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Indigenous Language Revitalisation: Mapuzungun Workshops in Santiago de Chile

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Most Indigenous peoples' languages are considered severely endangered, and Mapuzungun is no exception. Mapuche associations in Santiago de Chile have implemented a series of workshops to revitalise the language and revert this trend. This article uses ethnographic data to analyse two interconnected aspects that have motivated members of Mapuche associations to participate in community language workshops, namely identity and community-building. Although they have contributed to reverse the loss of Mapuzungun in Santiago, the implementation of language workshops has been limited by a state socio-political framework that has historically reproduced colonial-based ideologies that have reinforced the subalternisation of Indigenous languages. This article highlights the dynamic interplay of Mapuzungun revitalisation with practices that reinforce coloniality.

Keywords: cities, coloniality, community-based associations, indigenous language revitalisation, language asphyxiation, Mapuche.

Urban settlements have been central to the creation of colonial societies. As Porter and Yiftachel maintain, this is because invasion received organisational form through urbanisation processes. Thus, the establishment and development of cities was conceived as a manifestation of progress by the colonial power constituting 'a distinct activity literally building the settler-colonial nation' (Porter and Yiftachel, 2019: 177). The processes of colonial urbanisation have penetrated the social imaginary to the present day, turning the urban into a place alien to Indigenous identities (Brablec, 2020), without considering that many of these same cities were located in violently dispossessed Indigenous territories. As highlighted a decade ago by UN-Habitat (2010), indigeneity is an increasingly urban phenomenon. Indigenous presence in cities questions how Indigenous peoples experience and claim identities, belonging and rights across socio-spatial borders in the context of ongoing coloniality, discrimination and violence.

Following a similar trend, since the beginning of colonial rule, Chilean cities such as Santiago were considered the heart of development, progress and culture, the cradle of 'industrial capitalism' (Salazar, 2012). By contrast, Indigenous territories were seen as needing progress, thus being coercively joined to the Chilean nation-state's understanding of modernity. Historically, the state has executed multiple efforts to assimilate the Mapuche into the mainstream non-Indigenous society. Embedded in the beliefs of civilisation and whiteness, urbanisation processes have been deeply linked to the violence

of colonialism – a violence that involves territorial dispossession. The ongoing migration of the Mapuche population to the capital has to be considered one of the primary consequences of past and contemporary territorial dispossession, which is combined with a legal framework that has reproduced colonial-based ideologies.

In response to the historically centralist and culturally homogenising tendency of the Chilean political elite, in schools, the use of Mapuzungun (*mapu*: land; *zungu*: word/speech), the language of the Mapuche, was discouraged until 1994 due to efforts to standardise Spanish (Pfefferle, 2015). Thus, to attend state schools in Chile, compulsory since 1920 through the Compulsory Primary Education Law (Egaña, 2021), the Mapuche had to navigate an extra-community world dominated by Spanish. In addition, first-source accounts indicate that until the 1980s, the ridicule and physical punishment of those Mapuche who used Mapuzungun in their schools was a frequent pedagogical practice (Poblete, 2003; Lara, 2012). The direct consequence of this approach was that Mapuzungun ceased to be used in formal education. As a result of historical discriminatory practices, the language and its speakers have been stigmatised. Nonetheless, since the 1990s, the collective action of Mapuche migrants and their descendants in Santiago has challenged the loss and invisibility of their language.

Chilean cities dominated by the non-Indigenous ‘Other’ are identified as sites of Indigenous cultural loss (Peters, 2011). Yet, as Merino et al. (2020) discuss, the Mapuche in Santiago have managed to create and maintain a sense of belonging at a distance from their ancestral territory. While this and other studies (see, for example, Oteíza and Merino, 2012; Antileo, 2012) document the ways in which the Mapuche differently express cultural belonging and a sense of place in cities, they overlook the importance of organisational work in the preservation of ethnic traits in urban milieus. Cities are places where Indigenous peoples have resisted and challenged the normalisation of coloniality, understood as the set of practices emerging from the matrix of power constituted by colonialism that are still operative in contemporary Latin American societies (Maldonado, 2016). Urban Mapuche associations have contested these hierarchies of power by offering spaces for interaction among Mapuche peers that enable cultural recovery. As suggested by Māori researcher Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, the Mapuche are not alone in this process. Indeed, Tuhiwai-Smith explores 25 different Indigenous projects worldwide for ‘reclaiming, reformulating and reconstituting indigenous cultures and language’ (2005: 142). Language revitalisation is one of these projects, being channelled, in the case of urban Mapuche associations in Santiago, through workshops.

