

*Shunguhuan Yuyai*: The Battle for Kichwa Language and Culture Revitalization in Ecuador as  
Thinking-Feeling and Performance

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An indigenous language with more than one million speakers in Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru, Kichwa is one of the most spoken indigenous languages in South America and an official language in Ecuador. Unfortunately, Kichwa is experiencing a rapid loss among young generations, which is leading to growing discontent about the education system, community and self-identity crises, among other issues. Furthermore, the situation of Kichwa is one example of a widespread indigenous language loss taking place worldwide, and it exemplifies the disappearance of indigenous cultures.

It has been predicted that, by the end of the XXI century, approximately half of 7000 World languages will be extinct (Austin and Sallabank 2014, 2). Some more pessimistic sources provide an extinction rate by the end of the century up to 90%. However, there are efforts being done to revitalize endangered indigenous languages globally and, although many programs are struggling in their efforts, there are successful examples of revitalization through these programs. The best studied examples include languages like Maori, Hawaiian, and Basque. The purpose of this project is to understand Kichwa language revitalization in comparative perspective with other language programs. Within this goal, this thesis addresses four main issues: The first will be to look at the growth and challenges faced by Kichwa revitalization movement. Then, the reasons and arguments that Kichwa revitalization activists provide for the undertaking of such task will be presented. This will be done with the purpose of drawing initial lessons from past and present failing projects attempting Kichwa revival. Lastly, the signs of hope for future and current revitalization projects from each interlocutor in my project will be presented and analyzed. With these goals in mind, I will present how Kichwa revitalization movements are operating in Ecuador and how these efforts influence the younger generation of speakers.

## **Methodology of Research**

The material for this undergraduate honors thesis was gathered through two methods: First, I did an extensive bibliographic review on different language endangerment scholarly articles and books with the purpose of providing a theoretical framework to the thesis. Secondly, I gathered information in the form of interviews to Kichwa and non-Kichwa people involved in the language revitalization movement in some form or whose personal experiences related to such movement.

### **1. Bibliographical Research**

I focused on indigenous language loss and revitalization articles with a special focus on various regions of the American continent and with a more general focus in other places like Europe and the Pacific Islands. The literature used for this thesis is in both English and Spanish; the literature in the first language being more on general theories about language loss and revitalization; the literature in the second language is more concerned with the case-study of Kichwa in Ecuador. However, there is some literature concerning Kichwa in Ecuador in English as well.

### **2. Ethnographic Research: Nature of Interviews**

The second method of gathering data was done during my trip to Ecuador. From June 28 to July 12 of 2016, I performed ethnographic fieldwork and expert consultations in the Northern central part of the country in the form of interviews. I interviewed eleven people in the capital city of Quito; in Otavalo urban center, and in some neighboring communities like Peguche. These interviews were semi-structured and the same questions, which were open-ended, were asked to every one of the participants. Verbal consent was asked from each of the participants

before the interview and interviews had different durations. Some of them were about twenty minutes long; whereas others were close to one hour for a total of more than six hours of recorded audio material. It is important to mention that the extracts from the interviews I have introduced in this thesis are, although very significant, but a part of the interviews I did with each participant. For the purposes of an undergraduate honors thesis, I have decided not to include the complete interviews here. Also worth mentioning, all the interviews, except the ones done with Carmen Chuquin and Michael Uzendoski, were in Spanish. Nonetheless, all of my participants were speakers of Kichwa at different levels of fluency and all were fluent in Spanish. The interviews done in Spanish were transcribed to English by me, therefore, all the passages that appear in the thesis are my transcription of my interlocutors' words. For the purposes of the research I kindly asked Uzendoski and Chuquin to do the interview in English, since they are trilingual and their English is fluent. In that sense, my transcription of their words in the passages is verbatim.

### **3. Results from the Interviews and the Concept of *Shunguhuan Yuyai***

From the eleven interviews, I found that all the participants expressed a clear importance for investing more resources and time in the revitalization of Kichwa language through projects of various types. By the same token, almost all of the participants agreed that Kichwa is being rapidly lost. In this sense, my interlocutors expressed various concerns from their personal and professional experiences that reflect essential subjects mentioned in the literature review. Among these main subjects, the most salient are: lack of prestige in social domains, lack of resources from state institutions, and racism and discrimination. However, the voices that express these concerns are also the ones expressing visions of hope through the personal narratives of both their collective and individual efforts in revitalizing Kichwa. In order to encompass the visions,

projects, and efforts of my interlocutors, I offer the concept of Shunguhuan Yuyai (Feeling-Thinking in Kichwa) with the purpose of explaining the emotional-intellectual commitment that each one of my interlocutors has towards Kichwa language. The saliency of Shunguhuan Yuyai, as appreciated in the last part of this thesis, lies in the diversity, creativity, and courage of my interlocutors' efforts and projects, such as the role of audio-visual digital production media in Kichwa language revitalization. In the introduction of this thesis, various interlocutors and their perspectives will be introduced as a way to support the argument and theoretical perspectives presented by the scholars in this discussion

### **Causes and Nature of Language Death:**

Human cultural and linguistic diversity is priceless in many aspects, including the knowledge it represents and the value importance for humanity in general, regardless of the degree to which it has been commodified for commercial purposes. This diversity is something that we, humankind, have taken for granted throughout our history until very recently. Since the expansion of European powers worldwide, the second industrial revolution in England, and finally, the empowerment of corporations in alliance with governments and global institutions, we can no longer take our cultural, linguistic, and ecological diversity for granted because it has been disappearing at a staggering rate. In the case of our languages, we have mentioned the massive language extinctions that have been taking place and thus, we emphasize the importance of language and culture revitalization efforts. Nonetheless, languages would not need to be revitalized if they were not endangered in the first place, thus entire systems of knowledge and belief would not be at risk of disappearing. But what causes the endangerment and consequent disappearance, in many cases permanent, of languages? In this section, I will consider both modern and historical causes of extinction of individual languages and complete language

families that have appallingly accelerated since the expansion of European imperialism throughout the world since the XV century.

Authors like Sarah Thomason look at processes of imperialism and colonization as the main source for massive language loss; however, she goes further and enumerates a series of causes that make a language, first, vulnerable and, then, progressively endangered until it finally dies out. In her book, *Endangered Languages: an Introduction*, a language becomes vulnerable when there is a “restriction of domain” for children who are learning it (only spoken at home and a few other social contexts) (Thomason 2015, 4). Thomason dissects the main causes of language death into six processes occurring worldwide. In this part of the introduction, I will introduce to the reader these processes for their better understanding of language death as he or she reads the thesis.

The massive invasion of European powers and their people triggered large language extinctions in continents like America and Oceania. Many native people were forced to learn the invader’s language at first to subsequently abandon their own languages during the past 500 years. Even in modern states, where language policies against minority or indigenous languages are non-existent, people are still losing their language due to social and economic factors (Thomason 2015, 19). Because of the aforementioned first cause, colonized minorities and indigenous groups are constantly pressured to speak the dominant language since available job positions require its use. Government public policies regarding the use of a dominant or official language can actually force a minority language-speaking community not to speak their language but only speak the dominant language instead. A notorious case is the draconian and fascist “English Only” movement, which advocates language policies that would lead to employees being fired if they speak another language other than English. Although this outrageous policy

cannot be implemented at a national level, it has been implemented in some states (Thomason 2015, 21). Stemming from facts like the aforementioned one, Thomason explains that there are minority speech communities willing to give up their traditional languages in order to achieve upward socio-economic mobility. From the vision of community members in such cases, there is no “good or bad” in choosing whether to preserve or let their language die, despite the agenda of anthropologists or linguists. A community is in its agency to abandon their language for whatever reason (Thomason 2015, 88-9).

Nonetheless, ideological discourses also come into play as neo-colonizing devices for language death. The “Melting Pot” society model is a clear example. As Thomason defines it, the “Melting Pot” society model is a nationalist discourse, in which the purpose of the model is to assimilate all immigrants (and indigenous peoples as well) into a single national identity. As we would expect, this national identity entails the adoption of English (in the case of Anglo countries like U.S or Australia) and, preferably, the abandonment of any other language. The presumption behind this assimilationist, monolingual discourse is, as Thomason puts it: “the more linguistically homogeneous our society is the more unified and harmonious it will be.” As we can see, assimilationist cultural discourses like the melting pot model can gravely affect endangered languages and thwart revitalization efforts (2015, 23).

Alongside ideologies and discourses, states can very easily adopt repressive policies regarding the use of minority languages benefitting only one language as the sole official one. Such was the case of U.S government’s imposition of Indian boarding schools and the forced and cruel indoctrination of indigenous children into Euro-American society. There are other states whose politics also affect minority and indigenous languages even though these policies are not initially designed to attack them (at least not directly) (Thomason 2015, 25). One example is the

forced removal of the San people from their ancestral lands and their relocation into government-designated camps by the Botswanan state and the consequent endangerment of the San language (2015, 26). This is a clear example showing that policies affecting minority languages easily overlap with economic pressure and ideologies of assimilation, for they usually act in conjunction to attack minority languages. Unfortunately, these factors do not act alone, for negative social attitudes from members of the dominant society about a language can exert great pressure on a community or group of speakers. For instance, some derogatory labels, such as “backward, uncivilized, worthless, or useless” have been used to describe indigenous languages and their speakers. This discrimination can cause speakers of these languages to feel ashamed of speaking their languages because of negative, stigmatizing social experiences associated with their use (Thomason 2015, 27). Nevertheless, negative social attitudes come from within indigenous communities as well, as people may and do have conflicting views about their languages across and within communities. For instance, there are those who believe that there is only one correct way of speaking an endangered language, and these “language purists” tend to stigmatize people who speak different dialects of the same language or who make grammatical mistakes because they are not fluent at it (Thomason 2015, 28). Furthermore, ethnolinguistic attitudes and discrimination of dialects within an already endangered language by its speakers can seriously thwart revitalization efforts and, often, seal the language’s future extinction. As Thomason herself puts it “if the community can’t be brought to accept an altered version of their heritage language, the language may be doomed” in response to a reported case where elders of a tribe ridiculed younger speakers for imperfectly speaking Chinook as a second language. As a result, these young speakers rapidly abandoned the language for English, thus putting the last nail on the coffin for this language (2015, 29).



Ironically, language endangerment can also occur by attempting to standardize the language for revitalization purposes. The standardization of one version of an endangered language and its imposition over others will most likely create internal conflicts. It is very common to see communities quite divided about what dialect should be the standard language. Given that a community with a higher socio-economic status and political power imposes its dialect as the standard version, other communities may be reluctant to let their children be taught that dialect. Also, when language identity in a community is deeply rooted on ancestry and past traditions, speakers can consider as deteriorated that intimate connection when they realize their children have replaced their heritage dialect with a standardized version of the language, which can also alienate or anger the elders of a community (Thomason 2015, 34-5).

Michael Uzendoski has carefully studied the Intercultural Bilingual Education schools set up by the government in Amazonian Kichwa communities in Ecuador. Originally from the United States, Uzendoski is a socio-cultural anthropologist who has worked over twenty years with Kichwa indigenous communities in the Napo Province. I had the opportunity to interview Uzendoski at FLACSO University in Quito in the summer of 2016. When I asked him about the standardization of Kichwa in the Amazon region by the government, he provided me with an important insight regarding this problem:

What I think is super important for Amazonia is that they do more to teach the local dialect. Because standardized Kichwa was a disaster for Amazonia because it's very different from the way Amazonian people speak. Many parents in the places I've worked chose to put their children in Hispanic schools because they said they were imposing Highland Kichwa on them. (Uzendoski 7/7/2016)

There is an important emphasis on dialectical cultural sensitivity that Uzendoski emphasizes. The imposition of Standardized Kichwa on Amazonian Kichwa speakers meant an alienation from their local linguistic identity. Therefore, Uzendoski's point is to standardize a language that caters to the local cultural needs of a group of speakers, which can be difficult to achieve when there are many dialects of one language.

Nonetheless, a culturally-insensible standardization project or the complete absence of a project is not by any means the only reason languages become endangered but rather one reason that acts in conjunction with others causes. Nonetheless, the problem previously mentioned by Uzendoski is a powerful cause of this relative endangerment. In this sense, authors like Thomason explain that projects that aim to revitalize endangered languages can be useless or counterproductive if cultural sensibility and linguistic unanimity is not achieved among the community or communities that speak the target language (2015, 35). In that sense, social scientists like anthropologists and linguists play an important role in this process, for good and bad. Like Thomason, Austin and Sallabank report that both lay people and linguists/anthropologists tend to fall in the trap of the objectifying and commodifying endangered languages, whether it is for scientific purposes or simply as a romantic view of these languages as long-gone traditions suitable for a museum-like depiction (Austin and Sallabank 2011,18). For instance, linguists may focus so much on studying a given language that may end up seeing it as an absolute end and disregarding the expectations and desires of the speakers and the communities ( Austin and Sallabank 2011,17). Also, rhetoric discourses that romanticize endangered languages as "priceless treasures" can become symbolic artifacts easily capitalized for display in tourist-like activities like exhibitions in museums and thus run the risk to become inaccessible to the community itself. By the same token, revitalization projects can commodify

endangered languages and in the process force the community to relegate the revitalization duty solely to the institutions/programs in charge of it. Thus the natural expression of the language is not used anymore but instead the language persists only in “artificial” formal environments, like classrooms (Austin and Sallabank 2011, 18-9).

Finally, there are different types of death a language can experience, mainly sudden death and gradual death. In the first type of death, the speakers of the language suffer physical decimation and death, whether by means of disease, warfare, genocide, natural disasters or a combination of these factors (Nettle and Romaine 2000, 51-2). Many Native American and Australian aboriginal languages suffered this fate as their speakers were rapidly exterminated by white European invaders (Nettle and Romaine 2000, 51-2). Gradual death is mainly characterized by “disuse” of the language by its speakers; this does not imply their physical decimation but actually their shifting to a dominant language “voluntarily” or by force from an oppressive agent. As time goes by, speakers start losing lexicon that used to be associated with its involvement in specific domains (Nettle and Romaine 2000, 53). Furthermore, oral art forms and culturally-salient explanations of the world and linguistic features distinctive of that language are lost by attrition until the language is no longer remembered or simply dies out with its last speakers (Nettle and Romaine 2000, 53).

