 2007)

The construction of Ecuador as an idyllic place is also achieved through contrasting it with Great Britain, as shown in (7) and (8) below.

(7)

A sustainable paradise, that's what Ecuador is. The commitment to protect the mega diversity of the natural, cultural and human environments of Ecuador is fundamental for this country, an exemplary model of sustainable tourism in Latin America. (...) Ecuador is a country abundant with remarkable contrasts, where the slopes of snow-capped summits of the Andes turn into tropical Amazonian jungle or to the beaches of the Pacific coast, full of vegetation (...). Located in a privileged place of the planet, [Ecuador] is divided into two hemispheres by the equator, and into four worlds by its geography (...).

Un paraíso sostenible, eso es el Ecuador. El compromiso de proteger la mega diversidad natural, cultural y humana del Ecuador es el objetivo primordial de este país ejemplo de turismo sostenible en América Latina. (...) El Ecuador, es un país colmado de admirables contrastes, donde las pendientes de los picos cubiertos de nieve de los Andes se convierten en selva tropical amazónica o en playas verdes en la costa del Pacífico (...). Ubicado en el lugar privilegiado del planeta (...) [el Ecuador] se encuentra dividido en dos hemisferios por la línea equinoccial y en cuatro mundos por su geografía. (...)

(SENAMI 2010a: 35)

The description of the UK, presented in the same publication is much less favourable. The emphasis is placed on the features of the United Kingdom that make it very different from the Ecuadorian paradise, but might nonetheless be appealing for migrants looking for economic opportunities.

(8)

The climate is mild, the agriculture, highly mechanised and subsidised. The service sector – especially insurance, finance and tourism – generates high income. The vast reserves of coal and iron (...) are partially depleted, but in recent years the deposits of the North Sea have turned the United Kingdom into an exporter of gas and petroleum.

El clima es templado, la agricultura, altamente mecanizada, es una actividad subsidiada. El sector de servicios – especialmente seguros, finanzas y turismo – son grandes generadores de divisas. Las vastas reservas de carbón y hierro (...) se encuentran parcialmente agotadas, pero en los últimos años los yacimientos del Mar del Norte convirtieron al Reino Unido en exportador de gas y petróleo.

(SENAMI 2010a: 37)

Both excerpts come from a free publication of SENAMI (2010a), distributed in the Ecuadorian House. Therefore, it can be assumed that the potential readers are familiar

with Ecuador and its diversity, which brings the prestige function of the text cited in (7) to the forefront. The examples cited above create a positive image of the country, rather than of the language itself. However, the feeling of national pride they inspire reinforces the prestige of the Ecuadorian Spanish. Who wouldn't want to be raised speaking the language of paradise?

6. Planning language, planning identity

This section builds on the data presented above in order to draw, or at least attempt drawing, some conclusions. The research questions presented earlier are restated here:

- 1) Can activities and discourse of a minority community be interpreted as instances of language planning?
- 2) Are those activities and discourse used to create the national/in-group identity of those engaged?

Throughout this paper, I hope to have shown that the answer to the first question is positive. In Section 5, I discussed the ways in which Ecuadorians in London plan their language both through interaction, and through discourse. Here, I explore the second issue. Can a relationship be established between planning language and planning identity?

Spanish certainly emerges from the data as a vehicle of common culture. Public discourse emphasises the Ecuadorian national culture as a factor of in-group cohesion. However, on the less formalised levels, it is not as much the national belonging, as the Latino roots that make people belong together (see Section 5.2.2). The discourse of 'us, the Latinos' emerges prominently from all the conversations I had with the consultants (Grzech 2011: ch.5).

Many of my interlocutors would agree that - paraphrasing Fishman (1991) - 'one cannot be Latino through English'. However, speaking Spanish is not a necessary and sufficient criterion of in-group belonging. The Spanish do not form part of the Latino community. Brazilians, on the other hand, can potentially be included. During my visits in the Community School, I met a child of Brazilian parents, who was admitted to class despite her first language being Brazilian Portuguese. Possibly, her parents were of the opinion that, language notwithstanding, exposure to the Latino culture is a value in its own right. This shows that although social networks of Ecuadorians (and Latinos) in London are cemented by the use of a common language, they are more than just linguistic communities of practice. A more accurate term, I argue, would be *ethnolinguistic* communities of practice, drawing on the perception of common Latin American culture to construct in-group identity.

Language planning is a salient aspect of the community's activities and of its discourse. However, the data presented above shows that it is largely viewed as a component of the heritage culture, rather than an issue in its own right. Consequently, it becomes clear that language planning occurring within the Ecuadorian community should be regarded as an instance of planning status for culture, whereby language is planned incidentally. Even in case of the Community School, where the focus on acquisition of Spanish is overt, language teaching is meant to be, above all, a vehicle for transmission of a

common (Ecuadorian and Latino) culture. Hence, despite the fact that micro-language planning is actively implemented, it seems that even those who put it into practice do not regard it as explicitly dealing with linguistic issues.

7. By means of conclusion

There are many worthwhile issues that, for the sake of clarity and space, I could not explore in this paper. Here, I would like to bring at least a few of them to the readers' attention. First of all, I should point out that this study only investigated first-generation migrants, who are rooted in Ecuador by virtue of their life experiences. This might well account for their assuming that safeguarding their culture will automatically result in the maintenance of the heritage language. How will the second generation migrants cater for the Ecuadorian culture? Will they do it at all?

Over the course of my fieldwork, I witnessed a practice of a traditional dance group for teenagers. The members code-switched and code-mixed constantly between Spanish and English, but it was English that functioned as the lexifier. However, the interactions with the dance teacher were through Spanish only. Such diglossic tendency also occurred among the children in the Community School. English was the language of peer interactions, while Spanish served as a medium of communication with the teachers. If the language really is to be maintained, the scope of conscious corpus and acquisition planning will have to be extended as the next generations grow up.

Comparing the findings of this study with patterns of discourse e.g. in Venezuelan or Peruvian communities could bring more insights into the research on language planning and linguistic construction of migrant identities. Moreover, Latin American governments are becoming more concerned with their migrant populations. Migratory policies similar to that implemented in Ecuador were put in place in Peru and Venezuela.

The interplay of language and identity planning could also be explored further by comparing the case-study of London with those of the Ecuadorians in a Spain, or in the United States. The Spanish community is in a fundamentally different situation, in that it is not excluded from the country's linguistic market. In the US, on the other hand, the Latino minority is the most numerous, and most widely discussed one. The issue of providing more space of Spanish, especially in public institutions, generates controversy and debate, which influences the perception of Latinos by the rest of the US society.

To conclude, I reiterate a point arising from this specific case-study, but applicable to many others around the world. Language is often seen as part of a culture, which leads to treating language planning as part of culture planning. However, like any other enterprise, if LP is to be successful in the long term, it needs to be undertaken explicitly, and have realistic goals and objectives of its own, be it on micro-, mezzo- or macro-level.

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