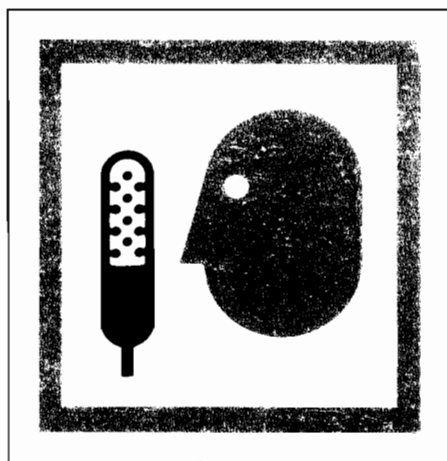


**INTERACTION THROUGH
LANGUAGE**

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Socio-cultural conflict and bilingual education—the case of the Otomí Indians in Mexico

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Introduction

For several decades, the concept of bilingual-bicultural education has been at the centre of a controversy. Each new experiment, whether it succeeds or fails, gives rise to new solutions, to original arguments, but also to problems. The discussion centres mainly on two questions.

The first, which is socio-political and cultural in nature, concerns whether it is really possible to build a multi-lingual and multicultural nation. It may be feasible, under plans to establish national states, to reconcile the forging of a national identity with the preservation of linguistic and cultural diversity. The second question, which is psycholinguistic and pedagogical, is concerned with the ways in which a second language is learned and the co-ordinated or conflicting use of two languages. What effects does learning a second language have on the development of the mother-tongue? What effects does the use of two languages have on the psychosocial identity of an individual?¹

If it is accepted, at least in principle, that a nation can be built without eradicating

minority cultures and languages, then one of the greatest challenges for the educational system is to provide for effective teaching of the national language to speakers of minority languages, without harming the subsidiary languages and cultures.

A second problem arises when curricula are being drawn up, and concerns the question of whether the priority social objective of fluency and literacy in the national language can be acquired without excluding development of the mother-tongue, or whether the mother-tongue can only play a transitional and supportive role.

In this article, based on the findings of a case-study in Mexico, an attempt will be made to show how the socio-cultural factors that shape the language conflict between Spanish (the national language) and Otomí (a minority Indian language) have a direct effect on bilingual education. An analysis will be offered of some of the contradictions between official primary-school bilingual programmes and the sociolinguistic conditions under which they are applied, in an endeavour to bring out the close relationship between the socio-political and cultural and the psycholinguistic and pedagogical aspects.

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The linguistic and educational policy pursued in regard to the Indians

Throughout its history, Mexico has found answers of its own to these questions. Ever since the Conquest, there has been a clash between two basic positions: one considering that the extinction of the indigenous peoples is a prerequisite for building up the national state, and the other fighting for the preservation of indigenous cultures and languages in this nation-building process. Without any doubt, the first opinion has in practice nearly always had the upper hand, much more than provided for in the programmes.² As Salomon Nahmad, an outstanding civil servant dealing with Mexican Indian affairs, has said (1982, p. 25):

It is quite certain that the ideals of unity are confused with those of uniformity . . . ; the teaching-learning process is used as an instrument, not to educate and to acquire knowledge, but as a substitute for arms to achieve ethnocide or evangelization. It is also claimed that education leads to the destruction of ethnic and linguistic identity, as if that identity has anything to do with the learning process.

In general, the sociolinguistic situation among the Indian³ population is characterized by an increasing loss of ground by the vernacular languages. The national language and culture are increasingly making inroads into the indigenous communities, 'to such an extent that it is difficult to determine how many cultural features of the indigenous groups are really of prehispanic origin' (Stavenhagen, 1979, p. 13).

Particularly during the twentieth century, the period of nation-building, the main instrument of Indian policies has been generalized primary education, in which the rural teacher is used as a promoter of change to further the programme of integrating Indian ethnic groups into the racially mixed national society.

