

Cultural glossary for the translations

Agency (Agencia). (See Municipality.)

Assembly. Town hall meeting.

Cabildo. The municipal or local council, generally appointed to serve on New Year's day for a term of from one to three years; often referred to as the local 'authorities' (*autoridades*). It is headed by the *Presidente* (mayor). (See also Cargo system).

Cargo system. The system of local public offices and responsibilities that is universal throughout indigenous southern Mexico (*cargos públicos* in Spanish, with analogs in each indigenous language, e.g., Yalálag Zapotec *Llin la'o*; San Juan Quiahije Eastern Chatino *nten^B nka^B jnya^F*). These are responsibilities that community members—traditionally men, but increasingly women—are assigned and are obliged to accept over the courses of their lives, beginning with service as *topiles*, or community errand-runners, and leading up to service on the *cabildo* (municipal council), or on the land council; or service as *Presidente* (Mayor) or as *mayordomo* for the annual community festival.

Castellanización/Castillianization. A public policy implemented by the Mexican government built around teaching Spanish (often referred to as *castellano* 'Castilian') to indigenous people in Mexico, and along with it, Iberian norms and customs, with the intention of rooting out or folklorizing indigeneity.

Chuvaj ants. Tsotsil 'Crazy woman'. A woman who breaks the norm, a woman who performs activities not often found in traditional daily life, for example as a professional, as a researcher.

Community assembly (*Asemblea comunitaria*). A local assembly where members of the community make decisions. The term refers to the collective, the body politic generally, as well as to specific ‘town hall’ style gatherings which would be called by the mayor or *Presidente* for the purpose of discussing and addressing community issues and projects, and making collective decisions.

Compadre/Comadre. Literally, ‘co-father’/‘co-mother’. A relationship of support—generically called *compadrazco*—between godparents and the parents of a child, most typically established when baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, but also on other propitious occasions later in life.

Curandero/curandera. Healer.

District. (See Municipality.)

Escuelas bilingües. ‘Bilingual schools’ that form a system in southern Mexico parallel to schools not designated as ‘bilingual’ and staffed by *maestros bilingües* ‘bilingual teachers’ who are bilingual in Spanish and an indigenous language, but, often enough, not the indigenous language or variety that is spoken in the community where they teach.

Gwzun. (See *Tequio*.)

Jchi’il jbatik. Tsotsil ‘we are partners’. Those of us who belong to the same culture, speak the same language and shared territory.

Live under scrutiny. To live within the community, being under constant observation about your actions and your ways of relating within the community where you live.

Local researcher. The person who researches and studies their own language and culture, who is located and anchored to a certain time-space-territory and a specific way of life as a member of the linguistic community and also the place where they conduct their research.

Mayordomía. A role of stewardship within the cargo system in which a person, the *mayordomo*, is responsible for financing and carrying out the annual community fiesta that is celebrated on the day of the year honoring the community’s Roman Catholic patron saint.

Mestizo/Mestiza. In Mexico, a person who identifies as being of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry but also usually as linguistically Hispanophone. It is sometimes contrasted with a fully Indigenous identity, which may also go along with loyalty to an Indigenous language. The notion of *Mestizaje* ('mixing', taken as the basis of a proper noun) is often made a focus or emblem of Mexican national ideology, but such a focus is often contested when it is seen as leading to the overlooking or erasure of cultural and linguistic Indigeneity in Mexican society.

Municipality. (*Municipio*). The basic local political unit in southern Mexico, most similar to Counties in the United States, but varying widely in size and population. Each southern Mexican state is divided into Districts (*Distritos*); each district into Municipalities; and—often—each Municipality may contain multiple settlements or hamlets, called Agencies (*Agencias*) if they have a local governing council (*Cabildo*), or Settlements (*Rancherías*) if they are smaller concentrations, typically belonging to an extended family. Informally, Municipalities are often referred to as *pueblos*, which we have variously translated as *villages* or *towns* following the authors' preferences, acknowledging, at the same time, that each English term might carry its own, not necessarily desired, connotations.

Paisanos. Fellow citizens, countrymen/country women.

Presidente. The head of the *Cabildo* and equivalent to the mayor or chief executive of the *Municipio* or *Agencia*. It is a one to three year community service office within the cargo system.

Pueblo. (See **Municipality.**)

Reciprocity practices. To give and take. To generate a mutual exchange, a two-way exchange, and not just from one of the parties.

Sk'an jtsatstastik ko'ontontik. Tsotsil 'Let us strengthen our hearts'. Acquire strength not to underestimate the work and actions a person does.

Settlement. (*Ranchería*). (See **Municipality.**)

Sorcery, witchcraft. Spanish *hechicería* 'sorcery, casting of spells' from *hechizo* 'spell'. These are not necessarily malevolent, as the terms in English may sometimes imply.

Tequio. From Classical Nahuatl *tequitl* 'tribute; work'. A general community duty of all citizens, e.g., service on a crew to fix potholes in community roads. *Tequio* stands apart from the cargo system, which involves service in community offices and roles.

It is translated into Yalálag Zapotec as *gwzun*, meaning “mutual aid or cooperation and voluntary service given from one member of a community to another. However, it is not a one-sided interaction but carries an understanding of reciprocity...”¹

Ulo’. Tsotsil ‘visitor’. A person who is no longer regularly in the family or community or simply does not belong to that family or place.

Vula’al. Tsotsil ‘to visit’. To arrive at someone’s house to talk or discuss something; to visit with them.

We-ness/Nosotrificación. From Spanish *nosotros* ‘we, us’. To research one’s own community, one’s own language and culture. The ‘we’ is the joint integration between the local researcher and the collaborating speakers of the study that compose a linguistic community.

Wen txhen. Yalálag Zapotec. A sign of reciprocity and social companionship based on a person or family’s previous participation in hosting an event such as a community festival. (See also *Mayordomía*).

1 Translation by May Helena Plumb from Lizama Quijano 2006: 210 (see bibliographic references in the article by Alonso Ortiz).