Regarding the causes of language death, it is concluded that it is caused by a series of factors acting in conjunction. In summary, the most pervasive factors triggering language shift are: The destitution of indigenous peoples’ self-sustainable livelihoods by means of land dispossession, forced migration and relocation encouraged by insensitive state policies. These policies are supported by the economic interests of governments, corporations, and global markets. Acting in conjunction with this destitution, the strong hold of neo-colonialist discourses

and policies that, through government action and law and in conjunction with negative attitudes from speakers of the dominant language, exert a great pressure on minority speech communities and lower both their community and self-esteem. There has been a meaningful discussion on the causes of language death, but in order to fully appreciate the gravity of language loss, it is necessary to look at the consequences of this loss, which is the topic for the next section.

### **Consequences of Language Death**

Now, let us look at the various consequences of the massive language loss taking place today. Here, David Harrison's (2008) theoretical perspective is useful indeed. Harrison, explains in his book, *When Languages Die: The Extinction of the World's Languages and the Erosion of Human Knowledge*, the massive erosion human knowledge is undergoing right now due to the alarming extinction rate of languages worldwide. He argues that this substantial human knowledge erosion takes place in natural sciences, practical knowledge and universal human thinking. From his standpoint, languages are powerful symbols that store accumulated knowledge about culture and nature, and that we must do our best to document them before they disappear. One of the most uncertain, yet powerful, arguments made by Harrison advocating documentation and revitalization efforts of endangered languages is that "We simply do not know what we stand to lose with the loss of a single language" (2008, 7). Harrison, like various authors, explains that language becomes moribund when children of their communities stop learning it, regardless of the number of adult speakers. When children no longer learn their ancestral language, they stop learning the traditional knowledge embedded within it. In this sense, this knowledge is in danger to be lost forever. Furthermore, Harrison claims that when the indigenous language is replaced by the dominant language, there is a tremendous "disruption" in

traditional knowledge transmission, mainly because of the way it's embedded within the indigenous language itself (2008, 16). This argument has been expressed as a serious concern by several of my interlocutors. For instance, when I was in Otavalo, I had the opportunity to interview Imbaya Cachiungo, a Kichwa social-media language-revitalization activist in Otavalo, who explained to me that "A 30-year old mother is not talking to her child in Kichwa but in Spanish, then there is an internal family disruption" (Cachiungo 7/4/2016). The disruption Cachiungo talks about is the absence of intergenerational transmission of Kichwa from parents to their children. Furthermore, Cachiungo told me that, according to sociolinguistic studies done by the Universidad Católica, only twenty five percent (25%) of Kichwas were speaking the language (Cachiungo 7/4/2016).

In his second book, *The Last Speakers: The Quest to Save the World's Most Endangered Languages*, Harrison (2010) narrates his work and experiences traveling around the world to meet with the last speakers of moribund languages to record them. In the process, he interviews these last speakers and documents unique knowledge about their indigenous way of life, philosophy, and revitalization efforts to teach their endangered languages to young generations. In one of interviews, Harrison recorded the life story narrative of a Washoe elder named Ramona, who was one of the last speakers of her language, as she explained her family experience in the boarding school in Nevada: "[Our] teacher always told us, you know, that we couldn't talk our language, we had to learn English. That's what they always said to my sister when she went to boarding school in Stewart...I think the reason why a lot of the Indian kids never really kept up with their language was because they were told not to speak their language" (2010, 250-2).

Nonetheless, this experience is not an isolated instance but a collective sentiment of oppression that has been expressed by several of my interlocutors. One of the most prominent interlocutors I had was Arturo Muyulema, Kichwa language professor at the University of Guayaquil in Ecuador. A Kichwa from the Cachizahua community in the Bolivar Province, Muyulema is a member of the Tinkunakuy, non-government center and organization for culture and language revitalization. I had the opportunity of interviewing Muyulema and his colleague Manuel Paza in the Universidad Central del Ecuador in Quito. When I asked Muyulema about his childhood experience he shared the following:

In the 70s and the 80s, which were my schooling years, there was not any bilingual school. In the communities, we were forced to speak Spanish. I remember that my teacher used to say that we have to speak Spanish and congratulated us when we did so, but he never encouraged speaking in Kichwa for a lot of prejudices. This has made that, in a lot of families, we had not been raised as bilinguals (Muyulema 7/5/2016).

I found it disturbing and contradicting that a teacher, whose profession is imparting knowledge, would actually discourage the use of an alternative ancestral knowledge like Kichwa for whatever reason. Now, in relation to Muyulema's experience, Harrison's perspective gets at the core of the vision and feelings of these last speakers about the extinction with their languages and what that implies for their personal lives and the future of their communities. Harrison's theoretical perspective gives us an idea of the tremendous amount of human history, knowledge, and cultures we can be losing if we stand idle before massive language extinction.

Harrison would argue that the extinction of a language is a tragic event. But what happens when entire linguistic families disappear? This is an event exponentially more tragic than the loss of a single language in every aforementioned aspect. Linguists and researchers

Whalen and Simons (2012) in their article “Endangered Language Families” investigate the extinction of linguistic families or “stocks, which are the greatest reconstructable groups of related languages” (Whalen and Simons 2012, 156). In this study, the researchers look at the 372 linguistic stocks or families that have been registered as still spoken since 1950, and they found that since that date 15% of the world’s stocks have disappeared and 27% of the stocks since that year are close to extinction as of 2012 (Whalen and Simons 2012, 156). In that sense, the authors conclude that several world language families are indeed endangered, despite the lack of indicators allowing to determine the level of endangerment of many other stocks directly (Whalen and Simons 2012, 156). The most affected global region by these massive extinctions is the American continent, especially in countries like Brazil, where twenty linguistic stocks have disappeared since 1950 (Whalen and Simons 2012, 160).

The consequences of losing entire linguistic families are of the same tragic nature as losing a single language but their effects are tenfold. First, the extinction of linguistic stocks undermines linguists’ ability to devise a comprehensive theory presenting the full range of human constructions in the forms of languages (Whalen and Simons 2012, 170). Secondly, the extinction of linguistic families also has serious effects in humankind’s ability to make sense of ancient inventions that are rich historical and archaeological depositories of human achievement (Whalen and Simons 2012, 156). As an example, Whalen and Simons claim that it would have been impossible to understand the complex Mayan writing system had the entire Mayan language family disappeared during the Colonial period (2012, 170). Another consequence of language families’ extinction was discussed in a conversation I had with Doctor David Mora-Marin, linguistics professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, about this specific topic. During our conversation, he explained to me that losing linguistic families further

undermines our ability to understand migration patterns, significant socio-historic events, and relations between different societies when no written attestations are available (Mora-Marin 2017).

Unfortunately, loss of knowledge and culture are not the only consequences of language death but the loss of health and well-being are also an outcome of this linguistic erosion. In the scientific article “Aboriginal language knowledge and youth suicide” (2007), researchers D. Hallet, M. Chandler, and C. Lalonde investigated the correlation between indigenous language loss and suicide rates among young people in various indigenous communities in Canada, with special emphasis in British Columbia (BC) (Hallet, Chandler, and Lalonde 2007, 392). Here, the researchers link “cultural continuity,” in which they list variables like “self-government, land claims, education, health care, cultural facilities, police and fire services, and language, with the overall health and “well-being” of the community (Hallet, Chandler, and Lalonde 2007, 395). The researchers reported that, regardless of the presence or absence of other factors of cultural continuity, including “land rights” and “sovereignty”, “conversational knowledge” of the indigenous language for several communities in BC proved to be a decisive factor in correlation with the suicide rates among the youth in these communities (Hallet, Chandler, and Lalonde 2007, 392). In this sense, the suicide rates among young people was considerably lower in those communities in which the “majority” of its members (50 percent or more) had conversational knowledge of their ancestral language (Hallet, Chandler, and Lalonde 2007, 398). In contrast, communities whose members had little or no “conversational knowledge” of their language “reported suicide rates six times greater” in comparison (Hallet, Chandler, and Lalonde 2007, 398).



The concept of cultural and linguistic continuity as a mental health marker is supported by Imbaya Cachiungo, one of my interlocutors and active self-defined 'Kichwa militant'. From Otavalo, Cachiungo is a social digital media activist who has various websites for Kichwa language revival. As we talked in the Otavalo municipal library, I asked Cachiungo what would be the consequence of losing Kichwa completely. In response, he told me a quite sad story from the youth of a specific indigenous community:

I think the psychological impact is very strong. There is a community called Nataual where they do not speak the language anymore. I have spoken with youngsters in that town who are like 15 to 20 years old when we did the surveys. They say 'I am mestizo,' but I say, 'How come you are mestizo? You are in Nataual territory, physically indigenous, indigenous last name but they do not know the language and self-define themselves as mestizo and, of course, they know very well that their grandparents and last names are indigenous. This self-denial, this self-racism causes them psychological problems and also in their personality. (Cachiungo 7/4/2016)

Needless to say, Cachiungo's experience confirm the argument of cultural continuity mentioned in the study. This "self-racism", as Cachiungo puts it, can lead to personal identity crisis and eventually, mental health problems in young people belonging to ethnic groups historically stigmatized by members of dominant groups like white and mestizo.

In sum, the consequences of language death are broad. First, the loss of cultural and linguistic diversity represented in beliefs, rites, and forms of speech is a reality, as communities lose the languages they used to speak. Once this happens, the priceless loss of oral human history represented in many forms of oral art and life narrative becomes a loss for the community and anyone interested in the history of humanity. Furthermore, and in most cases, it is no longer

possible for future generations of people to re-learn how to speak the language that their ancestors abandoned. Finally, this loss carries with it an unknown number of grievous consequences taking their toll on health, psychological, and self-identity level. In the next section, I will present a series of theoretical scholarly arguments regarding the importance of endangered language revitalization. And once again, my Kichwa consultants will remind us about how important the stakes are.

### **Language Endangerment and the Importance of Indigenous Languages and their Revitalization**

Given the current state of affairs of indigenous languages today and the unprecedented rate of extinction is it really worth the effort to document and revitalize these languages? And, if so, why should the general public be concerned about this loss? The answers to these questions will provide a platform to raise awareness about the current loss of the Kichwa language in Ecuador, which is the ultimate concern and purpose of this thesis.

Sarah Thomason defines language endangerment as the condition in which a language “is at risk of vanishing within a generation or two,” which happens because the only “fluent speakers” left are those that are elder and where middle-age adults only have passive or non-fluent knowledge of the language (2015, 4). Furthermore, language endangerment occurs when children no longer acquire the language as their mother tongue or simply do not acquire it at all (2015, 4). Given such conditions, language death, which happens when there are no speakers of a language left, is a very imminent reality. Language endangerment is a process that has been occurring since languages have existed, but is a process that, just like global warming and mass species extinction, has been tremendously accelerated by anthropogenic causes (Thomason

2015, 4). Now, let us take a look at various authors who emphasize the importance of studying this alarming threat today.

In their book *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages* (2011), Peter Austin and Julia Sallabank, Linguistics professors at the School of Oriental and African studies, make the case for why it is worth worrying about language endangerment, as they list reasons like “linguistic science, cultural heritage, language and ecology, language and identity, and linguistic human rights” (6-9, 2011). They particularly emphasize their theory on “language ideologies and belief,” which are founded on rooted tendencies, “ways of thinking” and observations. These concepts are strongly related to people’s language actions and their “policies,” or what people are supposed to do (Austin and Sallabank 2014, 4). Austin and Sallabank further substantiate the importance of studying language ideologies and beliefs when doing language revitalization projects because the decisions people take regarding the use of a language in specific domains with different people and how frequently they do so find their explanation on this very same ideologies and beliefs people hold, which are implicitly embedded in society (Austin and Sallabank 2014, 4-5). This concept explains, for instance, the fact that in many big cities of Latin America, including in Ecuador, indigenous peoples and languages are seen with indifference or shame and the implicit (and sometimes explicit) social prejudice these people are subject to.

Austin and Sallabank explicate the theory of language ideology and beliefs in terms of “false consciousness” (2014). This means that people are not fully conscious (if they are at all) of the ideas motivating their attitudes, actions, and “policies” about language (2014, 6). Now, what does this have to do with language endangerment? These ideologies are the underlying influence on people’s perceptions and practices regarding use or non-use of a language. Therefore, they should be understood to appreciate the scale of language endangerment (Austin and Sallabank

2014, 7). Austin and Sallabank argue that it is not only possible but necessary to bring to the surface unknown and “unconscious” positive ideologies about languages to improve revitalization efforts (Austin and Sallabank 2014, 7). Similarly, it is necessary to defy the “correctness” and widespread acceptance of “conscious” ideologies that in any form promote social stigmatization and the rejection of minority languages, dialects, and accents (Austin and Sallabank 2014, 7).

This concept of false consciousness was explained by one of my youngest interlocutors: Toa Maldonado. Originally from Otavalo town, Toa is a young Kichwa architect working for Otavalo municipality. As my first interlocutor, she gave me the opportunity to interview her at her house on my arrival to Ecuador. During our interview, Toa explained to me the importance of memories and good moments in relation to child motivation during our interview:

I think that for a child in order to get motivated, has to do a lot in what is generated at that moment: the moment to speak, the moment to live. If that moment has a good memory, I think that it could be in different activities. If he starts at home, where would be the place where he could get motivated. If his family speak it, reproduces it with his neighbor and that is not a product of reject within his family because that happens a lot of times. The father says: "No, do not talk to him in Kichwa. Instead, teach him English" and that happened to a classmate of mine. Then, if we find at home that lack of interest then there will be a negative memory. (Maldonado 6/29/2016).

In her quote Toa places an important emphasis on memories through moments in which experiences in childhood are generated. Her main point is that the quality of experiences generated at moments between children and their environment is crucial for children’s attitude towards the use of Kichwa in their adulthood.