During the six-year term of President José López Portillo (1978-82), when the

author's research was conducted, preference was given in the programmes to the multicultural variant of integration and this led to a redefinition of bilingual-bicultural education (Scanlon, 1982).⁴ In order to 'ensure that monolingual pre-school Indian children start learning Spanish—without detriment to their cultural and linguistic identities' (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1979, p. 56), the Secretariat for Public Education explicitly took up the challenge of achieving integration by teaching the national language and culture while trying, at the same time, to preserve ethnic and linguistic identity in the school system.

The language conflict

Some findings will now be presented of a collective sociolinguistic research project carried out between 1979 and 1982 in the Mezquital valley, one of the areas where much of the Otomí group is concentrated.⁵

The overall sociolinguistic relationship between Spanish and Otomí in this region can be characterized by the concept of substitute diglossia (partial bilingualism), that is to say, an unstable and skewed conflictual relationship between a dominant and a dominated language (Vallverdu, 1973).⁶ Two historical trends in the language conflict were noted: the growing expansion of Spanish and the displacement of Otomí as the main trend, and language and cultural resistance by the Otomí group as a subsidiary trend. The main trend, which is the outcome of a long historical process, can be seen at various levels: Spanish is displacing Otomí geographically, from the irrigated zones in the valley towards the arid areas in the sierra, functionally, since the national is replacing the indigenous language in an increasing number of communicative situations, and in the very linguistic structure of Otomí.

The subsidiary trend of language and cultural retention and resistance finds expression in the persistence of a traditional system of communication and internal organization in the villages. In fact, Otomí is still



Aztec place-name representations: Coatepec ('Snake-mountain-place'), Quauhnuarac ('Near-the-woods'), Itztlan ('Obsidian-place') and Tollantzinco ('In-the-small-place-of-the-cyperus'). From *Codex Mendoza*, Cooper Clark, London, 1938.

highly important in day-to-day verbal communication, as well as in traditional cultural activities (fiestas, celebrations, ceremonies, oral literature, etc.). In general, an affective identification with Otomí is found: 'Otomí will never disappear because we have always spoken it here'; Spanish on the other hand, is connected in the speakers' minds with its functional value as a language of communication (Muñoz, 1981a,b).⁷

The bilingual-bicultural school

In this situation of conflict and historical change, the rural primary school and the educational system as a whole play an important role; during the phase of transition and curricular experimentation when the team was studying the schools (1979-82), there is no doubt that the school was reinforcing the main trend towards the displacement of the indigenous language. This is reflected in the educational system's function as the vehicle of

modernization and a link with the national community, and also in the teaching activities, methods, materials and use of languages in the classroom.

In order to comprehend fully the internal functioning of bilingual schools and relate it to the out-of-school use of languages, four communities were selected with different socio-economic and cultural characteristics (Muñoz et al., 1980; Sierra, 1981a) but alike in having a high proportion of Indians in their population and in providing a complete course of primary education (six grades).⁸

Although the schools form part of the system of the General Directorate of Indian Education (DEGEI) and have been designated as 'bilingual' for forty years, they do not apply a truly bilingual curriculum. Until 1983 at any rate, national textbooks in Spanish were used in these schools for the four main subjects (Spanish, mathematics, natural science and social sciences).⁹ These books are designed from the linguistic point of view, to

teach reading and writing and to develop Spanish as a mother-tongue. They are not in any way useful for the learning of Spanish as a second language. The main difference between this type of 'bilingual' school and the ordinary primary school lies in the fact, very important in itself, that all the teachers are themselves bilingual Indians from the region who use the vernacular language as a means of instruction and communication.

As the children start school with very slight or no knowledge of the national language, a pre-school year of hispanization was introduced in 1979 with a view to teaching pupils enough Spanish to enable them to follow primary-school classes in that language. However, this goal was not attained because the method was not adapted to sociolinguistic needs (Lopez, 1982a) and the pupils continued to enter the primary schools with very little knowledge of the national language.