Urban Mapuche associations have developed a series of activities such as traditional ceremonies, and herbs, metalwork and *witral* (Mapuche weaving) workshops to re-create their identity. Among these activities, Mapuzungun workshops have generated the greatest interest due to the relevance of language as an Indigenous identity marker. These workshops, which engage in linguistic revitalisation practices, enable the collective operationalisation of a language that has been historically loaded with racist conceptions by the non-Indigenous ‘Other’. These workshops allow the Mapuche to reevaluate their language, keeping a sense of Indigenous identification alive in the urban context of Santiago. The significance of the use of Mapuzungun in the city has been twofold. First, Mapuzungun has regained importance as an identity marker within the urban Indigenous associative framework. Second, language workshops have served, albeit marginally, to reverse the loss of Mapuzungun in cities. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the ethno-cultural practice of Mapuche associations has been partly mediated by the state as the main provider of financial aid for the development of Mapuzungun workshops.

This article explores the possibilities and limitations of Mapuzungun workshops as sites of cultural and linguistic revitalisation. It suggests that Mapuche associations in Santiago have produced urban spaces ‘from below’ for the learning and practice of Mapuzungun, which in turn has played a key role in the collective enactment of Mapucheness in the city. However, Mapuche associations must navigate state policies so as to produce meaningful activities according to distinct spatial dynamics and power relations. By building on the Mapuche case in Santiago, and bringing to the discussion an urban, collective and participatory perspective, this study contributes to the flourishing literature on the reconstruction of collective Indigenous identities in Latin American cities while revealing the role that states, as entities that reproduce colonial narratives, play in this process.

This article is part of an ongoing ethnographic study on identity re-creation practices developed within Mapuche associations in Santiago that began in 2015. Participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews served as the primary data gathering tools. Participant observation has been undertaken in eleven Mapuche associations, resulting from a mixed random/snowball sampling approach. This approach produced a research sample of associations favouring cultural recovery. Given the economic barriers associations face with event organisation, the state’s financial support has been critical for materialising cultural activities. Indeed, all associations that are part of this study have applied, at some point, for public funding to develop workshops. Depending on the terms and conditions of the public funding received, the weekly workshops have lasted between three to six months, with a variable number of students that ranged from five to fifteen. The workshops funded by Corporación Nacional de Desarrollo Indígena (CONADI, National Corporation for Indigenous Development) have favoured the registration of Indigenous students below 29 years old; however, all associations have also promoted the participation of older generations since aged individuals have been tacitly in charge of helping with pronunciation and vocabulary. Moreover, 34 in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted between 2015 and 2018 with Mapuche participants in the associations included in the research. Reflecting the membership of Mapuche associations, the selection process of interviewees considered Mapuche individuals from different *kupalme* (family lineages) and *tuwün* (territorial identifications). It also sought to include a representation of different gender and age groups, and of varying longevity of participation in the associations. More recently, these methods have been complemented with digital ethnography, including online interviews and the observation of meetings of the eleven Mapuche associations initially included in the research. Pseudonyms are used throughout the article.

The (Dis)Use of Mapuzungun in Santiago

Indigenous peoples’ languages are considered the most at threat in the world. Many are being lost at an alarming rate. Mapuzungun is no exception as it is in a phase of disuse: the number of speakers is progressively decreasing, especially in cities. In many cases, rural ways of community learning that relied on the oral transmission of information have been challenged by city life (Zúñiga, 2007; Gundermann et al., 2009; Wittig, 2009; Lagos, 2012). Santiago has the largest proportion of Mapuche in the country, amounting to 35 percent of the Mapuche population (Censo, 2017). Currently, 83.2 percent of the Mapuche population in Santiago do not speak or understand Mapuzungun compared to 62.6 percent of the rural Mapuche population (CASEN, 2015). Even though

Mapuzungun has been used prominently in traditional ceremonies, the language has faced difficulties adapting to the new communicative functions in an urban context. As Mapuzungun progressively loses its communicative power, its use is increasingly relegated to a ritualistic performance to display shared identity and heritage. One of the main reasons for this relegation it is understood by this article to be ‘language asphyxiation’; that is, the diminished use of a subordinated language (Mapuzungun) given the supremacy exercised by a dominant language (Spanish). This is a typical consequence of ongoing practices and attitudes that reproduce coloniality in most, if not all, realms of societal life, manifested by cultural subalternisation as an active and violent agency removal process. Under incentives that continue to boost rural-to-urban migration, the Mapuche are losing direct and sustained contact with their communities of origin, making the learning and practice of the language a daily challenge. Nevertheless, the revitalisation of Mapuzungun in Santiago is evidence of its resilience in the face of continuous oppression and is largely the result of the consistent work of urban Mapuche associations through their Mapuzungun workshops.