By the same token, the concept of “false consciousness”, as described by Austin and Sallabank, can be extrapolated with Toa’s reflection in the sense that people’s attitudes about using Kichwa come from memories in association with good or bad experiences they had in their childhood. In this sense, the memory-experience association proves to be an implicitly powerful influence in speaker’s policies towards Kichwa. Another important theoretical perspective is provided by linguists Suzanne Romaine and Daniel Nettle in their book, *Vanishing Voices* (Romaine and Nettle 2000). They point to globalization as the main instrument of neo-colonization causing massive language extinction. They argue that the main causes for language death are extra-linguistic and are not a natural process but rather a human-induced effect where an oppressed group either physically disappears or is forced to abandon their language due to socio-economic conditions that are backed up by political decisions (2000, 90-1). Following this line of thinking, they argue that “language should not be seen in isolation but as one outcome of a more general ecological and economic matrix...without a socioeconomic basis a language will not thrive” (Romaine and Nettle 2000, 91). In the same way, Romaine and Nettle emphasize that any initiative of revival must begin by focusing in the “inter-generational transmission” of the language from parents to children. They further affirm that without this elemental focus at the family level, revitalization efforts involving higher domains, such as formal education and “government” are futile in the long run (2000,177). The intergenerational transmission of an indigenous language like Kichwa in urban centers is critically endangered, as Muyulema, during our interview, explained that:

The parents of children and teenagers, who are living in the cities are no longer speaking Kichwa. They are losing their linguistic identity, so we do not know what is going to

happen to them. Will they be Spanish-speaking monolinguals when they grow up?

(Muyulema 7/5/2016)

Muyulema expresses his concern regarding the future generation's cultural and linguistic continuity of Kichwa. His worries conform to Nettle and Romaine's argument on intergenerational transmission. Furthermore, Romaine and Nettle also argue that, in order to make language revitalization work, activists and social scientists should focus their efforts in encouraging and sensibilizing the local community of speakers (and non-speakers) to use their language again before investing time and resources in other projects (2000, 179).

Just like Austin and Sallabank, Romaine and Nettle criticize the "salvage linguistics" approach that only focuses in creating artificial stores of endangered languages like dictionaries and grammar databases without actually caring for the demise of the target language (2000, 179). Conclusively, they argue that when a community is empowered and in charge with the maintenance of their language, revitalization efforts are much more successful. That is the case for the Karaja indigenous tribe of central Brazil and the Shuar nation in Ecuador. Both Amazonian societies have ensured the transmission of language and culture by exerting agency over their children's and adults' education. They have done so by developing writing systems in their languages, culturally-sensible teaching materials, radios and other technological tools (Romaine and Nettle 2000 183-5).

Language revitalization efforts are also taking place in other countries in Latin America. One of the most remarkable examples is the maintenance and preservation of Mayan languages in Guatemala. Nora England (1998) reported that the standardization and implementation of a "unified Mayan alphabet" designed and approved by Mayan peoples was possible when the Academy of Mayan Languages in Guatemala was officially granted autonomous power in 1991

(England qtd in Grenoble and Whaley 1998, 106). Besides the Academy of Mayan Languages, there are other organizations in Guatemala directly involved in the preservation of Mayan languages in which Guatemalan universities like Universidad Mariano Galvez (UMG) and Universidad Rafael Landivar (URL) offer Bachelor's degrees graduate specializations in linguistic and sociolinguistic studies of Mayan languages (England qtd in Grenoble and Whaley 1998, 109). In addition, Oxlajuuj Keej Maya' Ajtz'iib' (OKMA), founded by Nora England herself in 1990, is one of the strongest and most prominent organizations involved in the production of pedagogic and research material in various Mayan languages like "K'ichee', Achi, Kaqchikel, Q'anjob'al and Poqoman" (Grinevald qtd in Brenzinger 2007, 68). In addition, the program constantly trains native Mayan languages speakers in various subfields of linguistics and pedagogy with the purpose of helping Mayan languages revitalization in the communities through their own trained members (Grinevald qtd in Brenzinger 2007, 68). Unlike other organizations in Guatemala, Ecuador and the rest of Latin America, OKMA is directed and run by members of the several Mayan communities, thus having more sovereignty on their goals and the ways in which these are achieved (Grinevald qtd in Brenzinger 2007, 68).

Returning to the theoretical debates on language preservation, linguists like Stephen Anderson emphasize the necessity of language revitalization and give value to communities' efforts in so doing. Anderson (2012) explains in his book, *Languages: A Very Short Introduction*, that a community can learn to use a dominant language to their advantage while at the same time retaining their ancestral language. In this sense, he debunks the false dichotomy stating that if a socio-economically disadvantaged group of people want to improve their status, they must abandon their ancestral language and culture and assimilate into the dominant (Anderson 2012, 44). Many communities have a desire to hold on to their socio-cultural identity

at different degrees and many feel constant pressure of assimilation by the dominant society with which they interact daily and the government that rules the country they find themselves in. From this line of thinking, Anderson provides two essential arguments that advocate the essence of language revitalization: the first argument states that people must be able to use their ancestral language in order to retain a sense of meaningful ancestry, socio-cultural “identity,” and “cultural” heritage. The second argument states that the preservation of a people’s ancestral language does not entail their exclusion from using other dominant languages to enhance their collective goals and status among the dominant society (Anderson 51, 2012). In accordance to this reasoning, Anderson does not favor a situation of monolingualism in either the ancestral or the dominant language because this would imply either isolation from the rest of the world, in the first case, or total assimilation and loss of the indigenous identity, as in the second case. Instead, he advocates for preservation of the indigenous ancestral language and integration to the wider world by adopting a global language and, thus creating a bilingual setting where people can move back and forth in different worlds by using different languages.

Just like Anderson, Mark Turin, linguistic anthropologist professor at British Columbia University, makes important arguments regarding the significance and nature of language loss and revitalization in his article “language revitalization” (Turin 2016). One of this arguments is that “language is so heavily intertwined with cultural knowledge and political identity that speech forms often serve as meaningful indicators of a community’s vitality and social well-being” (Turin 2016, 1). In this sense, the authors assert that “linguistic endangerment” is neither an unavoidable fate nor a “natural process” but the factor of socio-political conditions imposed by forms of imperialism by high political powers that often take the form of both ancient and neo-colonialism and modernization/globalization. To respond to this intrusive and harmful neo-



colonization, Turin points to the necessity of language revitalization programs with the speech communities because they are not only focused on reviving disappearing linguistic practices for scholars to study but constitutes a de-colonizing methodology allowing victimized speakers to respond back against globalization (2016, 2).

In summary, the first key point in understanding language revitalization efforts is the concept of ideologies and beliefs about language use and prestige, for the survival of a language depends on how important their speakers think their language is for their lives. Languages do not become endangered in isolation today, but this endangerment is caused by intensive contact with speakers of a more dominant, prestigious language. In that sense, ideas and attitudes from speakers of the dominant language towards speakers and their endangered language influence the value of revitalization efforts considerably. Equally important, the heart of a successful revitalization effort lies in the safe transmission of the language from parents to their children and among family members. While the communities ensure the legacy of their language to their children, they can also benefit themselves by using a more dominant language for their interests and still preserve their tongue. The same principle is true in reverse: the use of the indigenous language by a community does not translate to their isolation from the rest of society. Furthermore, language death is actually triggered by anthropogenic factors rather than by natural factors, and that these are extralinguistic—mainly expressed through the ideological and physical oppression of one group of people over other(s).

### **Ecuador: An Introduction to the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the nation-state**

With more than 12 million inhabitants within its borders, Ecuador is one of the smallest countries in South America but one with the highest linguistic and ethnic diversity. The country is divided by three dominant natural regions: the Andes or Highlands, the Pacific Coast, and the

Amazon Basin. Each of these regions is inhabited by indigenous peoples, but also by mestizo population (mixed race descendants of white European and Indigenous ancestors who have adopted the Hispanic mainstream Ecuadorian culture) (Kendall and Haboud 2002, 359). Afro-Ecuadorians (descendants of Africans brought as slaves) and white people are also present in the country's population; the latter historically have maintained themselves as social elites since the colonization of Ecuador despite being a minority (Kendall and Haboud 2002, 359-60).

As the indigenous language with the greatest number of speakers in Ecuador and a salient symbol of interculturality in this country, Kichwa is one the descendants of the ancient Quechua brought by the Inca Empire to present-day Ecuador during its expansion. This Quechua replaced the various indigenous languages spoken in that region and became the lingua franca of the empire (Velupillai 2015, 345). During the Spanish colonial rule, Quechua was used as the lingua franca to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity and also as a means to control them. In this sense, the Spanish regime facilitated the spread of Kichwa throughout Ecuador, and became the mother language and the mode of inter-personal communication for many indigenous people across the different regions (Haboud and King 2002, 367). Velupillai explains that the language enjoyed "prestige" among the various indigenous populations, as its use was fostered by the Spaniards as a lingua franca among the indigenous people to facilitate commerce and hegemonic relations of dominance by the Europeans.

I must clarify that there are strong debates regarding whether the different varieties of Quechua in South America should be considered as dialects of the same language or different related languages with a common ancestor. For the purposes of this thesis, Kichwa or Quichua, as pronounced and written in Ecuador and Argentina by its speakers, is a member of the wide Quechuan family occupying a great part of Eastern South America (Adelaar and Muysken 2004,

179-84). In this sense, linguists Willen Adelaar and Pieter Muysken (2004) classify Ecuadorian Kichwa as “Quechua IIB” dialect along with other dialects like Quechua I, Quechua IIA, and Quechua IIC,” spoken in various parts of Peru and Bolivia (2004, 184). Despite this classification, it was very clear to me that my interlocutors, all of whom are speakers of Kichwa at different levels of fluency, made an unequivocal distinction between the Ecuadorian variety and the rest. Therefore, they consider it to be a separate language in its own right, a separation which may be based on both linguistic intelligibility with other Quechuan dialects but also based on geo-political and cultural identity. Nevertheless, the argument advocating Kichwa as a separate language is supported by linguistic genetic research indicating a “profound transformation” in the Quechuan varieties found in Ecuador and Colombia at the complex morphological level (Adelaar and Muysken 2004, 187).

Returning to the socio-historic context of Kichwa in Ecuador, it is well-known that Kichwa-speaking people were largely confined to rural areas; nevertheless, heavy migration of indigenous Kichwa peasants to urban centers took place shortly after Ecuador’s independence. This migration brought intense contact of Spanish and Kichwa speakers but also discrimination and social stigma from the first group against the latter (Velupillai 2015, 345). Consequently, Kichwa quickly lost prestige as the *lingua franca*, for it was (and still is by some) regarded as a backward language that only the Indian peasantry is supposed to speak. Furthermore, the contact and pressure exerted by Spanish, now the dominant language, and Kichwa was such that younger children, descendants of migrant peasants, created a mixed language called *Media Lengua*, as Velupillai describes (2015, 344-5). As she explains, *Media Lengua* (which is a pejorative term for it translates to “half-tongue”) “did not emerge through any need for communication, as speakers knew both Spanish and [Kichwa], but rather through the expressive needs of a

community that neither identified fully with the urban Hispanic nor with the rural [Kichwa] culture” (2015, 346). However, Media Lengua is only spoken by around 1,000 speakers or so because in the last generations many more Kichwa youngsters have been shifting to Spanish monolingualism (Velupillai 2015, 343-6).

Currently Kichwa is spoken across the country, and it splits into two main varieties spoken according to geographic region: The “Highland” Andean variety and the “Lowland” Amazonian variety. King and Haboud report that within the Highland Andean variety there are three main dialects: “Northern (spoken in Pichincha and Imbabura provinces); Central (spoken in Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Bolivar, and Chimborazo provinces) and Southern (spoken in Cañar, Azuay, and Loja) (Haboud and King 2002, 364-5). For the “Lowland” Amazonian variety, “Bobonaza (spoken in Pastaza province); Tena (spoken in Napo province); and Limoncocha (spoken in Orellana province) are reported (Haboud and King 2002, 365). Haboud also reported that by 1998 there were two million Kichwa speakers, many of whom had their level of bilingualism at different degrees (Haboud and King 2002, 366). Other sources like the UNESCO Atlas of languages (2010) report that there are seven main dialects of Kichwa and these are named according to the following provinces: Imbabura, Chimborazo, Loja, Napo, Cañar, Pastaza, and Salasaca (the latter not a province)(Moseley 2010).

The aforementioned dialects in the previous paragraph are either classified as “definitely endangered” or “severely endangered” and have in total approximately 818,000 speakers in all Ecuador (Moseley 2010). It is important to clarify that there are no reliable measures to tell who is Kichwa by means of language fluency and self-identity when we have intersectionalities with geography and migration to urban centers. It is a misguided stereotype to associate countryside with Afro-Ecuadorians and indigenous peoples, even though they mostly have lived in these

areas historically. Thus many people believe that indigenous people who migrate to the city stop being “indian” and become mestizo. Similarly, such exclusion also occurs when “socio-economic” upward mobility is obtained by these people (Haboud and King 2002, 369). In this sense, this racial discourse of fixed geography disenfranchises urban, educated, and well-off indigenous peoples from their identities because there is a strong socially-constructed association with indigeneity with the rural life, poverty, and low education. If for any reason, an indigenous person does not match such profile, he or she is no longer considered indigenous. I argue that this stereotype is another neo-colonialist discourse aimed to disempower minoritized groups in Ecuador and elsewhere. However, Kichwa language has been used in the last decades as a powerful political “symbol” for the advocacy of cultural and linguistic rights by many indigenous organizations, including the CONAEL. By the same token, it has also been used for other purposes, such as religious conversion by churches; tourism advertising, and partisan political popularity (Haboud and King 2002, 367-8).

Among many indigenous communities around the world, language shift from the native tongue to the tongue of the colonizing society is a widespread social phenomenon, and indigenous communities of Ecuador are no exception. In the anthology, *Voces e imágenes de las lenguas en peligro* (2013), Researcher Manuel Paza Guanolema writes in his article, “El papel de los pueblos indígenas y sus lenguas en la construcción del estado plurinacional desde su propia visión” (Role of indigenous peoples and their tongues in the construction of the plurinational state from their own vision), argues that the globalized market and its adoption by underdeveloped countries’ capitals, such as Quito, encourage cultural homogeneity by means of cultural intolerance against indigenous languages and cultures other than the dominant mestizo-Spanish customs and language (Paza 2013, 250 qtd in Haboud and Ostler).