There is a marked break between the pre-school curriculum and that of the first grade, owing to a radical change in goals and methods which affects the entire primary-education system in the area.

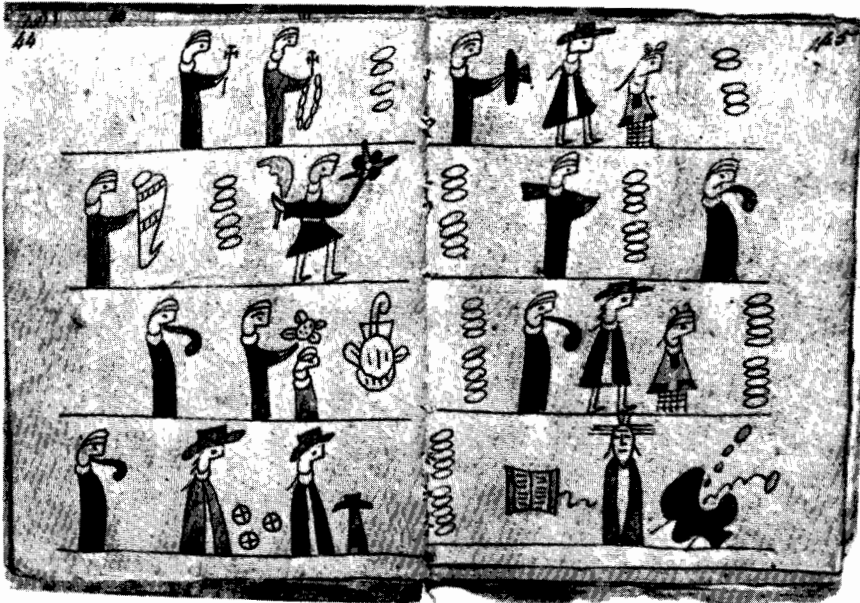
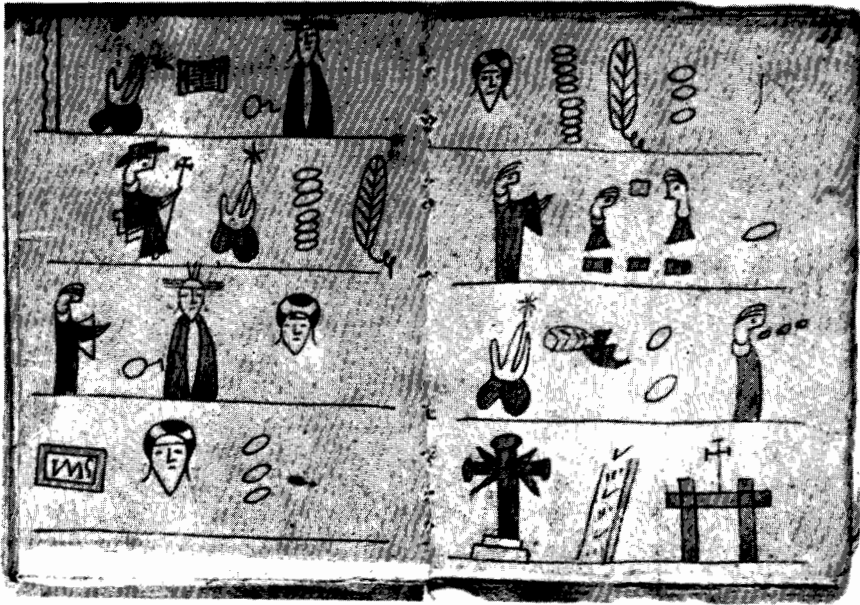
One of the main problems, and one which largely accounts for the poor scholastic performance, lies in the conflict between the official goal—literacy—and the requisite goal—hispanization and the teaching of Otomí during the first years. As it is practically impossible for Otomí children to follow curricula designed for monolingual Spanish-speaking pupils, the teachers use the Indian language as the language of instruction while it is necessary to do so, and introduce curriculum content and Spanish in a disjointed manner. In fact they have tried to combine attempts to achieve literacy (the teaching of reading and writing) creatively with hispanization (the teaching of Spanish as a second language), in an endeavour to teach Spanish *through* the written language. This means that they try to achieve literacy in a language which the pupils do not know, a practically unattainable goal that is in open contradiction to all modern methods of teach-