Since the recovery of democracy in Chile in the early 1990s, the Mapuche in Santiago created and joined an increasing number of Indigenous associations based upon their shared self-identification as Mapuche people (Brablec, 2021). With the Indigenous Law of 1993, the state recognised urban Mapuche associations as legal entities different from rural communities, which are located in the Mapuche ancestral territory and are based upon the principles of *tuwün* and *kupalme*. According to the Indigenous Law, associations would serve as a ‘context of social organisation, cultural development, mutual protection, and support among urban and migrant Indigenous peoples’ (Article 76) independent of their place of origin and ancestral line. After 30 years of dictatorship under Pinochet, which suppressed collective activity, this recognition has served as a catalyst for associational multiplication in the capital of Chile. Even though most Mapuche people in Santiago still do not participate in any identity movements, the number of Mapuche organisations around the city has steadily increased throughout the years. There were nineteen urban associations within the state’s legal registry in 1999; twenty years later, this number grew to more than 220 urban associations, and it seems to be increasing every year (Gobierno Regional Metropolitano de Santiago, 2016).

To make sense of contemporary efforts to revitalise Indigenous languages, it is essential to understand the political context that has shaped their modern-day marginalisation. Each of the seven governments that came after the return to democracy has tried to address the multiple hurdles affecting the Indigenous population in the country. Framed within a neoliberal multicultural approach (Hale, 2005), one of the most relevant of these policies is the Programa de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (Intercultural Bilingual Education Programme – PEIB) implemented since 1996 by the Ministry of Education under the Indigenous Law. According to this policy, all schools, in both rural and urban areas, with Indigenous enrolment of 20 percent or higher must incorporate a traditional educator (*educador tradicional*) responsible for transmitting cultural and linguistic tools to the students, usually in the form of workshops (Castillo and Loncon, 2015).

Even though 75 percent of Indigenous students are enrolled in schools located in urban areas (Ministerio de Educación, 2017), the implementation of PEIB in cities has been erratic, plagued by a lack of resources, dependent on the will of the schools and lacking in cultural relevance. The architects of Chile’s modern educational system designed an Indigenous language education policy characterised by disorganisation and ambiguity, operating under the belief that Indigenous languages were incompatible with modernity (Zúñiga, 2007; Lagos, 2015). Thus, as Álvarez-Santullano and Forno (2008)

point out, the teaching of Mapuzungun has been conceived as a peripheral curriculum; that is, a curriculum based on occasional classes and with content that is not formally evaluated as is the case with Spanish and English. In practice, the teaching of Mapuzungun is dependent on the goodwill of teachers who, in their majority, are not prepared for the task. Consequently, Mapuzungun remains subordinated, as it has been historically, to Western pedagogies.

As Delgadillo (2018) maintains in his study on Bolivia, the pedagogy that sustains educational action in Latin America is rooted in the coloniality of power as a hegemonic model resulting in the subalternisation of Indigenous languages. In practice, education systems reinforce Indigenous subalternisation by fostering language segregation and the epistemic ghettoisation of Indigenous knowledge (Pérez-Aguilera and Figueroa-Helland, 2011). From a political perspective, Aninat and Hernando (2019) indicate that intercultural education has suffered from a profound lack of state coordination. According to the authors, this is due to the high number of institutions involved in implementing the policy, from CONADI to different organisations associated with the education sector; however, each has an unclear scope of action. This lack of a systemic plan leads to an inconsistent articulation of the PEIB throughout a student's education cycle. As Lagos (2015) points out, educational initiatives which cover this gap in cities have emerged from Mapuche associations instead.

Indigenous community-based associations play a crucial role in language revitalisation, understood as saving a language that is falling into disuse by increasing its usage by both native speakers and learners (Hinton, 2018). As a result, the Mapuche in Santiago have been impelled to look for associations as contexts in which adults and children can receive the language education they cannot otherwise obtain from their households or the public system. While the levels of Mapuzungun competence in Santiago are low (Gundermann et al., 2009; Lagos, 2012; Pfefferle, 2015), speaking Mapuzungun has become an important source of identity. Mapuzungun is nowadays widely considered one of the most relevant symbols of Mapucheness (Wittig, 2009), not only as a means of communication but also as an element of symbolic relevance in ceremonies. Attending a Mapuzungun workshop has thus been transformed into one of the main methods of enacting Mapucheness when living outside the homeland. The complexities of the collective re-creation of Mapuzungun, as one of the most salient cultural markers, are presented next.

