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The relationship between language teaching and Mayan language conservation in Guatemala.

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Mayan summer language programs in Guatemala

Oxlajuj Aj Kaqchikel program
- Began in 1990
- Sponsors:Tulane University and the University of Texas at Austin

K'iche' Maya program
- Began in 2008
- Sponsors: University of Chicago, Vanderbilt University, University of Kentucky

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Mayan summer language programs in Guatemala

Although the Kaqchikel program was the model and inspiration for the K'iche' program, the two programs differ in a number of ways because of differences in the sociolinguistic contexts in which they operate :

- Approaches to pedagogy and dialectal variation
- Integration with local communities
- Relationship to language documentation

Both programs aim to challenge prevailing language ideologies that denigrate Mayan languages:

"The student of Kaqchikel is likely to produce reactions of surprise and delight with their communication attempts. That someone who speaks a global language lke English would take an interest in learning and speaking Kaqchikel subverts ever so slightly the established order and doing so helps establish trust and rapport, because the time and effort expended in crossing that linguistic divide is an act of recognition and respect." (Brown, Maxwell and Little 2006: 5)

Both programs have relied (to varying degrees) on FLAS [Foreign Language/Area Studies] fellowships from the U.S. Department of Education for student funding.
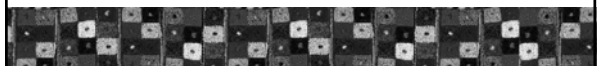
Language-oriented employment for teachers and host families creates economic opportunities that are only available to those who speak Maya.

Approaches to dialectal variation

The Kaqchikel program teaches a standardized variety that is not widely used in local communities.

The K'iche' program teaches a local variety (Nahualá, Sololá).

Oxlajuj Aj Kaqchikel curriculum

- Kaqchikel is undergoing language shift much more rapidly than K'iche'
- Student-teacher ratio is 1:1 in order to facilitate teacher training in Standard Kaqchikel, particularly for those working in bilingual education
- Program founded early in the Maya (cultural revitalization) Movement

Oxlajuj Aj Kaqchikel curriculum

- Use of numerous neologisms and standardized grammar
- Judie Maxwell (Tulane) worked closely with Kaqchikel language planners, particularly in developing neologisms
- Simultaneous development of standardized Kaqchikel and pedagogical materials

Oxlajuj Aj Kaqchikel curriculum

Use of Maya numbers above 20
Use of traditional Mayan names:
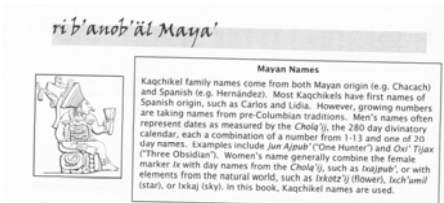
Oxlajuj Aj Kaqchikel curriculum

Inclusion of neologisms that are not widely used:

K'iche' program curriculum

Decision to focus on a single local dialect:

- More dialectal variation compared to Kaqchikel
- No consensus on standardization (or orthography)
- Higher levels of language maintenance compared to Kaqchikel
- Local bilingual education materials already developed

K'iche' program curriculum

Conservative features of Nahualá K'iche':

a. the 10-vowel (5 long/5 short) distinction
b. absence of unstressed vowel deletion
c. maintenance of /h/ as a phoneme
d. prosodic phonology, phrase-level alternations
e. distinct marking for negation and irrealis
f. maintenance of full forms of question words
g. consistent use of instrumental/benefactive voice
h. consistent use of VOS as basic word order
i. full use of respect forms of second person pronouns

K'iche' program curriculum

Materials developed in collaboration with Manuel Tahay Gomez, one of the founders of the local bilingual education program (Oxlajuj No'j Tijob'al Maya).

English-language L2 materials follow principles established by local teachers, leaving language planning questions entirely under control of the local community.

Relationship to local community

- In keeping with original goals of pan-Maya political unity, the Kaqchikel program occurs at multiple teaching sites.
- Majority of time is spent in tourist centers (Antigua, Panajachel), with short stays in Kaqchikel towns (Comalapa, Tecpan)
- Primary connection to Kaqchikel communities through developing close relationships with teachers

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Relationship to local community

- K'iche' program involves six-week stay with local host families (in which Maya is the primary home language).

- Students with no prior knowledge of K'iche' were placed with families in which some members of household are monolingual.

- Longer presence in Nahualá resulted in high visibility, knowledge of student presence.

Role in language description

- There is a long tradition of pedagogical grammars for Mayan languages, particularly for K'iche' (Wick and Cochojil-González 1968, Mondloch 1978)

- The Kaqchikel textbook (Brown, Maxwell and Little 2006) includes the most detailed description of Kaqchikel grammar currently available in English.

Role in language description

- In the K'iche' course, all examples used in class are discussed by local teachers.
- This method uncovered a number of previously undescribed constructions and new information about language variation, including change in progress

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Change in kinship terms

Term	Traditional meaning	Emergent meaning
atz	older same-sex sibling	older sibling
chaq'(ixel)	younger same-sex sibling	younger sibling
anab'	sister of a male	sister of a male
xib'al	brother of a female	brother of a female

Changes in instrumental voice

i   Xatukunaj ruk' q'ayes.
       x+at+u+kunaj r+uk' q'ayes.
       COMP+2sABS+3sERG+cure 3s+REL(with) herbs
       S/He cured you with herbs.

ii.   Q'ayes xukunab'ej awech.
       q'ayes x+ø+u+kuna+b'ej a+wech.
       herbs COMP+3sABS+3sERG+cure+instr 2s+REL(oblique)
       It was herbs s/he used to cure you.

Changes in instrumental voice: Emergence of ditransitive constructions

ii.   Q'ayes xukunab'ej awech.
       q'ayes x+ø+u+kuna+b'ej a+wech.
       hers COMP+3sABS+3sERG+cure+instr 2s+REL(oblique)
       It was herbs s/he used to cure you.

iii.   Q'ayes kukunab'ej ri ajkun le awanab'.
       q'ayes k+ø+u+kuna+b'ej ri ajkun le aw+anab'.
       herbs INC+3sABS+3sERG+cure+instr DET doctor DET 2sPOS+sister
       S/He is using herbs to cure your sister.

Role in language description

The existence of pedagogical materials in English makes in possible to speed up courses in language description.

In a course at the University of Kentucky (Fall 2008), undergraduates spent two months learning K'iche' grammar before spending one month working with a native speaker, allowing students to examine previously undescribed areas of grammar.

Role in language description

Example: Affective roots (mostly onomatopoeia)

CVC+VC$_1$Vb'ik	single occurrence
CVC+najik	intermittent
CVC+lajik	regular and repeating
CVC+VC$_1$Vtik	rapid, intensive repetition
CVC+VC$_2$ik	hyperintensive

In cases, where teaching a language to students from outside of the community is appropriate and there is sufficient interest in learning the language, language programs may:

- help provide financial resources for language work by the community
- challenge language ideologies that denigrate minority languages
- foster collaboration with local teachers that contributes to language documentation and description
- create opportunities for new areas of research by providing students with a solid background in the current state of language description

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References:

Brown, R. McKenna, Judith M. Maxwell and Walter E. Little. 2006. *La utz awach?: Introduction to Kaqchikel Maya language.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Mondloch, James. 1978. *Basic Quiché grammar.* Albany, NY: Institute of Mesoamerican Studies, SUNY-Albany

Wick, Stanley A. and Remigio Cochojil-González. 1968. *Spoken Quiché.* Chicago: University of Chicago (3 volumes).