Unfortunately, this tendency to repress the indigenous has also persisted in formal education and politics. In the anthology *New World of Indigenous Resistance: Noam Chomsky and Voices from North, South, and Central America* Maria Yolanda Teran, Kichwa researcher and author of “Kichwa Resistance in Ecuador”(2010), relates from her personal experience that both her siblings and parents suffered “racism” and bigotry from other people when they had to relocate in the city of San Gabriel. At schools, children were obliged to speak only Spanish and remove their traditional clothes to be accepted. In this way, and despite Teran’s mother’s efforts to preserve Kichwa, she and her siblings lost oral fluency in their native tongue (Teran 2010, 252 qtd in Meyer and Maldonado).

Other researchers like Luis Macas Ambuludi, Kichwa anthropologist and linguist, confirm Maria’s experience by accusing formal education of serving as an alienating agent of indigenous cultures by enforcing upon them a very Eurocentric-based view of life that does not account for Kichwa realities and language and dismisses them altogether (2010, 240-41). He further explains that the main goal of formal education in Ecuador is to homogenize students into a monocultural framework and, in this way, abide to the requirements of a globalized, capitalist market (Macas 2010, 240-41 qtd in Meyer and Maldonado).

Such a view is confirmed by the professional and personal experience of one of my interlocutors: Luzmila Sambrano. I met Sambrano through my host and adoptive mother in Ecuador and had the opportunity of interviewing her at her cultural center. Sambrano, director of the cultural center, a Kichwa teacher and a mother who strongly emphasizes her Kichwa heritage preservation, expressed her view regarding the role of schools on the history of indigenous peoples:

We live in an Ecuador that it is so-called pluricultural, multiethnic, and multilingual. But in schools we do not even know the national reality of our peoples. Thus there is a weak formation in the curriculum of schools at a national level...if students do not know the reality of our peoples, let alone their knowing our language. (Sambrano 7/9/2016)

Sambrano emphasizes the gap between discourse and the reality of the teaching of multicultural history from a Eurocentric focus that alienates indigenous students from their people's histories and invisibilizes them at the same time. Sambrano's criticism of schools' curriculum can be seen as an intentional anti-colonial methodology as characterized by scholars like Linda Tuhiwai Smith. In her book *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), Tuhiwai Smith claims that colonial education was the instrument with which European powers imposed their knowledge and culture over indigenous peoples. The repression of indigenous languages, knowledges, and cultures by both religious and secular schools was done with the purpose of assimilating these populations (1999, 64)

Unfortunately, language loss does not only take place in big cities, but in indigenous communities as well. It has been reported that only adults who are above 40 years old present a fluent, constant use of Kichwa, whereas the youngest generations are only speaking Spanish in their majority (Pazmiño 2013, 229 qtd in Haboud and Ostler). Alliwa Pazmiño (2013) in her article, "sondeo de vitalidad de la lengua Kichwa en comunidades serranas" (vitality reconnaissance of Kichwa language in High land communities" performed a sociolinguistic survey in which people of various Kichwa communities in provinces like Pichincha, Cotopaxi, Bolivar and Chimborazo were interviewed regarding their attitudes towards Kichwa (2013 227-8 qtd in Haboud and Ostler). In these interviews, participants were asked questions like "What is your mother language?", "What language do you prefer to speak?", and "What language do you

“speak the most at home?” (Pazmiño 2013, 227 qtd in Haboud and Ostler). In communities like San Antonio, Pichincha, which experiences heavy non-indigenous migration, Pazmiño reports that 54% of participants feel comfortable speaking only Spanish, 32% speaking both languages, and only 15% feels comfortable speaking Kichwa (2013, 228). Furthermore, she explains that, in communities like San Antonio of Cayembe, “hispanization”(castellanización) has had a stronger influence since dairy industry and floriculture has attracted people from other regions. Many other young men migrate to bigger towns and cities attracted by opportunities to make more money, which also affects their use of the language. Finally, Pazmiño concludes that in most of the surveyed communities there is an alarming rate of Kichwa loss in young generations. Whereas 90% grandparents and 75% of parents speak Kichwa, only 4% of grandchildren use Kichwa as their mode of communication (Pazmiño 2011, 230 qtd in Haboud and Ostler). There is a serious attrition of Kichwa language in these communities, for many children are neither learning nor speaking any Kichwa with their family at all.

In the next section, I will introduce a brief history on the first political indigenous movements in Ecuador in the 70s and their consequent expansion and strengthening during the 80s and 90s. As it will be shown next, these political movements and the ideologies in which they are based were an essential medium for indigenous peoples to reclaim their rights on land, sovereignty, and culture; including an ideal of intercultural bilingual education.

### **From Political Struggle and Ideology to Realization: The Cementation of Intercultural Bilingual Education in Ecuador from a Political Indigenous Fight**

To understand the current state of affairs of the Kichwa people in relation to their cultural rights it is important to look at the history of the political indigenous movements in Ecuador that were born in the XX century. Amalia Pallares argues in her book *From Peasant Struggle to*



Indian Resistance (2002) that indigenous communities were largely confined to rural areas and that migration to big cities and interaction with mestizos was rare (Pallares 2002, 14). She explains that, during the 1970s, stronger indigenous political movements rose up claiming political, economic, and cultural rights in addition to asserting their self-determination as Indians. The first important political movement that would raise was called Ecuador Runacunapac Richarimui or Ecuarunari (abbreviation of Kichwa name that means ‘The Ecuadorian Indian Awakens’) (Pallares 2002, 16). This was a pan-Indian movement that aimed to rally all the indigenous groups in Ecuador for a common cause: to improve their civic status and lifestyle condition by demanding the Ecuadorian government to re-evaluate the constitution.

During the 1980s, another very important political organization advocating for indigenous rights in Ecuador was created: CONAIE or Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador). This organization formally presented sixteen “demands” that included the right for a bilingual education and the guarantee of learning and speaking in one’s indigenous language but also other demands concerning land rights, health care among others (Pallares 2002, 16-8). CONAIE was the first organization in exerting a demand for a pluricultural Ecuadorian state, where all the indigenous groups of Ecuador would be officially recognized in addition to their cultural rights of being respected and enforced.

With the self-assertion of many indigenous groups as nations, Pallares points out the transition from an ideology that underscored land rights as the primordial objectives of indigenous people to assert their sovereignty. Nevertheless, the plurinationalistic movement would have a central focus on the establishment of an official program for bilingual cultural education in combination with political empowerment (Pallares 2002, 186-7). In addition to this

new political ideology, presidencies like Jaime Roldos'(1979-1981) with his inaugural short speech in Kichwa, and the new ideological movement of "neoindigenismo" (new indigeneity) both in Ecuador and throughout Latin America would provide the noble ideals of indigenous activism with a reckoning force (Pallares 2002, 186-8).

According to Pallares, the new indigenous political movements in Ecuador acted under the "neoindigenista" (neo-indigenist) ideology, which acted on two essential principles: First is that indigenous peoples be seen as human beings and not simply as "objects" to experiment with, thus arguing for their rights to be respected and enforced. Second and most important, it adopted an anti-paternalistic, anti-neocolonial stance by demanding that the government re-evaluate the constitution to accommodate the pluriculturality and multilingualism of the various indigenous nationalities in the country. By the same token, it charged the government with responsibility of ensuring the respect and enforcement of these rights as well as accepting and acknowledging its responsibility on the ongoing "cultural genocide" of indigenous people in Ecuador (Pallares 2002, 188-9). Later on, indigenous activists in conjunction with the government-sponsored seminar program "Nueva Vida" (new life) in 1980 developed the first Kichwa alphabet and allowed various social workers, educators, anthropologists and linguists from different parts of the country to unite in this endeavor by sharing their knowledge.

In addition to the first alphabet for Kichwa language, other set of demands were sent for approval. The official allowance for "use of Kichwa names in the registry" and the eviction of the Summer Institute of Linguistics or SIL (a religious Christian organization dedicated to transcribing the bible in the world's languages) were conceded by the government. Unfortunately, "provincial literacy programs" and the autonomy of indigenous people to design and organize educational programs in their territories were refused by the government (Pallares

2002, 199-200). This refusal meant that there was still a long way to go in the establishment and design of truly indigenous educational programs aimed to the Kichwa culture and language revitalization at that time. Pallares argues that the control of educational programs for indigenous peoples managed by themselves would allow them to gain more agency and determination in tackling issues like racism in the education system, as it is currently present in Ecuadorian mestizo schools and would allow for a cultural sensibility where the indigenous Andean history and knowledge would have an equal or greater saliency over the imported, foreign European history and knowledge (2002, 202).

The improved realization of this ideal of indigenous autonomy in education came with the creation of the Dirección Nacional de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (National Directory of Intercultural Bilingual Education) or DINEIB in 1989 (Haboud 2002, 386). DINEIB is considered as the most important amendment to the intercultural bilingual education (IBE) process taken so far in Ecuador. Duties such as the implementation and upkeep of standardized Kichwa; the creation, design, and development of culturally-sensible “curricula” along with education programs tailored for the target communities were the main responsibility of DINEIB, which worked in conjunction with CONAIE to achieve such goals (Haboud 2002, 386). Furthermore, DINEIB contributed to an unprecedented creation and improvement of academic teaching materials in Kichwa and “pedagogical” methodologies by the creation of 53 “pilot schools” throughout seven Kichwa provinces, in which it was reported that 175 teachers and 4000 learners participated in the program by 1993. This salient program designed by DINEIB was called Proyecto de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural (Intercultural Bilingual Education Project) or PEBI; this project was also possible between an alliance between the Ecuadorian and German education governments (Haboud 2002, 387).

Nonetheless, it must be said that DINEIB had various faults and limitations in their implementation of IBE (intercultural bilingual education). On one hand, DINEIB did not specify the even distribution of Kichwa and Spanish in different levels of basic education. In that sense, bilingualism was desired but what was not specified was the degree of bilingualism and bi-literacy in Kichwa nor by which models that bilingualism was going to be achieved (Haboud 2002, 388). Another key liability DINEIB ran into was the lack of “qualified” bilingual teachers for Kichwa. Despite “program camps” for IBE training, the actual implementation of Kichwa in the classroom was far from the expected ideal, as teachers themselves felt insecure about their own language and teaching skills and also expressed doubts about the potential of Kichwa as an academic language (Haboud 2002, 388). Among other factors hindering the implementation of Kichwa in class was the prejudiced, negative attitude from Spanish monolingual school staff (including deans and teachers) and many families-mostly in some poor rural communities-whose preference was their children being taught in Spanish for reasons mainly based on a desire to achieve a higher socio-economic status (Haboud 2002, 388).

With the foundation of the DINEIB, Pallares claims that “educational policy was the site where mestizo hegemony had been broken” (2002, 204). However, the “gap” between the establishment of new goals and projects for a bilingual education in Kichwa and the actual social-public policies that would enforce it was just too big. Therefore a new platform of action was needed to tackle this problem, and it became known as Plurinationalism (Pallares 2002, 204). Under this ideal and political movement, Kichwa and other indigenous nations sought to promote their sovereignty and right lands to fight dispossession. As Pallares argues, without their own lands, native people would easily fall prey to authoritarian government rulings and invasions from transnational private corporations (2002, 208-9). These factors combined would

set the grounds to a heavy economic dependence and massive migrations to big cities, where Kichwa culture and language is most likely to be lost through assimilation into mainstream Ecuadorian society. The fact that the Ecuadorian government had failed to include land rights and sovereignty within the discourse of pluriculturalism as a political stance on indigenous people led many indigenous activists to adopt the political movement and goal of plurinationalism as they rejected terms like “cultures” and “ethnic groups” but denominated themselves as “nationalities.”

This re-asserting communal identity as a “nation” would allow Kichwa and other indigenous peoples of Ecuador to assert their land rights in the search of sovereignty, thus gaining vital infrastructural power (Pallares 2002, 211-3). One could go further and argue that that indigenous activism’s reaction against the Ecuadorian government’s refusal to acknowledge indigenous nations’ land rights is an anti-colonial methodology. A methodology against the neoliberal-state sponsored land-grabbing, which is seen as an indirect cause of culture attrition and language death described by Thomasson in the introduction. Such dispossession of lands from peasants and indigenous peoples is triggered by neoliberal capitalist policies that favor global markets and state legibility over diverse populations. On the other hand, sovereignty, at least at some degree, allows for public policy that actually observes and enforces the use of Kichwa and other indigenous languages in politics, public services, formal education, and mass-media communication, thus allowing these languages to gain prestige and recognition. Furthermore, an opposition of this sovereignty embodied within the indigenous political discourse of Plurinationalism as seen by indigenous activists would mean the acceptance of a forcibly-imposed “homogenous Ecuadorian state” (Pallares 2002, 214). As Pallares affirms that “the legal incorporation of plurinationalism became, in this view, a precondition of justice for

all” (2002, 214). Despite both the government and indigenous activists shared a view of pluriculturalism, their views concerning plurinationalism were strongly opposing forces. From that point on, the political platform of plurinationalism provided Kichwa and the other indigenous nations in Ecuador an even playing field to contend for their cultural, material and land rights (Pallares 2002, 217).

Language revitalization efforts in Ecuador have the advantage of being supported by CONAIE or “Ecuador’s Indigenous Nationalities’ Confederation” (Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador), which as King (2001,33) reports, is “one of the strongest indigenous organizations in the world.” This organization supports all indigenous groups in the Ecuadorian territory, and Kichwa, the main focus of this thesis, is the biggest indigenous nationality by far with numbers surpassing the 2 million (2001, 35). Before the creation and the strengthening of CONAIE in defense of indigenous peoples’ rights, the Ecuadorian government has not been kind either with Kichwa or with any indigenous group within its territory.