ing. This is why educational practice in many cases takes the form of a mechanical and repetitive exercise, devoid of any pragmatic semantic content and communicative value.

Literacy

The success of the literacy drive has been limited for several reasons: some are of a methodological nature and will not be mentioned here (Hamel, 1983), while others, of a sociolinguistic character, concern the relationship between learning to read and write and the usefulness of that attainment in daily life. It is well known that the most successful programmes, methodology aside, have been those that have established close links between the learning of the alphabet and its immediate functional and social use.¹⁰ The situation is very different in the schools in the Mezquital valley. Although it was noted that great importance is given to Spanish and its written form, it cannot be said that there is a well-defined functional use of written Spanish. As stated by Garza et al. in a recent study on the region, 'the introduction of the system of writing, as a social practice, cannot yet be considered in these communities to be a cultural and socially determined goal' (1982, p. 69). Otomí children have much less contact with written language than their urban peers, who are in daily contact with a large number of posters, advertisements, signs, etc., and thus possess a much greater knowledge of reading when they enter school.

In fact, the teaching of reading and writing is oriented much more towards the social value and prestige of the written language and the desire to stop being illiterate than towards its functional use. Consequently, the contradiction between the high value attached to the teaching of reading and writing and the low yields obtained strengthens, at the level of linguistic awareness, the concept of Spanish as a refined language with its own script, mastery of which is a privilege and a symbolic asset for a few among the Otomí, especially the teachers.



The Ten Commandments: four pages from an early nineteenth-century catechism in Testerian picture-writing developed by a Spanish friar to be deciphered in any Indian language. It is a formulaic sequence likely to have been learnt previously by oral repetition used by Catholic missionaries for instructional purposes. Rows of circles represent numbers marking off the end of each Commandment. Princeton University Library.

Hispanization

As previously stated, hispanization is not officially part of the primary school curricula, though paradoxically it constitutes one of the pillars of the entire language policy in respect of the Indians. The teachers who try to meet both goals are forced to reintroduce the teaching of Spanish in an almost 'clandestine' manner in spite of the curriculum. The need to emphasize reading and writing and to transmit the contents of the textbooks hampers the teaching of Spanish primarily as a means of communication. Rather than encouraging verbalization in the target language as much as possible, with role-playing and the acting-out of communicative situations, the teachers introduce isolated Spanish words as exercises in reading and writing. In this way, content is presented which is not only of no use for communication, but is also beyond the cognitive capabilities of the pupils at this stage of their development, as can be seen from the example below, taken from a first-grade natural sciences class at San Andrés.

Teacher: Oviparous animals . . . What are they called?

Pupils (in chorus): Oviparous!

Teacher: Now let's see . . . What did we say that animals hatched from eggs are called?

First pupil: Oo . . .

Second pupil: Oo . . .

Teacher: Oviparous!

Third pupil: . . . vi . . .

Fourth pupil: . . . vi . . .

Teacher: What?

Pupils (in chorus): Oviparous!

Teacher: Now let's see, five times . . .

Pupils (in chorus): Oviparous, oviparous, oviparous, oviparous, oviparous . . .

Teacher: What are they called?

Pupils (in chorus): Oviparous!

Teacher: What are oviparous animals? Those which are hatched from eggs . . . those which are hatched from eggs . . . What are animals hatched from eggs called?

Pupils: ???