Mapüdükeiñ warria mü: We Speak Mapuzungun in the City

The role of associations is crucial because there is a large Mapuche population in Santiago. A percentage of associations has assumed the role of teaching Mapuzungun because schools are not providing the educational tools to keep the language alive. (Bárbara, 57 years old, Mapuche traditional educator)

The Mapuche in both rural and urban areas are subject to significant socio-economic deprivations. They have most recently suffered from a general pejorative conception of indigeneity held by the Chilean-*mestizo* society, with the Mapuche struggle for land recovery equated to terrorism by the state (Richards, 2010). However, enacting Mapuche markers of difference constitutes an important identity claim (Webb, 2013) which has

gained increasing exposure, especially since the enactment of the Indigenous Law. The Mapuche in Santiago need to be understood beyond the explicit spatial mobility from an ancestral territory to a new milieu. This movement mirrors the complexity of ethnic reconfiguration, which is deeply linked spiritually to the ancestral territory, and the new interactions in a plural-heterogeneous setting circumscribed by a highly centralised and unitary country such as Chile (Brablec, 2020). In the process of geographical rural-to-urban relocation, there is a parallel symbolic mobilisation of cultural traits shaped by both constant contact with their Indigenous peers and the various exchanges that take place in the different urban and rural settings. Thus, Mapuche identity is shifting and context-driven, interpreted, signified and lived differently within urban Mapuche associations. The Mapuche identity re-creation processes in Santiago resemble those experienced by other Indigenous groups in Latin American cities. For instance, first-generation Indigenous migrants in the Bolivian cities of La Paz and Santa Cruz revitalise rural traditions during special events, while Indigenous youth engage in artistic fusion between ‘traditional’ Indigenous and popular urban culture (Horn, 2017). On the other hand, Campbell (2015) argues that Amazonian cities have become resourceful spaces in the struggle for Indigenous cultural preservation as Indigenous groups continue to engage in diverse ‘post-traditional’ environments.

The use of Mapuzungun in the city is a clear example of the fluidity of identity reconstruction and boundary reshaping. A proportion of the Mapuche in Santiago, especially the younger generations born in the capital, have creatively constructed their placement in the city through the coining of hybrid Mapuche/non-Mapuche neologisms, such as ‘*mapurbe*’, ‘*mapunky*’ and ‘*mapuheavy*’ (Aniñir, 2009), to describe contemporary expressions of Mapuche identity. Through hip-hop music, some young Mapuche groups have been actively using phrases in Mapuzungun for identity re-creation (for example, the cases of Mapuche rapper Jaime Cuyanao and the group Wechekeche Ñi Trawün). Although these practices differ from the more conventional teaching activities promoted by associations, Mapuzungun language has unquestionably occupied a prominent position as a landmark of Mapucheness in Santiago.

As Bárbara stated in the opening quote, Mapuzungun workshops organised by Indigenous associations in many instances assume the language educational role neglected by the education system. To the open-ended question ‘Why do you think it is important to revitalise Mapuzungun in the city?’, participants in this study replied by identifying two interconnected aspects of the workshop environment, namely, Indigenous identity and community-building.

Language and Identity

For us, language and identity are interconnected. If I recognise myself as Mapuche, it is not enough to have an Indigenous surname. I have to accept what being Mapuche entails, and for that, it is essential to know how to communicate in Mapuzungun. (Valeria, 42 years old, leader of a Mapuche association)

As Bourgeois, De la Sablonnière, and Taylor (2018) argue, Indigenous languages are central to Indigenous communities’ identity. Speaking the same language is a valuable resource for ethno-national groups as it is a recognised – although not necessarily exclusive – marker for the definition of the distinctive culture of a group. Ideas around the blood quantum (Alfred and Corntassel, 2005) or external markers such as clothing

(Margiotti, 2013) have also been identified as relevant markers of group membership. As a communicative tool, languages are vehicles for transmitting information and play a key role in the interaction and cohesion of a collective. Valeria is the leader of a Mapuche association located in the outskirts of Santiago. As indicated in the introductory quote, identity and language are interdependent for Valeria, making it difficult for one to exist without the other. As a result, her association has been systematically teaching Mapuzungun through weekly workshops to deliver the necessary socio-linguistic tools that would facilitate and reinforce Mapuche's sense of identity. The intimacy between Mapuche identity and Mapuzungun was an element identified by all the eleven associations part of this study, including María's. According to her:

It does not make much sense to dress in all your clothes, go to ceremonies, if you do not even know how to answer a greeting in Mapuzungun. I will not see that person as a Mapuche. (María, 45 years old, leader of a Mapuche association)