Despite the power of indigenous organizations like CONAIE, and its extension in education known as DINEIB, there have been mixed results. Results that are rather inconsistent than promising and whose nature seriously questions the current approach of both indigenous and government organizations alike to Kichwa preservation through education. To appreciate the inconsistency of language revitalization projects, the different communities in various regions where Kichwa has experienced and continues to experience a decline among the indigenous population must be analyzed. In her book, *Language Revitalization Processes and Prospects: Quichua in the Ecuadorian Andes*, linguist Kendall King (2001) studies two Kichwa communities in the Saraguro province: Lagunas and Tambopamba. King reports that in both communities Kichwa has been losing domains against Spanish, and that the language was only

used in occasional social interactions among elders, and “by some parents” secretly “with their children” (King 2001, 185-6). Furthermore, she reports that the “community schools” in both of these communities put a scant emphasis on children’s acquiring any level of fluency in the language. Even worse, the “expectation” of children acquiring fluency in Kichwa has been relegated solely to schools by many parents. So there is not an expectation of children to respond on Kichwa or speak it even though they are exposed to it (2001, 186-7). Nonetheless, King explains that Kichwa has taken a prominent symbolic value among the inhabitants of Lagunas because it is a clear “ethnicity marker” that separates them from mestizo people. Furthermore, many locals expressed to King during her interviews that the definite loss of Kichwa would be catastrophic for their future (2001, 190) (Consequently, my interviewees expressed the same feeling unanimously). Unlike Lagunas, the Tambopamba community did not see Kichwa as a vital, emblematic marker of ethnic identity since they already had chosen aspects of their rural life non-related to language to fulfill such function (King 2001, 191).

Regarding the success of IBE Kichwa schools, there are mixed feelings regarding the efficiency of bilingual schools for Kichwa across Ecuador. Whereas some of the interlocutors emphasized the agency and importance of government intervention for school planning, funding, and design; others explain that communities themselves must step up and do the revitalization projects themselves, with or without government help. In this sense, one of the first interlocutors advocating for state sponsorship and intervention is Edwin Tituaña, current coordinator of Kichwa peoples in the municipal town of Otavalo. Originally from Miguel Gascabezas community, Tituaña allowed me to interview him in the municipal library of Otavalo. When I asked him about the state of schools in Otavalo he told me that they were doing a pretty good job at promoting language use among children, as he explained to me that:

There is a program that the state is running called Guardianes de la Lengua (the Language's Stewards). These are pilot plans that the state is running through the education district, which is managing this first phase to put in practice in the communities where it has been identified that the language is not being lost but it is rather becoming strong. (Tituaña 6/30/2017)

Although in our interview, Tituaña acknowledges the fact that CONAIE had initially failed at its goal of promoting a truly bilingual education, he expressed great confidence in the government's capacity to improve and implement IBE as our conversation evidences it:

We must get into a wider methodology. But this domain pertains to the national government. It has to be established through a norm or law. Right now in the national assembly, there is a new Law of Languages, which would be a new opening for small institutions like local towns or even from parroquial committees we can continue promoting the language strengthening mainly through its use. (Tituaña 6/30/2017)

As evidenced in our conversation, Tituaña is very confident that the Law of Languages will be a turning point for the state of IBE in Kichwa communities. However, he seems to relegate exclusively to government institutions the responsibility of improving IBE schools educational model rather than taking into account the potential agency of communities being in charge of their schools' improvement. Other professionals like Sacha Rosero, mass-media communicator and lobbyist in the Ecuadorian National Assembly in Quito, also explained to me the importance of this public policy and its approval by the government during our interview in Quito

If speakers are not willing to take action so that their language is not lost, the government cannot do anything to force them not to lose it; it is very important that the linguistic community activates itself so that they keep speaking and valuing the language...we see



all of this as a tree and each one of those five branches, but if this tree does not have roots, it falls down. In this case we consider the Law of Languages as the root because we need a juridical framework in which we can justly have these linguistic rights (Rosero 7/1/2016).

While Tituaña calls on the agency of the state to pass the Law of Languages and delegates to it full responsibility regarding the maintenance of Kichwa language programs on the communities, Rosero advocates for the Law of Languages but delegates the responsibility of language maintenance to the communities. Rosero emphasizes communities' participation as essential for the success of this policy, but also states the importance of a policy where indigenous languages have their spot secured in public life. These two perspectives regarding the role the government plays in the improvement of bilingual education and the revitalization of Kichwa is a mere introduction to the following major section. The disagreement in agency between Tituaña and Rosero is a call to action to others in defense of their language and culture. Having said this, I will turn to the ideology and performance of those living in Kichwa territory by describing and analyzing their perspectives in order to better understand the entanglement in which they are battling to improve language education programs and struggling to dismantle an anti-indigenous discourse present in Ecuadorian society.

**Government Schools, Internalized Racism, and Academic Neglect: the lived experience of Kichwa in Sierra and Amazonian communities in Ecuador.**

So far we have only taken into account the reports of scholars who don't live in Kichwa territories (or indigenous communities for that matter) and do ethnographic fieldwork that, though extensive and detailed, do not give us a complete emic perspective on the issue of Kichwa language loss and the issues with bilingual education models implemented in indigenous

communities. We read that Edwin Tituaña mentioned the relative success of bilingual schools in getting children and teenagers to speak Kichwa. Nonetheless, there are other interviewees, including members of other communities, who have a different view and different experience, both personal and professional, in Kichwa loss and revival.

In this special section of the thesis, I want to introduce the voices of the people I interviewed as truthfully as possible. As I mentioned in the methodology section, I had the opportunity to talk to Kichwa people (and non-Kichwa as well) of different professions, academic backgrounds, and life experiences. I want to introduce their voices as a compilation of life narratives that will allow me, not only to learn about their lives and views on IBE (Intercultural Bilingual Education), Kichwa loss and revitalization, but also to have a view on the social dynamics of both indigenous and mestizo societies from the interlocutors' individual worlds. I also plan to connect some of their perspectives on IBE, loss and revitalization of Kichwa with the theoretical perspectives of the authors I have mentioned during the introduction with the purpose of demonstrating the global incidence of my interlocutors' perspective. I want to set them in a general framework that can be applied to indigenous communities around the world who are attempting to revitalize their language as a response to the existential, socio-cultural, and spiritual encroachment provoked by predatory formations of the neoliberal capitalist global market system. In particular, my interlocutors have drawn attention to three critical issues: the problematic nature of government-run Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) schools; the harm of internal racism and bias against Kichwa within both mestizo and indigenous communities; and the silencing of Kichwa in academic and political spaces. Furthermore, in the last major section of the thesis, I will present my interlocutors' efforts and their courage to

visibilize Kichwa language in the places of entanglement where the aforementioned issues are happening.

One of the youngest interviewees I had for this project was Ati Cachimuel, professional musician, music teacher and band member of the music bands Los Nin and Yarina. When interviewing him in urban Otavalo, I asked Ati about the functioning of bilingual schools for children in the Otavalo sector. He expressed the following experience: “In reality, in the schools from the communities generally I have seen that the same education is given there as it could be given in the cities. It has not been an education adapted to the reality of these communities” (Cachimuel 7/8/2016).

The fact that Hispanic education is prioritized in comparison to an inexistent intercultural bilingual education (IBE) where a great part of the population is Kichwa is a bad symptom regarding the spread and maintenance of IBE in Otavalo communities. Other interlocutors like Imbaya Cachiungo agree with Ati on the inefficiency of IBE schools. However, Cachiungo is more aggressive and goes to the root of the problem when he expresses with great disillusion that:

I neither have faith nor hope in that because it started all wrong from the beginning and it will continue to be wrong. When these type of things are not worked out properly we are only looking for a dignifying death for Kichwa because we know it is wrong but we keep doing it...It is preferable to work on the theme of “sensibilization” [sensitivity] and visualization at least a couple of years in order to select those who want to act for the language because they are convinced. The idea is to make an effort, if it is just a few schools then put everything on them because from the beginning the project was ‘massified’. And

then teachers were not trained in Kichwa language; their teaching is completely in Spanish, and it is still the same today (Cachiuango 7/4/2016).

Cachiuango is precisely pointing out on some of the key flaws that linguists like King and Haboud had previously pointed out in their writings. The ‘massification’ and desire to implement IBE schools as rapidly as possible did not allow the program to have a strong basis on the training of a reasonable number of teachers with a strong methodology and proficiency in Kichwa.

Regarding Intercultural Bilingual Education, other interviewees like Toa Maldonado express her discontent regarding the modeling of bilingual schools. Toa explained to me that recently “the government’s termination of classes in some bilingual schools that encouraged the practice for children in their environment” was a much questioned decision. When I asked her what were the reasons bilingual education was failing she said that:

I think that the fact that other models have been used, such as western models...our indigenous visions barely go in and have any influence, and like many other indigenous views is that the living is beyond that what a teacher can tell you to do but actually what do we know to do ...Practically, what is understood here is that bilingual education is for the rural sector. That is what has been generalized, when we talk about urban sectors, in private schools, bilingual education or at least to be able to learn Kichwa is almost like forgotten. (Maldonado 6/29/2016)

In her thoughts, Toa points out to the lack of cultural sensibility in these schools, where the goal is to emulate European teaching models without a serious attempt to localize that model to the needs of the local people. Nonetheless, Toa also points out a geographical divide happening between rural Kichwa communities and urbanized Kichwas, where the latter obtain few or no

intercultural bilingual education but a mainstream Hispanicized education instead. When I asked Toa the role of the government in the reproduction of intercultural bilingual education in these rural areas, she said that

The efforts done by the government are also valid, they should not be disregarded in their totality, but they do not reach the spaces where they are really needed. To be honest, in the sector where I see...I think that the main edge are the teachers and educators, first with their attitude, secondly with their knowledge of what is really the language and the culture. Because texts can describe everything but if the teacher does not have the will or does not have the knowledge, in what way can he apply the knowledge? (Maldonado 6/29/2017)

Toa expresses a reality that was mentioned on the previous section regarding the lack of qualified teachers in bilingual schools. Regarding the availability of didactic material in Kichwa for children, she expressed a lack of involvement from public government institutions, as she recounts:

If there are small activities that can be developed at a local level, so we should expect that aid because many times we could be speaking it on the board but we would not have like a small pamphlet or little story in Kichwa a child can take home, so we do not have that material. Me for example, I do not even see my mother with materials in Kichwa and she is a teacher, so she does not have those materials to give to her young students.

Altogether, there is a high percentage of low-income population, so in which way you can help them? There should be some sort of book-keeping they should have and not all people have technology so it is more complicated. (Maldonado 6/29/2016)

It seems the problem is one of logistics. Should teachers have more didactic materials at their disposal, they would have the tools to perform their job with greater ease, and at the same time, keep the children interested in learning.

As I kept interviewing more people, I started realizing that the current failure of the IBE (Intercultural Bilingual Education) program in Ecuador had more profound implications in society, and that an inappropriate modeling of bilingual schools could not be the only reason for the dwindling number of Kichwa speakers in the youngest generations. For that reason, I decided to look for the personal perspective of a professional, who despite being an “outsider,” had been putting his professional and personal life at the service of improving cultural and language revitalization programs for Kichwa communities in Napo Province, Amazon. I interviewed Dr. Uzendoski in FLACSO University in Quito, to inquire on his experience. He told me that

The problem with the bilingual model is that you have two languages but the indigenous language is always inferior and is only taught in one class of the day, so students would get as much English as they would get Kichwa. So that's why I am in agreement with Sacha's argument regarding the need to go towards a model of immersion (Uzendoski 7/7/2016).

In this way, Sacha Rosero, who Uzendoski recalls, explained that there has to be a serious reform on the current traditional-transitional bilingual model for Kichwa schools for these to succeed. As Rosero himself expressed in our interview:

"We have seen in Catalonia, where all education, including Kindergarten, elementary school, high school, and university is exclusively given in Catalan. That is called linguistic immersion, in which the education is in the ancestral language, and where the

dominant or official language is taught as L2 (second language). So, at the end of the educational process we have people who are complete biliterate bilinguals at the least...that would be the change that we expect to happen but it is a long process. (Rosero 7/1/2016 )

Another very prominent scholar that favors the immersion model for indigenous language schools is Dr. Carmen Chuquin. A PhD in bilingual education and linguistics from University of Illinois and a remarkable Kichwa language professor, Chuquin provided me with an important perspective regarding community participation and the geography of IBE schools when I interviewed her in her family-owned hostel:

The Kichwa-speaking community should be involved in the project and the grandparents, our ancestors, should be part of the program. Also, Kichwa immersion schools would be really good in the community, not in Quito, not in the main downtown Otavalo, not the downtowns of the captor cities but in the communities you know... you can't learn the language by just being in a classroom. (Chuquin 7/8/2016 )

Chuquin emphasizes the necessity that the community in general and its elders get involved in creating these schools in sensible rural communities, where education is most inaccessible for children and teenagers. When she introduces the concept of “captor cities” she expresses a process of socio-geographic inequality between the rural and the urban: valuable resources for potential good schools in teachers and infrastructure are only invested in areas where development is seen as profitable and worth investing: the cities. In this sense, Chuquin challenges and criticizes the hegemonic geographical inequality under which rural indigenous communities are underestimated and through a process of “development hoarding” from captor cities that makes these communities invisible. Similarly, she criticizes the Eurocentric approach

of schools that insist on teaching language from a classroom educational space. Chuquin in her rhetoric advocates for the revitalization of physical learning spaces in the rural communities outside the classroom by engaging in direct enculturation through rural activities.

So far we have focused on the visible decline of Kichwa speakers among young generations in terms of the poor functioning of bilingual schools and the latter's infrastructural and modeling problems. Going back to my interview with Uzendoski, I asked him what would be the circumstances where young people, teenagers and children, would feel encouraged to continue speaking and maintaining Kichwa. He touched a sensitive wound in Ecuadorian society persisting today:

The problem here is colonialism...it wasn't very long ago when the parents of people my age were beaten or punished for speaking Kichwa in school. So basically with all of that history and social logic of colonialism and racism, it's very difficult to de-program a society or culture that has been so permeated by racism and colonialism. You can't change that overnight. And I think that's the root of the problem because children can feel racism and feel discrimination and when they are stigmatized but they don't have the intellectual capacity to understand it. You can't explain to a 4-year old what colonialism is. So from very young age they get these negative vibes that send them these very subtle, implicit but powerful messages that your maternal language makes you inferior.

(Uzendoski 7/7/2017)

This quote reflects how deep and engrained the problem for Kichwa and the rest of indigenous languages in the Americas is regarding social stigma, low prestige and institutionalized discrimination. Uzendoski demonstrated to me with this explanation that Kichwa language loss is much more than just lack of budget or lack of qualified teachers and materials. One can realize



that Uzendoski's description of colonialism through the institutionalized punishment for speaking Kichwa at school is not an isolated case. As Thomasson described in the introduction, there have been policies directly aimed at destroying indigenous languages and cultures through a series of cruel colonizing methodologies that involve psychological and physical torture. A notorious case of this grievous process are the Indian boarding schools taking place between end of the XIX century and mid XX century.