One of the most worrisome phenomena is undoubtedly poor verbalization by the pupils

in Spanish. Except for highly routine interactions connected with the organization of activities in the classroom ('May I leave the room?', 'Present!', etc.), pupils during their first years at primary school do not use words of any syntactic and semantic complexity in Spanish.

The functional distribution of the two languages can be presented in the following way:¹¹

OTOMÍ

Teachers

Introduction and development of content.

Explanation—translation of new lexemes, expressions, sentences, grammatical problems and reading and writing in Spanish.

In part, organization of the class: introduction and changing of activities, complex instructions, group dynamics (except for stereotyped phrases).

Pupils

Replies to general questions.

The handling of phrases dealing with classroom activities (to a lesser extent, with lesson content).

Practically all verbal communication among pupils that is not supervised by the teacher.

SPANISH

Teachers

Introduction and pronunciation of lexemes, expressions, etc., as subject-matter for the teaching process.

Repetition of explanations and instructions given first in Otomí, or which are subsequently repeated in Spanish.

Some patterns of formal organization (going over lists, etc.).

A series of stereotyped instructions.

Pupils

A minimum of verbalization in Spanish consisting almost entirely of repetitions or

the insertion of lexemes in sentences read out by the teacher.

Some cut-and-dried phrases ('May I leave the room?', 'Present!', etc.).

The distribution of the languages in verbal communication reflects the methodological concept held by the teachers with regard to the teaching of Spanish: the main instruments used are translation, repetition and memorization through reading and writing. To sum up, it may be said that one of the main problems that account for poor performance in learning Spanish is the discrepancy between the sociolinguistic circumstances of the pupils and the primary-school curricula. This contradiction is reflected, especially in first-grade classes, in a conflict between the mutually obstructive goals of hispanization and literacy, with the result that neither goal is satisfactorily met. No one in Mexico would object to Indian children learning to speak, read and write Spanish properly. The champions of the indigenous languages are only demanding that hispanization should not be used to the detriment of vernacular languages. In the schools that the team studied, there is good reason to believe that the curricula not only result in poor performance in respect of the objectives set, but also contribute further to the decline of Otomí, on account of its subordinate function and because it is not used to develop subjects or curricula.

In the small world of the school the distribution of the languages corresponds to the dominant trend in the language conflict: the courses start with practically monolingual Otomí instruction, moving on to an alternation between the two languages and finally towards increasingly dominant use of Spanish in the final primary-school years. It appears to the authors, of course, that the qualitative distribution and the historical background of each language is more important than quantitative distribution. It was noted that Otomí was used in schools as the language of instruction while it was necessary to ensure a modicum of understanding but was discarded as soon as possible; the term 'crutch function'

has been used in the study to describe this use of the Indian language.

In this sense it is possible to speak of a programme that in reality is a transitional one (Cummins, 1980), more compatible with the historical plan to bring the Indians into the national society and language and in the final analysis to destroy their ethnic roots (Stavenhagen, 1979) than with the 'bilingual-bicultural education' tag of the official programme, which aims at a stable sociolinguistic relationship between the two languages.

Despite these mainly adverse factors, the Indian teachers have, in many cases, achieved a creative syncretism which gives curricular elements, methods and materials new functions in the context of Indian culture.¹² This phenomenon means that the Indian schools play a good teaching and socializing role, so that they could become more successful if the curricula themselves were reformulated.

Sociolinguistic features in bilingual schools

Various socio-cultural factors are involved in the functioning of education for the Indians. In turn the school as an institution plays a prominent role in the language conflict.¹³

In this connection, the collective research reported here brought out at least three factors: (a) the socio-cultural effects of the historical project for national constitution and the integration of ethnic minorities; (b) the lack of common measure in the social values attached to Otomí and Spanish and in people's concepts of them as languages; and (c) the position and social function of bilingual Indian teachers.