María is part of the small group of fluent Mapuzungun speakers in Santiago or, in local jargon, *hablantes*. Of the total of 34 interviewees, a quarter acknowledged an advanced level of language competence that would allow them to understand and express themselves adequately in Mapuzungun. Like Valeria's associations, María's adopted the teaching of Mapuzungun as their main objective. Similarly, both emphasised that other identity markers appreciated as relevant to the Mapuche, such as surnames (as suggested by Valeria) or participation in ceremonies (as suggested by María), are of secondary importance if they are not accompanied by competence in the language of their ancestors. As Oteiza and Merino (2012) maintain, speaking Mapuzungun plays a crucial role in Indigenous self and peer identification, constituting a foundation on which the Mapuche worldview is based. In this way, the United Nations for Indigenous Peoples (2008) asserts that the revitalisation of Indigenous languages through community-based work has a special meaning since Indigenous peoples rely on oral communication for intergenerational traditional knowledge transmission. In the words of María:

The only way to understand the worldview, what being a Mapuche means, is through the language. The important things, the spiritual ones, have to be spoken in Mapuzungun; otherwise, the sense is lost. That is why it is essential to speak the language. (María, 45 years old, leader of a Mapuche association)

Thus, language revitalisation through workshops is not limited to the teaching of language to enable interpersonal communication. Mapuzungun is also closely related to a deep-rooted symbolic experience, encompassing notions that are often impossible to explain by using words but are intelligible through a lived representation of them. As maintained by Course in his study on Mapuzungun, 'in the context of language in the Amerindian imagination, the ontological possibilities for what language is take particular forms, structured as they are within particular cosmological understandings' (2018: 13).

Leaders of Mapuche associations, such as Bárbara, Valeria, and María, often refer to the asphyxiation of Mapuzungun due to the advance of the languages of the 'Others', which could ultimately result in the erasure of their identity. According to Bárbara:

Without the language, we get sick, we scatter, we lose our identity. What we are trying to do in the workshops is put Spanish and English aside and

use words in Mapuzungun. I am managing to get them say *feley* instead of okay, and *may* instead of *sí*. (Bárbara, 57 years old, Mapuche traditional educator)

As Mapuzungun is profoundly attached to a sense of identity, Mapuzungun teachers, or *kimelfe*, use the safe learning environment offered by associational workshops to counter language asphyxiation and to introduce everyday words into their students' vocabulary. Motivated by a sense of defence of '*lo Mapuche*', urban associations revitalise their language as an expression of identity affirmation. The threat posed by using words such as '*sí*' and 'okay' in Spanish and English, the languages sheltered by the policies that govern the country's educational system, is mitigated by framing the associative workshop as a Mapuzungun space.

Community-Building

My cousin invited me to a Mapuzungun workshop organised by his association. I went one day to see what it was about, and I immediately wanted to join that association, I wanted to be part of that community. Now, this association is my home. I learned to recognise myself as Mapuche here. (Fernando, 45 years old, member of a Mapuche association)

While there is debate regarding which criteria accurately represent the level of success of language revitalisation (Fitzgerald, 2017), the number of fluent speakers remains one of the most visible indicators of a satisfactory outcome (Pine and Turin, 2017). However, Indigenous community-led projects that focus on creating a cultural context for more Mapuzungun learners' engagement with traditional knowledge can have equally important and lasting impact on social identity. Indeed, language revitalisation has a multidimensional and interconnected impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples from communicative, identity and social perspectives (Pine and Turin, 2017; Brablec, 2019). Although Mapuzungun workshops are not the only means through which community can be built in an urban context, these events lead to multiple interactions with people, things and situations to promote a sense of togetherness that is built sheltered by the revitalisation of a language deeply connected with Mapuche identity. Several urban Mapuche associations operate weekly language classes out of a collective desire to preserve and transmit Mapuzungun to the next generations, to reconnect with a lost or forgotten sense of Mapuche identity, or as an occasion to be together with other self-identified Mapuche individuals in a familiar environment. In turn, the frequency of workshops provides an excellent opportunity to meet on a regular basis, thereby building and strengthening a sense of community.

Fernando is a second-generation Mapuche in Santiago. As a joint result of the early migration age of his parents and the fierce discrimination that he and his family suffered because of their indigeneity, Fernando's parents decided not to teach the language to their children in order to facilitate their integration into the dominant non-Indigenous society. Appreciating Mapuzungun as a key Mapuche identifier, Fernando's parents were no exception in their protection strategy towards racism which, nevertheless, led to the dispossession of both their language and their sense of belonging to an Indigenous community. A similar social uprooting experience is shared by Marcela, who migrated to Santiago when she was a young adolescent. According to Marcela:

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Through the workshops, I have been able to remember things that I forgot, to remember words. I felt more Mapuche when I joined the association, when I participate with the other members because now, I remember. (Marcela, 66 years old, member of a Mapuche association)

Inserted in an urban landscape, participation in the collective revitalisation of Mapuzungun has led many Mapuche, like Fernando and Marcela, to remember together aspects of their shared culture and thus reconstruct a past sheltered in memories and conceptions of their rural homeland left behind. At the same time, this process has been accompanied by the reaffirmation of social ties with those perceived as members of the same ethnic group. In other words, the process of remembering Mapuzungun framed by the workshop collective experience is parallel to a process of identity reassertion and community-building in the city.