Nonetheless, Dr. Uzendoski proposes a radical and interesting solution which relies directly on strong social action. He explains that the Kichwa community itself must impose the use of Kichwa in every domain of society within their territories just like Catalonians did with Catalan, as he confirms. He makes a valuable point of hegemonic relations between cultures: as long as Kichwa language is seen as inferior or subordinated to Spanish, there will be stigmatization.

Other interviewees like Imbaya Cachiungo, also sees the racist attitude from mestizo Ecuadorian societies as a hindrance for a successful revitalization. However, for Cachiungo the most harmful type of racism is the one coming from the indigenous people themselves, as he expresses:

This self-racism coming from mestizos and sometimes from indigenous themselves has not allowed for the language to be seen as an alternative way of life that can contribute in the development of the world, but it is not seen like that. For instance people say 'Oh we can afford to lose that language, so what? That is indigenous stuff' That is how an indigenous whose grandfather was truly indigenous but his father cut his hair and now he uses tie thinks' and look: self-racism; they deny themselves. So mestizo people would be like 'Oh but you are indigenous, you should speak the language...' yes but there are

factors needed for that to happen and since we do not have them this is the situation we have come into. (Cachiuango 7/4/2016)

Cachiuango questions mestizo identity, as he explains that it comes from an assumption where the person is some part Spanish and some part indigenous: a mix. However, he finds this identity problematic because the self-proclaimed mestizo does not speak any indigenous language and claims at the same time to have indigenous ancestry; this is what Cachiuango means by self-racism. Furthermore, the concept of self-racism as explained by Cachiuango overlaps with the theory of language ideologies and beliefs presented by Austin and Sallabank in the introduction. Self-racism originates when people put into question their identity in contrast with the identity of the other group. In the case of Kichwas, they are pressured to contend with the possibility of transitioning from their identity to the mestizo identity. It is important to emphasize that this is not a natural process, for the connotations that mestizo Ecuadorian society has given to Kichwa peoples and their language have never been truly positive. There is still a present neo-colonialist mentality that has permeated the thinking of many mestizos and indigenous alike, and this mentality implicitly puts Indigenous knowledge at a lesser value in comparison to Western knowledges.

Finally, a third concern relates to what Uzendoski called “the stigmatization of Kichwa in the academia”, for it does not have the recognition in universities that it should have by its status as official language. Furthermore, he pointed out that there is no Kichwa literature program in any university of Ecuador and that, actually, more human and economic resources are spent studying Kichwa in universities in the U.S than in Ecuador. The first fact is indeed confirmed by Kichwa professor Arturo Muyulema when I interviewed him at the Universidad Central in Quito, as he said:

In the 80s, there used to be a Bachelor's degree in Kichwa linguistics in the Universidad Católica but the programs in Ibarra and Quito were closed and there is no formation in Kichwa linguistics or in any other indigenous tongues so that is an empty space in our country. (Muyulema 7/5/2016 )

The closing of these programs in the Universidad Católica and other institutions can be seen as a lack of commitment from scholarly academic circles, and a clear underestimation of the Kichwa and the rest of indigenous languages in Ecuador. Furthermore, Muyulema, from Cachizahua community in Bolivar province and member of Tinkunakuy, a small NGO dedicated to Kichwa language and culture revitalization and teaching in Quito, expressed to me that one of the main problems for IBE written production was the neologisms:

Regarding education textbooks that had been used, one of the main critics coming from within is the use of too many neologisms in the elaboration of the "cuqueyes pedagogicos", so the policy now dictates to include neologism. And yes, because all languages evolve and they have to be open to the rest of the world, and with technological and scientific advance, we have to create new terminology but this has to be done in a gradual, socialized way and ultimately validated by the community itself. (Muyulema 7/5/2016)

The problem of the ineffectiveness of written attestations based on neologisms invented indifferently from communities' acknowledgement and input is also pointed out by other Kichwa teachers like Luzmila Sambrano. During our interview in the office of her cultural center in Otavalo, Sambrano explained to me that:

Nowadays there are new terminologies but these terms sometimes, in my opinion, should not be the meaning of that word because it should be related with something very general to say that word, For example, I do not agree when we say ‘wigi-wigi’: that means cellphone. Why do we call it that? Because of the sound. From my perspective, a phone should be ‘Karumanda Kalliachi’ (to speak from far away)...I also disagree with colleagues who gather up in meetings but do not really go out into the communities to find where our ‘taytas’ and ‘mamas’ are: our real ‘amautas’ that know. (Sambrano 7/9/2016)

Both Sambrano and Muyulema point to a grave disconnection between the academic interests of various linguists and grammarians designing written attestations and neologisms and the way people in the communities actually speak.

In fact, too often, these linguists and grammarians focus their time and energies on inventing neologisms that carefully avoid any borrowing from Spanish instead of focusing on whether Kichwa is spoken at all in the communities; this attitude is counterproductive and a serious flaw. The obsession with neologisms and written material by social scientists can be seen as the objectification and commodification of endangered languages described by Austin and Sallabank in the introduction, and one main contributor for language extinction due to wasted efforts to no avail. Furthermore, Sambrano and Muyulema mentioned the mindless production of vast amount of materials in Kichwa, including books and corpus terminology that were insensible to the socio-linguistic dynamics of Kichwa communities in Ecuador. I compare the mindless production of these materials with Romaine and Nettle’s concept of “salvage linguistics” mentioned in the introduction, where the objective is to simply document an endangered language without any sincere intention of helping in its revitalization. However, I

choose to expand the fixed definition of salvage linguistics by these authors not just to data recollection but also extend it to an insensible, conspicuous data production. For it is a production insensible to the needs and expectations of the communities where Kichwa is spoken.

We have seen that interlocutors like Cachiungo and Sambrano in their last quotes put the term “Interculturality” in question because there was not an emphasis on the importance of learning Kichwa. A real appreciation for Kichwa comes by means of both the teaching of the native Andean historic socio-component and the appreciation of Kichwa identity in both the socio-historic and present context in order to appreciate the learning of this language. But for both Cachiungo and Sambrano, this appreciation never came to realization with the IBE as run by the government. Sambrano and Cachiungo’s emphasis on ‘sensibility complies with Thomason’s theoretical perspective on cultural sensibility and linguistic unanimity as preconditions for a successful language revitalization project. As both interlocutors would argue, there has to be a meaningful and transcendent purpose for the learner, especially a child or teenager, to learn Kichwa other than ‘for the sake of simply learning a language’.

### **Deeper threat to Kichwa in the Political Arena**

During our interview in the main room of her “Survivors of Otavalo” cultural center, Sambrano expressed her discomfort about mestizo and indigenous leaders’ advocacy for IBE schools in contrast with their own actions. As she expresses:

Inside the infrastructure the leaders say ‘we fight for bilingual education’ but my question is ‘If the leaders talk so much about this education and conserving the language, do they have their own children enrolled in schools of these communities? What they do is to take their children out, get them to the big cities and put them in the best schools. So

where is that commitment as a leader advocating our children speaking both languages?  
(Sambrano 7/9/2016)

We clearly see a gap between IBE advocacy as speech and the reality of these schools to the point that it is the impression that not even the 'best advocates' of IBE schools believe in the final realization of a project that has been too romanticized by government officials and education developers and yet too distanced from addressing the raw realities of the people it was supposed to help. The growing disillusion with the IBE program and the imminent future failure does not simply come from an inadequate planning but has more profound issues of a political nature. In this sense, Kichwa professor and writer Manuel Paza Guanomela, native from Chimborazo Province, provided me with a useful insight during our interview:

Abya Yala or the originary Andean peoples have our own philosophies, our own way to systematize these knowledges, in this case is our science that is not the same thing as western science...When DINEIB was present, it was about transmitting that knowledge, if there was a possibility, at least let us do so in Kichwa...When the government took over the project, the little we managed to achieve does not even exist anymore, so we are in worse conditions now. What we need now is that the current government invest the same resources here that in other western fields. (Paza 7/5/2016)

Paza makes a clear distinction between indigenous Andean science as an ontological category and an imported Western science. Consequently, he advocates and considers necessary the spread of this indigenous science by indigenous people in an autonomous way they consider appropriate to their needs.

However, in his comments, he alludes to a critical political change that DINEIB underwent that subjected it under government control. In order to understand the current failure of IBE as a project, we must look at the role of the government. In December 11 of 2014, the Ecuadorian state under the presidency of Rafael Correa decided to dismantle the physical headquarters in which CONAIE had operated for decades (Muyolema 2015, 1). The philosophical view of CONAIE for indigenous people in Ecuador rests on the ultimate realization of three primordial objectives: Land, Culture, and Self-determination, as Muyolema asserts (2015, 2-5). What he claims is that the undermining of “utopic” democratic processes and unanimous equity is produced by the realization of Correísmo: President Rafael Correa’s ideological rhetoric and political movement with its respective allies (Muyolema 2015, 9). Specifically, the dismissal and denigration of any social criticism by alternative parties and organizations has been a priority in Correa’s administration’s agenda (Muyolema 2015, 10). Perhaps the clearest expression of this priority came with the expulsion and forced dislocation of CONAIE personnel from their main physical political headquarters is an exemplification of the “dissident political view dismissal” approach employed by Correísmo (Muyolema 2015, 10).

Muyolema argues that the CONAIE is to be seen as the cluster of fights, struggles, and victories achieved by the indigenous populations of Ecuador, and its definite dismantling signifies a methodology of neo-colonialism and oppression by the government under President Correa (2015, 11). This dismantling entails the utter destruction of the political spaces so arduously and valiantly earned by indigenous peoples to express and project concepts like *plurinationality*, *plurilingualism*, and the philosophy of *Sumak Kawsay*, an alternative of life to the neoliberal western notion of development. These concepts are to be expressed from their own vision, as opposed to how the government portrays it (Muyolema 2015, 12). As Muyolema

himself puts it, “Correísmo not only pretends to destroy CONAIE itself but also everything it represents in relation to the indigenous peoples and nationalities and to society in general.” The denigration of IBE as proposed by CONAIE is but an example of such a neo-colonialist approach (Muyolema 2015, 13).

When I interviewed professors Paza and Muyulema in the Universidad Central library in Quito, I comprehended that they strongly emphasized the importance of the state as the medium through which land, culture, and self-determination as seen by the indigenous movement and through the action of organizations like CONAIE would become the ideology behind a reckoning force for the defense of indigenous peoples’ rights in Ecuador. Nonetheless, I also noticed their growing disillusion with the state’s actions contrary to what has been claimed by indigenous nations regarding their autonomy over their territories, cultural and land rights. Despite being a leftist government, Correa’s administration has relegated the indigenous ideals by setting them aside in favor of transnational corporations’ interests in extracting minerals and petroleum. When I brought this concern to Muyulema, he told me that:

We live in a hegemonic world where the supremacy of modernity and globalization are ever present but I believe the world has survived thanks to the acknowledgement that we are diverse, and that cultural and linguistic diversity must be preserved. A country is not rich only for its petroleum, only because of its minerals or natural resources. A country is rich because of its culture, its knowledge. And realize that we as Kichwa, as Andean peoples, have to be proud because we have been the first ones in domesticating potato, some 8000-10,000 years ago. This very same potato occupies the fourth place as a staple food for humanity. That has been an example of our input as people and the government



has to invest, not spend, and I believe there is much still to be done. (Muyulema 7/5/2016)

When I brought the same topic to Paza, he replied that:

The world is indebted to us. It has that responsibility of investing so that these knowledges, cosmovision, and philosophy are once again visible. Because if we only hold on to this capitalist system, then we are done. This way of building cities is not possible anymore. Everything is consumed here but what do they give us in return? Waste. That is the type of development that the West proposes but if we propose from our perspective then Sumak Kawsay is well understood, that is the alternative proposal. This is the commitment of investing in the visibilization, revitalization of this knowledge, in which there is an emptiness of 500 years... if we lose these languages and are only left with Spanish or any other European language, which is the same, then we are left with what they have given us only.....If we do not remediate this situation then we will be gone more sooner than later. (Paza 7/5/2016)

Muyulema and Paza explain in this quote the essence of the philosophy of Sumak Kawsay: an alternative in response to a development that has been implemented and promoted as ideological discourse by institutions like the World Bank and IMF (International Monetary Fund) and historically associated with the West. Let us see that the ideological discourse of development that Muyulema and Paza criticize has been accommodated to the logic of neo-liberal capitalism. This logic consisting in localizing a common resource (forest, fishery, etc.) in order to exploit it, deplete it, and then move on to find other resources while leaving behind a path of destruction and death. And all this is done for the sake of maximizing profits and capital for companies and to satisfy the never-ending demands of the global market economy.

Kichwa teachers and activists like Muyulema and Paza emphasize the importance and the responsibility the government has promoting the necessary spaces for successful revitalization of Kichwa language through public, digital, and educational spaces. Nonetheless, one should consider the legal and judicial framework behind the idea of interculturality as performed by CONAIE and the government to better understand the current failing of IBE and the goal of interculturality as a political discourse. In this sense, Jose Quimbo, litigating lawyer by profession and elected official in the major's office, offers us an important perspective. Quimbo, like many of my previous interviewees, underlines the role of the state and the non-indigenous sector of society in the revitalization of Kichwa, as he explains:

The recovering of Kichwa language, its strengthening not only depends on its Kichwa speakers or its indigenous population; it depends on the society that surrounds it; it depends on authorities at all levels. I think we have to stop romanticizing by putting in the constitution that languages like Kichwa and Shuar are languages of inter-cultural relation if there is not enough financial support, logistic support, human talent, and administrative support from the state. It is like the practice of the indigenous right, which sounds pretty in the article 171, but that same constitution that acknowledges our right to put in practice those norms in reality ordinary justice approves decrees that limit the action of indigenous rights. (Quimbo 7/3/2016)

Needless to say, there is a gap between the written articles of the Ecuadorian constitution and the actual practice and implementation of cultural rights for indigenous peoples. The romanticization of the constitution that Quimbo talks about not only portrays Ecuador as a progressive state but also enhances the discourse of Interculturality as designed and promoted by government institutions. It is this concept of Interculturality in which Quimbo elaborates further on:

There is an incongruence between the discourse of interculturality encouraged by the government and the realities of the communities...Actually, even from the Culture Ministry, there is an encouragement to use the traditional clothing; nonetheless, there is not a framework that encourages children and youth to take Kichwa as a mother language through the channeling of budget, logistics and all the mechanisms of the government to the strengthening and revitalization of Kichwa. (Quimbo 7/3/2916)

Based on Quimbo's account, there is an attempt by state institutions to dictate what should be relevant and what is worth for people to revitalize about their Kichwa culture and what is not. In addition to Quimbo's perspective I argue that the discourse of interculturality through state institutions portrays a defined set of features that indigenous peoples should reflect but simply ignores other components of a Kichwa way of being (*runa kay/runa kawsay*). The state's omission and negligence to fully implement the creation of spaces that encourage children to preserve Kichwa may be seen as a rigid limitation of the state's discourse of Interculturality.