In addition to training people to become fluent Mapuzungun speakers, language workshops also impact identity formation and group consolidation. The low number of *hablantes* in urban Mapuche associations has not prevented these associations' members from incorporating the language in their multiple social interactions. That is, although workshops are still dominated by Spanish, the quasi-performative oral use of words and phrases in Mapuzungun has been positioned as a marker of Mapuche group belonging. Cristina remarks that:

You immediately feel part of the group when they greet you in Mapuzungun, you feel that you are part of them [...]. When I joined the workshops of the association, it helped me. I am picking up Mapuzungun. (Cristina, 64 years old, member of a Mapuche association)

As the case of Cristina reveals, the use of Mapuzungun is equated with a sense of belonging to the Mapuche community. Through the participation in workshops, words and phrases are apprehended, thus enabling socio-cultural learning for those who did not have the opportunity to acquire these tools through family education. Therefore, the use of Mapuzungun words has become customary in the interactions among the Mapuche. Greetings (*mary mary*), gratitude (*chaltumay*) and farewell (*peukallal*) are expected to be always in Mapuzungun. By referring to Mapuzungun words, the Mapuche immediately position themselves as part of the Mapuche people. Cultural practices, such as those presented here, are developed and redefined around the sense of community that binds the Mapuche individual to other members of the ethnic group. However, the use of some words does not replace the relevance of being an *hablante*. By offering spaces for Mapuzungun workshops, Mapuche associations have been transformed into Mapuzungun revitalisation settings.

The Challenges of Mapuzungun Revitalisation Workshops

Most under 30s in Santiago no longer speak the language. And that is very sad because if young people do not speak the language fluently, we can die as a people. (María, 45 years old, leader of a Mapuche association)

The participants in this study identified two challenges as the main obstacles when planning and executing their language revitalisation workshops: first, the state's allocation

of a low budget for workshops while it places high bureaucratic demands on the associations for the development of activities; second, the lack of interest of the urban Mapuche community in Santiago, especially younger generations. The combination of these factors underlay what María identified in the preceding quote as a threat to the survival of the Mapuche as a people. These two limitations are discussed in the following subsections.

The Role of the State

One of the main challenges is the budget. The state gives us little money, but they expect us to develop a well-structured language workshop for several months. There is also very little cooperation between us as associations. We do not support each other, and that is a problem. (Carla, 65 years old, leader of a Mapuche association)

Mapuche associations have widely criticised the state for not developing a long-term plan able to face the complexities of intercultural education at the city level. The state is an influential agent in the revitalisation of Mapuzungun in Santiago. To implement language workshops successfully, associations registered as legal entities have heavily relied on the limited economic support offered by the state. To obtain the necessary resources, these Mapuche associations can apply for competitive public funds. While state funding has been vital for the development of cultural workshops, it has also posed several obstacles that threaten the actual implementation of activities. Through a careful channelling and monitoring of limited public funding schemes for the organisation of cultural and micro-entrepreneurial activities, urban Mapuche associations are regarded as subjects who can apply for specific social benefits that can address socio-economic disparities (De la Maza, 2010). However, as Carla noted in the opening quote, resources have appeared insufficient for sustaining lasting activities and developing well-structured workshops that, in practice, compensate for the lack of state support in intercultural education. The organisation of language workshops requires economic planning to finance the rent of venues, modest remunerations for the *kimelfe*, and learning materials for students. In a similar way to Carla, Valeria notes:

The state designs these funding projects poorly. They make associations compete against each other to access few resources. We are offered what was left over in terms of resources; our culture is not valued. And the money has to be enough for educative weekly workshops for six months! (Carla, 65 years old, leader of a Mapuche association)

Both Carla and Valeria seem to agree that there is a series of consequences emergent from the lack of resources intended for the organisation of workshops: the difficulty of making ends meet for a well-designed and long-lasting Mapuzungun workshop; the state's devaluation of Mapuche traditional knowledge; and a funding system for Indigenous projects prone to generating competition, rather than collaboration, between associations. This last point has been one of the primary factors responsible for a rather disjointed urban Mapuche associational panorama. One of the reasons provided by the Mapuche interviewees is related to the lack of transparency regarding the allocation of resources provided by the state, leading to a high level of inter-associative suspicion. As Margarita posits:

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My association has received very little support. But other [Mapuche] associations win macro projects. (Margarita, 35 years old, leader of a Mapuche association)

The opaqueness in the allocation of funds for the development of Mapuzungun workshops has led associations to speculate on the success of some and the bad luck of others, contributing to the competitive associational landscape in Santiago as presented by Valeria, Carla, and Margarita. The role of the state's funding has certainly given rise to inter-associative schisms that do not seem to find an easy solution. Other associations, like Valeria's, have complained about the growing bureaucratisation in the teaching of Mapuzungun. In her own words:

It is a lot of work to organise a workshop. With the state, everything has to be certified, as they do not believe you. You need to have letters of recommendation and to justify all the gaps in the *kimelfe's* CV to be recognised as an adequate teacher. They are very bureaucratic. (Valeria, 42 years old, leader of a Mapuche association)

The leaders of Mapuche associations, some of them also *kimelfe*, expressed their fatigue and annoyance regarding the high bureaucratic demand for the planning of workshops. One of the main areas of conflict is the lack of validation of Indigenous traditional knowledge. The expectation to certify ancestral knowledge following Western guidelines to be able to qualify for public resources has discouraged various associations from leading Mapuzungun workshops as they feel their knowledge is not valued.

Although Mapuche associations charge a monthly fee that ranges from 1,000 to 3,000 Chilean pesos (£1 to £3) per person, this money does not cover the most basic expenses. Only a few Mapuche associations have taken steps towards economic autonomy. A partial consequence of the often detrimental project system is that there have not been significant attempts to develop economic-based alliances between the associations included in this study, reflecting the atomised associational landscape. In practice, this situation has hindered the development of coordinated inter-associational action to pursue language revitalisation. Overall, the implementation of Mapuzungun workshops is still restricted by a dependency on public funds. Indeed, recent data indicate that the poverty rate of Chile's Indigenous population is twice as high (18.3 percent versus 9.9 percent) and its wages 33 percent lower than those of the non-Indigenous population (CASEN, 2015). Consequently, an amalgam of interconnected historical socio-economic conditions results in multifarious discrimination, including racial, economic and gender factors, making socio-economic opportunities in cities scarcer for Indigenous peoples. This translates into a structural dependency on institutions that are not necessarily sensitised to the specifics of Indigenous urbanisation. In practice, the Mapuche are inscribed in categories of inequality, with little space to challenge dominant representations of indigeneity and to revitalise key markers of indigeneity such as language.

Lack of Interest

One of the greatest challenges we have as an association in the teaching of Mapuzungun is the lack of participation of young people. I think there is a profound lack of interest. (Denise, 21 years old, member of a Mapuche association)

Language revitalisation through Mapuzungun workshops has mostly originated through the actions of the same Mapuche community in Santiago, either by *hablantes* or by those willing to learn their ancestors' language. These two groups share a common sense of loss of a language that stands at the centre of their Indigenous identity. While workshops respond to a planned endeavour to regain the use of an endangered language (Hinton, 2018), this strategy has not always been successful in attracting the younger Mapuche generations who, in many cases, have parents who themselves grew up without speaking the language. By not having learned the language at home and excluding themselves from language learning experiences, the risk of losing the use of Mapuzungun in the city becomes real. A proportion of the Mapuche youth has found other language revitalisation channels, such as partaking in hip-hop music or dance groups with Mapuche peers (Lagos, 2012). However, studies looking at the Mapuche youth in Santiago suggest that they still value the more regular interaction with Mapuche from different age groups and in different socio-cultural contexts, as these practices are appreciated for their impact on identity strengthening (Zañartu et al., 2017). Despite the relevance conferred on Mapuzungun as a symbol of identity, young Mapuche in contemporary Chile are mostly urban and tend not to speak the language (CASEN, 2015). According to members of Mapuche associations, one of the reasons for the low participation rates of young Mapuche in language workshops is lack of interest. In this regard, María shares Denise's view on the apathy towards the active learning of Mapuzungun:

Young people do not participate in workshops. There is no interest. I am teaching the children of the members of the association. Young people do not understand their own culture. (Denise, 21 years old, member of a Mapuche association)

As Hinton (2018) maintains, it is not rare that even those committed to teaching the language can feel a sense of despair and hopelessness as they observe people ceasing to use it and children not learning it. Multiple interconnected factors are responsible for this current scenario. One of these issues has been the pervasive and palpable legacy of colonialism, with racism influencing all aspects of the national education system. In the words of Rocío, a second-generation Mapuche in Santiago who does not speak Mapuzungun:

They made fun of me at school, the teachers, because of my surname, they used to call me *india*. I did not want to participate in an association until I grew up; before, I was ashamed. My mum was also discriminated against, humiliated. (Rocío, 40 years old, member of a Mapuche association)

For many people, the abandonment of Mapuzungun is part of a deliberate decision to hide an identity loaded with social stigma. As a result of sustained discrimination, even endorsed by the school's teachers, Rocío's mother decided not to teach the language to her three children, thereby depriving her grandchildren of Mapuzungun. Some Mapuche believed they were protecting their children against racism by concealing this aspect of their identity, which resulted in a generation dispossessed of Mapuzungun. Rita, on the contrary, used to speak Mapuzungun at home since it is her mother tongue. However, the experience of her daughter reveals a similar experience to Rocío's:

My daughter suffered a lot as a child. She understands Mapuzungun because we spoke it at home. But she does not want to speak. She does not

want to come to our [association's] meetings. (Rita, 55 years old, member of a Mapuche association)

Rita's daughter was subjected to violence and discrimination because of her Mapuche surnames and a slight accent that revealed her early approach to Mapuzungun. As a consequence of this experience, she had never, at 35 years of age, participated in any associational activity to which her family dedicate a large part of their time. It should not be forgotten that, for centuries, national political authorities have forcibly tried to homogenise Chilean society culturally and idiomatically (Álvarez-Santullano and Forno, 2008). Thus, the alleged lack of interest of urban Mapuche youth in learning Mapuzungun is an important consequence of the colonial legacy operative to date.

Conclusions

The active engagement in Mapuzungun workshops has been transformed into one of the main instruments the Mapuche have to enact their identity collectively when living outside their homeland. The space offered by associational workshops for language revitalisation has become a space of identity resistance. As maintained by Rivera Cusicanqui, bilingualism is an empowering tool and decolonising practice for Indigenous peoples in Latin America, because it allows them to create 'a "we" of interlocutors and producers of knowledge, which can then dialogue, on equal terms, with other foci of thought and currents in the academy of our region and of the world' (2010: 106). The implementation of a network of language workshops is part of an attempt to reverse the loss of Mapuzungun, one of the main pillars on which Mapuche identification resides. Additionally, workshops have been recognised by the members of various Mapuche associations as an occasion that allows them to remember experiences of a rural past and enact a present protected by the collective revitalisation of Mapuzungun. In turn, Mapuzungun revitalisation workshops have promoted community building for those who participate in Mapuche associations while residing in a city to which many of these participants were forced to migrate.

As is the case in other Latin American countries (see, for example, the case of Mexico's General Coordination for Bilingual and Intercultural Education – Hamel, 2008; Pérez-Aguilera and Figueroa-Helland, 2011), Chile has a nationwide bilingual education programme for Indigenous languages, the PEIB. This programme was, however, centrally designed and to a great extent has excluded the involvement of Indigenous individuals from its implementation. The economic assistance provided by the state to associational language revitalisation has been scarce and coupled with a high bureaucratic demand. Furthermore, the inclusion of Indigenous actors in the formulation of policies and the evaluation of intercultural education in cities remains insufficient. The consequences of this approach on Mapuche language revitalisation have been numerous. One of the most evident results is that Mapuzungun still suffers from language asphyxiation, being both racialised as inferior (Antileo, 2012) and subordinated to the teaching of Western languages in schools. The lack of relevance given to the teaching of Mapuzungun reflects racism's pervasiveness, severely affecting the appreciation younger, city-born generations have for this language. As a result, Mapuche associations in Santiago have faced the challenge of appealing to the younger population segments, which are reluctant to participate in language workshops. Associations consider addressing this situation to be one of the most critical tasks for the survival of the language in the

city. The fruits of collective work are becoming more noticeable in associations such as María's, who pointed out in a recent conversation: 'I think the youth are showing a bit more interest recently as they realise the true importance of their ancestors' language'.

To have a more palpable impact on revitalising Indigenous languages, associations themselves should be allowed to play a key role in designing and evaluating strategies since they are cognisant of their specific needs, based as they are on ancestral knowledge. The state should play only a supportive role instead of making Indigenous associations compete for funding (Hamel, 2008; Pine and Turin, 2017). These competitive funding schemes offer short-term economic incentives for Mapuzungun workshops creating, in turn, new bonds of dependence on the state and deeper rivalries between associations. Instead, the state could support urban Indigenous associations as they progress towards economic autonomy, thereby avoiding the intensification of paternalistic dynamics. The process of empowering urban Indigenous associations in their attempts to re-create their culture should go hand in hand with training Indigenous traditional educators in schools and further enabling Mapuzungun teaching in the city (Lagos, 2012). These measures would serve to build greater trust among Mapuche associations and potentially develop an inter-associative effort to revitalise a language at risk of extinction.

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