### **Voices of hope and reflection in the Kichwa language revitalization movement in the context of Ecuador**

So far, I have analyzed my interlocutors' vision on IBE, language loss and revitalization. There are agreements and discrepancies between the different opinions voiced so far. Nonetheless, there is a general consensus that the current modeling and methodology of IBE has to change drastically and that indigenous communities themselves must be the main agents in their own fight. It is this agency that I want to talk about now. In accounting for the Kichwa-specific mode of learning, I have turned to the idea of "Thinking-feeling" as postulated by Dr.

Arturo Escobar, a renowned world authority in political ecology. I will describe this concept and then adapt it to language learning by offering the Kichwa version: Shunguhuan Yuyay. This will be a key concept to encapsulate the efforts, thoughts, and experiences of all my interlocutors in the revitalization of Kichwa and a practical strategy that they can incorporate in each of their revitalization models for Kichwa

Escobar argues that the ideology of “thinking-feeling”, as an epistemology of the Global South, is a reaction against the environmental and social degradation produced by the state-development apparatus in conjunction with the neo-liberal capitalist market through the incursion of corporations (2016, 14). The ideology of “thinking-feeling” (or *sentipensamiento* in Spanish) as conceived by indigenous and black populations are knowledges providing key visions on how to address environmental degradation and the social displacement coming from it. Because these thinking-feeling ideologies are originated in geographic spaces of struggle, they are intimately connected with the environment (Escobar 2016, 14).

In this sense, I adopt Escobar’s theoretical perspective of “thinking-feeling” with the purpose of extrapolating it to the context of Kichwa and the other indigenous languages in Ecuador by creating the concept of Shunguhuan Yuyai, which is the Kichwa translation for ‘thinking-feeling’. Therefore, I argue that Shunguhuan Yuyay is an ideology representing Kichwa and other indigenous languages as knowledges and philosophies providing an alternative to the neoliberal developmentalist discourse imposed by the state bureaucracy and it attempts to render legible populations with the ultimate goal of a homogeneous cultural and linguistic assimilation into a single mainstream Ecuadorian culture. Shunguhuan Yuyai reflects the emphasis that Toa Maldonado placed on the importance of teasing in Kichwa among family members in the sense that “it generates confidence because speaking Kichwa in certain form and

the sensations generated is to know that I still belong to a family, because generally the moments in which we speak Kichwa someone older is beside us” (Maldonado 6/29/2016). In her thought, Toa emphasizes the importance of a sense of belonging to a family through the use of language in innovative ways and with the purpose of connecting with the elders. In a similar way, Ati Cachimuel emphasizes the emotional and communicative aspect of family relations when he explains that: “I think the matter is about awareness, especially coming from the household...In my case, that has been a matter of awareness from my parents to take agency over the language and say ‘it must continue through the generations and cannot die’” (Cachimuel 7/8/2016). Here, Ati and his parents exemplify the concept of Shunguhuan Yuyai through their awareness and determination to keep their ancestral language as the means of communication between their family, despite all the adversities. In the next paragraphs, I will exemplify the concept of Shunguhuan Yuyai further with the projects and endeavors of my interlocutors in Kichwa language revitalization.

### **Language Revitalization Projects: Digital Social Media and Audio-Visual Production**

In this subsection, I will introduce the revitalization projects that three professional linguists, Kichwa activists, and anthropologists have produced: Sacha Rosero, Imbaya Cachiungo, and Michael Uzendoski respectively. I also discuss the program of Ati Cachimuel, a musician who mixes language revitalization with artistic innovation. Based on their quotes, I will draw similarities that each of their projects have in common in order to generalize them on an ontological category of revitalization. The purpose of this final section of the thesis is twofold: to provide a space for my interlocutors to express their efforts, philosophies, and reflections of

language and life; and also to establish, in some cases, a meaningful and clear connection between their narratives and the wide global issues described by the different scholars I have used in this thesis so far.

*Sacha Rosero on digital media learning*

We are focusing on a long-term revitalization project for the next 50 years; it is called Kichwa Sisary...we follow the Hawaiian model because one of the things they have done well and that we should replicate here is the use of the new technologies...as we transition into the digital era, we are distancing ourselves from physical printed material and rather focusing on the production of digitally-made sources. That is why we have created Kichwa.net, which is a portal where we mostly have Kichwa-teaching materials...our point is to make readily available those materials that allow people to learn Kichwa in our portal. (Rosero 7/1/2017)

Rosero's purpose is to create a digital media platform for learning Kichwa that is available for a vast audience having access to internet. In that sense, the learning materials will be more accessible to people wanting to learn Kichwa but, for some reason, do not have the economic or practical means to acquire them. As a linguist, he is well aware of other language revitalization models implemented for other languages like Hawaiian and Basque. By adopting salient features of these successful projects, Rosero's purpose is to improve the current Kichwa revitalization movement with such inputs.

*Imbaya Cachiungo on digital social media visibilization*

Kichwapi, Kichwakunapak, Kichwangapa (In Kichwa, for Kichwa-speakers, to continue "kichwazing")...this is the phrase that I use in Facebook too because I invite those who

know the language and want to write it. It does not matter if they do not know it completely but if they know words or are sympathizers of Kichwa language, if they just put "ball", "tree", "yura" that visibilizes you and helps you to establish a presence on Facebook. (Cachiuango 7/4/2016)

Cachiuango's purpose is to get people to start writing in Kichwa to visibilize the language. He had commented to me that barely anyone posts anything on Kichwa on Facebook; they only do so in Spanish. His Facebook page Kichwashun has this purpose: to encourage and visibilize Kichwa speakers in social media platforms in order to establish a growing Kichwa-speaking community in the internet.

*Michael Uzendoski on digital audio-visual production*

Uzendoski told me that he had recently premiered Cocama Runa movie in FLACSO University. This is a locally-produced movie directed by him in conjunction with a professional PhD in documentary filming. When I asked him about the movie, he responded:

That's a very powerful tool for young people because they are like 'Wow, how did you guys do that?'...and it's not the Hollywood philosophy to make money; the philosophy is that you make movies to tell stories of the community and the movies are for the community; they are not necessarily for the public at large, although we like it when other people watch the movies...all the actors were indigenous people; they wrote the script and we taught them how to film. What was amazing about how the movie came out is that all the scenes of shamanism and cultural performance were spot-on because it's part of their daily life...It [Cocama Runa movie] really capitalizes on the performative

aspect of the language and the culture, which is really what the essence of indigenous life is. It's not talking about culture; it's living the culture. (Uzendoski 7/7/2016)

Through this quote, Uzendoski encapsulates the importance and value of language and culture revitalization through digital audio-visual production. It's not only about doing a well-mastered digital production but a production that tells a local story. A production that captures local Kichwa culture in action and in its natural environment and performed by enculturated people, not just any actor.

There are three important purposes that the three projects by Rosero, Cachiungo, and Uzendoski share. Their first goal is to raise Kichwa language and cultural prestige through the use of technology. This use will visibilize Kichwa language and culture in digital media platforms. Finally, this visibilization will also “glocalize” technology through local culture-oriented inputs while simultaneously making them available to wider audiences. What I mean by “glocalize” is to take something that is global and localize it to the socio-cultural norms of one society.

### **Kichwa Language Revitalization through public speech**

There are more conventional, yet very important channels to fight for Kichwa. In this subsection, I will present the revitalization efforts of two important scholars and interlocutors: Dr. Carmen Chuquin and Jose Quimbo. Chuquin, a great scholar and expert in Kichwa teaching methodology; and Jose Quimbo, lawyer and a skillful political orator, provided me with personal efforts as experiences they had regarding Kichwa as public speech.



*Carmen Chuquin on Academic social circles*

So we were having this presentation about language revitalization in FLACSO, so when I was participating I started speaking only in Kichwa and people were just staring at me and they were like " So is it only going to be Kichwa?" So I started showing the PowerPoint presentations and they were only written in Kichwa, so in things like that is where I force people to go into the language. The problem is that beaurocrats talk about Kichwa-related projects but it's going to be done in English or Spanish, so if you are really interested, why don't you do it in the language itself? (Chuquin 7/8/2016)

In her attempt to create a linguistic space for Kichwa in an academic setting, Chuquin touches on an obvious yet very important aspect of language: its potential acquisition by necessity. Perhaps this is the most efficient and pragmatic reason to learn any language, and Chuquin has "hit it on the spot." By the same token, she points out the ironic contradiction of those advocating for the implementation of projects for Kichwa revitalization by not doing so in the language they attempt to revitalize in the first place! This is a well-pointed critique that Chuquin also states regarding the IBE program in Ecuador.

*Jose Quimbo on public political speech*

I was recently in Chile, Valparaiso in an international meeting. The chair of Valparaiso asked me to speak but there were no Kichwas there, and he said 'Our friend from Ecuador Jose Quimbo with the white hat please give us a word'...And there was not a single Kichwa, but I started speaking in Kichwa, and they did not understand a single word but everybody clapped in the auditorium. (Quimbo 7/3/2016)

Both Chuquin and Quimbo take advantage of their status within the context they find themselves to create linguistic spaces for Kichwa both in academic and political spheres. Such is a valuable revitalization effort at small spaces that bestow prestige and pragmatic use for Kichwa. Now, let us step back to the introduction where Stephen Anderson argues on the agency of communities in adopting the social dominant language to their advantage while preserving their indigenous language. Anderson's argument is clearly applied by every one of my interlocutors throughout the interviews. Regardless of their professional background, all of them must make use of Spanish for practical purposes. Nonetheless, the connection between Anderson's argument and Chuquin and Quimbo's language revitalization through speech is that I choose to apply the argument's logic but invert it. In this sense, I modify and apply Anderson's argument into the fact that indigenous peoples can make active use of their mother language through taking advantage of their contextual status in order to create important linguistic spaces that provide a meaningful impact in the mind of non-speakers. Therefore, Chuquin's and Quimbo's purpose is to create a desire in non-Kichwa speakers or semi-speakers to learn the language.

### **Art, Attitudes, Philosophy, and Self-Esteem: Kichwa revitalization in linguistic and cultural spaces**

The concept of Shunguhuan Yuyai embodies a resistance that uses creative, non-simplified knowledge as one of its strongest weapons. This knowledge is used to create small spaces of an interactive, creative, and integrated learning of Kichwa. In this way, for four Kichwa supporters, their defense of the language is expressive, emotional, and sophisticated by means of important changes in attitude. These supporters are: Ati Cachimuel, Manuel Paza, Arturo Muyulema, and Luzmila Sambrano. Through their quotes, each one of them will

demonstrate how cultural and linguistic conscience and spaces are created through different strategies.

*Ati on revitalization through artistic spaces*

When I asked Ati what was his perspective on the revitalization of Kichwa for children as a musician and a music teacher, he stated that:

It is an unconscious thing because it is always present at the work I do, even when I teach how to play an instrument. They should sing in Kichwa or they have to sing a song in a specific part that reflects certain things. So it is to keep working forming networks, forming collectivistic groups...I do not think we should expect too much from public institutions because we cannot wait for anything never. And the only way is to do it ourselves by creating awareness. (Cachimuel 7/8/2016)

Ati is at odds with Rosero and Tituaña in this sense, for he expresses his disappointment with government-run institutions; he believes that they made a promise that was never fulfilled. Instead, he focuses his efforts and attention on the revitalization of Kichwa through sociolinguistic spaces, specifically music. When I asked Ati, in what ways was he trying to revitalize Kichwa through these artistic spaces, he explained that:

A group of workers and I are doing music workshops, dance, painting, agriculture and other activities. But our main focus is the strengthening of identity. To reinforce many things of our people, like the language, like the life-styles what we had here within agriculture, conviviality. (Cachimuel 7/8/2016)

Ati realizes the importance of revitalizing Kichwa through the creation and maintenance of artistic spaces and experiences that establish and strengthen a connection between a set of socio-

cultural and economic practices with a distinctive Kichwa Otavalo identity. I realized that he placed the same emphasis on identity through story-telling songs with his professional groups when he told me that:

[W]e are aware of who we are and where we come from. Our language, which is one of the strongest things that should prevail in the group. We make our songs and compose our lyrics in Kichwa and Spanish. Our music reflects an outsider music that has been submitted and re-shaped by music from the inside. So it is like we use electronic instruments but at the same time we are also using native instruments. So in that sense I believe it is very important to work with youngsters to create that awareness as well...The fact of singing in Kichwa has to say something, has to transmit something about your community, about your culture, which is very important, and this is what we do with our group. To say what is going on, to tell things about our life and things that happen here in Otavalo. (Cachimuel 7/8/2016)

The adoption of foreign instruments and rhythms by Ati's group in order to "indigenize" them can be extrapolated to Mark Turin's argument stating that revitalization programs must provide agency to people in the community to respond back to the pervasiveness of the global free market in conjunction with globalizing methodologies. Furthermore, merely teaching Kichwa or singing it does not suffice for Ati. There has to be a clear connection between ethnic identities in conjunction with a series of practices, of which Kichwa becomes the maximum symbolic expression. We could say that this also is a criticism to public bilingual education as proposed by the Ecuadorian state because the spaces where these practices could take place are neither available nor encouraged.

*Manuel Paza on self-esteem and linguistic spaces*

When I asked Paza about the spaces where he spoke Kichwa, he assured me that he spoke it in any Kichwa territory within Ecuador. However, he strongly emphasized the importance of strengthening the language in small spaces like in the family, in Tinkunakuy. This strengthening takes place in public spaces like the market, and in social media through platforms like Facebook. One can appreciate such importance from the following quote:

These are the spaces where we strengthen and make Kichwa visible as well as self-esteem because it is not like before anymore. Before, when people listened a word or short sentence in Kichwa then others said "Hey speak in the Christian language, speak in Christian" so they stared at us but not anymore, so one can talk wherever and now we have to make them feel bad. But now we should do it in a good way and say 'So you only know Spanish, learn Kichwa then'. Because we, with so many difficulties have learned both Kichwa and Spanish and you, who have had all possibilities, only know Spanish. So we need to invert that situation. (Paza 7/5/2016)

Paza sees in these small linguistic spaces a transcendental opportunity to revitalize self-esteem and personal identity. There is a subversive and valiant attitude not only to reject linguistic profiling and racism from those shunning Kichwa speakers but by inverting the situation through Paza's creating a psychological sense of embarrassment or desire in non-Kichwa speakers so that, in one way or another, they feel driven to learn at least something about the language. There is a connection between his attitude and Austin and Sallabank's theory of ideologies and beliefs, for Paza is bringing to surface the positive internal ideologies on Kichwa from non-speakers in order to create favorable linguistic spaces for Kichwa. Although Paza's attitude may not be seen as "polite" by some susceptible critics, I argue that is an effective way to revitalize an

endangered language in small spaces because it triggers an attitude change towards learning a language from a pragmatic and attitudinal standpoint.

*Arturo Muyulema on philosophy of teaching*

When we teach an indigenous language, we must not teach it in a translated way but in a contextualized one. We opt for a socio-cultural focus. As we teach elements of the language we have to also teach socio-cultural concepts. For instance, to talk about family we have to talk about "ayllu" because "ayllu" goes beyond from being an anthropological concept because it is a concept of Pacha, which is nature. Inside Pacha we not only have human ayllus but also communities, deities, mountains, lakes, rivers. All in nature is alive in the Andean world and these elements interact so there has to be a cohabitation...elements of the language like thoughts, philosophy, cosmovision are to be understood in the context of familiarizing oneself with Pacha, nature, and concepts of time and Minga (work). Minga is a much broader concept than work in the capitalist system. This is where we have been working and we learn every day. (Muyulema 7/5/2016)

Muyulema goes back to the subject of teaching Kichwa from a cultural-awareness approach in the sense that there has to be a significance in the learning of a language, whether it is spiritual, practical, philosophical or of identity. It is important to understand that culturally salient concepts in Native Andean culture like Ayllu, Pacha, and Minga, are embedded in Kichwa language and that they require a degree of cultural competency to be properly understood as both belief and performance, preferably through Kichwa itself. Muyulema's philosophy of teaching gives agency and centrality to Native Andean culture and provides students a portal to know and understand them through language as performative learning. This philosophy is what both

Muyulema and Paza emphasize and apply in their culture and language revitalization center Tinkunakuy.

*Luzmila Sambrano on recovering her language:*

Since I was 20 years old. I had the opportunity to work in a place called 'Cultural Workshop Kawsana Junchis'. Inside it, I had a very dear colleague called Ariruma Kowi. He constantly told us that we should speak in Kichwa; that we should revitalize Kichwa. When we went to a meeting we would speak Kichwa, and it was hard because I did not know how to speak it because my mom and dad did not teach me how to speak it. I started learning Kichwa during my first and second years of university, and then I learned the rest in daily life. It was so important for me, but at the beginning of our meetings one was ashamed of speaking it. This is because either I cannot speak it properly and because they are going to look at me and make me feel bad, but I became aware of that, because as a woman I had to strengthen this speaking it myself...So five years ago we created a project called "Survivors of Kichwa Otavalo Town." Some men and women who knew how to write it, and others who did not, formed this museum of Otavalo Kichwa with the end of strengthening and revitalizing our customs, traditions, lifestyles and the language within it. (Sambrano 7/9/2016)

Sambrano's experience goes back to younger years of her life, in which she did not previously speak any Kichwa. Despite her natural feelings of shame for not being able to speak the language fluently, her desire and open attitude to learn has made of her a fluent speaker today. For Sambrano, the encouragement and instruction she received from her mentor Ariruma Kowi was a key factor for her identity as a Kichwa speaker, and it is what she passes on to her students when she teaches and revitalizes the language in her cultural museum and learning center.

In summary, the most important similarities found in the personal and collective efforts by Ati, Paza, Muyulema, and Sambrano are an open attitude to learn Kichwa through the creation and adoption of small linguistic spaces for its practice. Also, the teaching of Kichwa from a philosophical approach is a very salient aspect, for it puts cultural aspects of the Native Andean world on an equal level with the grammatical and pragmatic aspects of the language.

### **Shunguhuan Yuyai: An Andean sentiment of hope, nostalgia, and reflection**

Toa Maldonado and Ati Cachimuel each in their early thirties, have realized the importance of Kichwa in their lives and decided to share them with me. Therefore, in this conclusion, I seek to represent their reflections as truthfully as I can in order to draw similarities between their reflections and the concept of Shunguhuan Yuyay. And with this idea, I will pull together a final reflection on indigenous language loss and revitalization.

#### *Toa Maldonado on memories and family bonds*

The impact of losing the language would be like to not only forgetting about pronouncing the words but we would forget a lot of memories that we keep, memories about living with one's grandpas and other spaces besides life in the streets or in the city. Those memories would vanish because many times we used to joke with my father saying when he meets with a friend, he jokes about something in Kichwa. If I try to translate that to Spanish it does not really make sense because it does not evoke the same emotion because when we tell it, we immediately picture the space of what is being said in an indigenous vision. So every word preserves a little memory, even photos. So if words are lost, so many memories would be lost because if we do not have a memory of the things



that have been done we are just practically feeding ourselves from what we experience now and not from the past. (Maldonado 6/29/2016)

Toa evokes memories as something very significant of her life and of the lives of many peoples. But these memories and valuable moments of life are directly linked with the use of Kichwa; words and expressions that evoke vivid memories of places, feelings, and people. Toa's emphasis on the importance of memories as photos to relevant personal experiences in her life can be seen as both a personal loss and a loss of traditional knowledge. Now, one can incorporate Harrison's argument on the importance of saving endangered languages in order to keep oral human history and other valuable knowledges embedded in language from disappearing. However, I choose to extrapolate Toa's reflection with Harrison's argument from the cherished sentimental value that these memories encoded in Kichwa have for her identity instead of taking her feelings from a strict linguistic perspective. Memories through language are an unconditional part of one's identity. Losing one's words, as Toa would argue, is eventually "losing yourself", as her next quote demonstrates:

I think that losing Kichwa would even break certain bonds of being recognized by your family. Because without your language, you would only be recognized as someone from Otavalo and that is it. But if we preserve the language, at some point I will be consulted...as for instance, 'Ha your accent is from such place, you speak more or less like from Peguche, ha according to your accent you are from uphill.' And that is how my father, for example, recognizes them. His Aunt says for example 'I am very sure he is from Carahuela by the way he speaks, because I just heard him and speaks very fast'. So if we lose that part of us that gives us roots and an entire community practically, although I am not sure whether that worries many people or not. (Maldonado 6/29/2016)

Toa links sociolinguistic identity with ancestry. Here she explains that many youngsters living in the urban area do not identify themselves anymore with the villages or communities where their ancestors once lived. She also makes an important point regarding the preservation, not only of Kichwa itself but also of its dialectic diversity, because in her thinking, these dialects have primordial functions of identity in relation to place or region of origin. In this regard, we also have geographies of dialectal entanglements, where many people also value the struggle of preserving their local Kichwa dialects as a means to revitalize the language itself and also maintain healthy family bonds with those relatives living in urban centers. Her concern about people caring or not for Kichwa community identity and dialectical diversity as a salient cultural marker is a territory of struggle, where family relationships based on geography and language are being redefined.

#### *Ati on self-awareness*

It is always a barrier at the beginning. It would seem like too big of a barrier to speak in Kichwa. However, and it has happened to me that as soon as you utter the first word and everything flows. In my household with my whole family, we grew up speaking Kichwa. That is the same case for many people but when we get together we start speaking in Spanish "why have not you grown up speaking Spanish?" It would seem a barrier too big but as I tell you, as soon as you drop the first word everything comes out fluid... It comes very natural. Actually it is much closer, intimate, and understandable. It is a more personal matter than in Spanish... There was a time with my mom there was a barrier in our communication because we started speaking only in Spanish and when we went to school everything was in Spanish. So it is a situation about awareness because I say "it is bad that I am just speaking in Spanish" so I saw it as a great barrier, so we have to break

it and as soon as we broke our first word and everything was fluid. So it is a situation in which all of us are because the language is there and it is just a matter of wanting it.

(Cachimuel 7/8/2016)

Just like Toa values the memories and experiences a language carries with it, Ati values an intimate, natural interpersonal communication with his family and friends. Ati's self-awareness to take back what is his legacy can be seen as a "territory of struggle," where the battle of preserving Kichwa through meaningful communication in his interpersonal relationships takes place. In this sense, Ati retakes personal and intimate linguistic spaces previously occupied by Spanish and indigenizes them to the proper natural fluidity of Kichwa.

Both Toa and Ati demonstrate a clear sense of identity through Kichwa. Toa values the teachings and memories from the past, as well as the strength of family relations through geographical and dialectical connections. Ati, in a similar way, values Kichwa identity through a self-awareness that propels him to self-assert it through intimate sociolinguistic spaces in his family and his friends. Both Toa's and Ati's efforts are Shunguhuan Yuyay, for they conceive their cultural and linguistic identity around Kichwa at the same time their actions revitalize it in response to an encroaching, homogenizing Spanish-monolingual environment. In this sense, Shunguhuan Yuyay is a concept that embodies the revitalization efforts, reflections, and experiences about the present and future of Kichwa and other indigenous languages in Ecuador. However, it is a concept that can be adopted for the rest of endangered indigenous languages in the American continent and other parts of the world. Now, the constant battle between identity and cultural preservation and revitalization vis a vis the homogenizing global neoliberal capitalist machine is a place where "territories of struggle" are created. It is from these territories where the Shunguhuan Yuyay is conceived as ideology and performance. It is conceived as the

representation of Toa's, Ati's and the rest of my interlocutors' ideas and actions to value, preserve, and revitalize Kichwa.

Throughout the thesis we have seen how the different theoretical perspectives of scholars have served as general explanations regarding the problems my interlocutors have expressed regarding Kichwa loss and revitalization. As their perspectives have indicated throughout this thesis, my interlocutors' main reasons accounting for the loss of Kichwa in Ecuador are primarily an underfunded, ill-designed intercultural bilingual model by the government that is not culturally sensitive enough to the needs of Kichwa communities. Also, it is an education system based on an early-exit transitional model at best, where the purpose is to transition to a monolingual education in Spanish rather than aiming for the maintenance of the mother language, being Kichwa. In addition, there is still a pervasive neocolonial racist mentality coming from various sectors of the white-mestizo population against indigenous cultures, languages, and their peoples. However, an internalized self-racism within indigenous communities was also pointed out by some of my interlocutors as a grievous cause of Kichwa loss. I must mention that these two factors combined have greatly accounted for the fact many Kichwa children are neither learning nor speaking their language anymore. Consequently, there has been a constant underestimation of Kichwa as a language of academia, public speech, and mass-media communication by academic institutions like universities, state institutions like the Ministry of Culture, and many radio and TV channels and digital social media platforms. Finally, Kichwa and the rest of indigenous nations are faced with a leftist neoliberal government who is unwilling to sincerely acknowledge and recognize their ancestral rights on their lands, cultures, and sovereignty. In addition, it is a government that, through policies insensitive to the needs of the general population, is also forced by institutions like the World Trade Organization to benefit

agents like transnational corporations. These latter are agents of environmental and social degradation and constantly undermine indigenous nations' capacity to assert their rights.

Although, there are disagreements between the interlocutors on how this revitalization goal should be achieved, everyone expressed their sincere sentiment on the importance of recovering linguistic and cultural spaces for Kichwa. Among the main expectations and hopes among my interlocutors to revitalize Kichwa one finds the incorporation of new technologies and digital platforms like social media applications to enhance its prestige, visibilization, and availability for a much wider audience. This aspiration is emphasized by people like Rosero, Cachiungo, and Uzendoski, and it can be extrapolated to already successful language revitalization like the Maori and Hawaiian models. In addition, the creation and maintenance of public, educational, and artistic sociolinguistic spaces for Kichwa, especially for a wider audience of children and teenagers has been essential. People like Ati, Quimbo, and Chuquin make an important emphasis on this expectation and strategy. In a wider context, one can see that languages like Guarani, an indigenous language in Paraguay, are already at this stage. Furthermore, the advocating and triggering of positive changes of attitude and conception from indigenous and non-indigenous sectors of the population about Kichwa language and culture is necessary for a successful revitalization. In this sense, a valuable strategy to achieve this expectation is to raise awareness on people's minds to appreciate the importance of Kichwa language and culture by teaching and learning from a Native Andean philosophy. The main interlocutors advocating for this approach were Cachiungo, Ati, Sambrano, Paza, and Muyulema. In a wider context, this strategy is already being implemented for the revitalization of Mayan languages in countries like Guatemala (Grenoble and Whaley 1998), Lastly, an expectation that is among the most relevant is for people to value Kichwa as a means to maintain

and strengthen family bonds attached to a specific geographic place of origin. In addition, the expectation of valuing Kichwa as an intimate, sentimental means of interpersonal communication through self-awareness is something highly emphasized by Toa and Ati. In my perspective, this expectation is true for languages in general, but it can be more salient for indigenous languages that are only spoken in a delimited region of the world. In this sense, the sense of belonging to a geographical space through language-dialect identity is intensified. Finally, every one of the interlocutors have contributed a personal or collective effort to further achieve this goal of revitalizing Kichwa. It is my ultimate goal to write this thesis to shed light to the different perspectives and approaches undertaken by eleven Kichwa revitalizers and also as a way to sensitize and open the general public's mind on the importance of preserving humanity's linguistic and cultural diversity.

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