For want of space, only the last point will be dealt with at length.¹⁴

The social position of teachers

Many of the sociolinguistic characteristics of the Indian schools can be accounted for by the social position of the teachers in the inter-ethnic conflict and by their ideological concept of it. Their profession allows them to rise in

the social scale because, unlike most of the other Indians, they are paid a fixed salary. This regular and relatively high income enables them to start up small businesses, to buy land and thus increase their property. In this way, their bonds with their ethnic group of origin (their culture of orientation) are weakened, and they draw increasingly closer to the state administration and groups holding agrarian power (their culture of adjustment). This fact objectively places them in a position where their class interests conflict with their ethnic loyalty (Baez-Jorge and Rivera Balderas, 1982).

Rural teachers in Indian areas are unlike their urban counterparts in that they are the only 'intellectuals' in their communities and, on account of their training and good mastery of Spanish, they have greater opportunities of holding administrative and political posts; they therefore hold posts as judges, municipal chairmen, secretaries of co-operatives, etc.¹⁵ In fact, most of the teachers act as direct agents of the historical assimilation project, since their social position gives them a link to the national society that allows them, in the short term, greater advantages than the socio-cultural defence of their ethnic group.¹⁶

We will now deal with a sociolinguistic feature that has a direct influence on the educational process and explains, to a certain degree, the way in which the languages are used in the schools, the relationship between hispanization and literacy and the actual situation in regard to the transitional bilingual education programme: the point in question is the teachers' own concept of the language conflict between Spanish and Otomí and their attitudes towards the two languages.

The contradiction between the teachers as Otomí, living in the context of the beliefs and experience of their people, and as recognized representatives of the national culture accounts, at least in part, for three striking phenomena in their teaching work.

The first point that attracts the attention is the high value placed on Spanish as a written and codified language; Otomí, on the other hand, is viewed as a language lacking

these qualities, since neither the written form established 'from outside' by linguists nor still less the grammatical form of Otomí possesses a functionally and socially accepted usage.

This gives a first clue as to why the teachers identify with the main objective of the second language being acquired, according to spite the practical problems arising from their daily attempts to teach writing and reading without adequate prior hispanization; it can be deduced from the practice of the teachers and from their interpretation of the educational process that they hope to achieve hispanization as an almost automatic consequence of literacy, ability to communicate in the second language being acquired, according to this view, through the written word. The children have to learn the new language on the basis of the alphabet, since the civilizing mission inherent in the educational process can only be accomplished through writing.

Let us see how a first-grade teacher (at San Clemente) explains the process of learning Spanish to his pupils:

On the basis of the letters which you can see on the board, we are going to learn little by little to speak Spanish . . . with the help of these letters, we are going to learn how we are going to ask for things, how we are going to greet a person, how we are going to ask for things when we go to a store . . . how we are going to ask for a cake of soap, a pound of salt, a quarter of corn . . . We are going to learn on the basis of these . . . let's see, children, read!

Pupils (in chorus): A . . . E . . . I . . . O . . .
U . . .

In this example, the teacher is trying to capture the attention of the pupils by evoking situations where there is a real need for communication in Spanish, as suggested for the pre-school method. But this introduction, very useful in itself, serves to justify the teaching and practice of the letters in isolation, without explaining, which would in any case be impossible, how learning letters can help the children to solve their oral communication problems in Spanish.



Otomí dancers on the Cerrito pilgrimage. Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

Secondly, a preference for the standardized form of Spanish and a resulting tendency towards 'hypercorrection' were noted (Labov, 1966) in the teachers' linguistic work.¹⁷

In the bilingual schools in the Mezquital valley a relationship of symbolic tension is established not only between Spanish and Otomí, but also between the linguistic standard imposed by textbooks and aspired to by the teachers and the regional variant of

Spanish. This regional Spanish is affected by the Otomí substrate and by the fact that it is the second language of many speakers who have only a partial mastery of it.¹⁸

There is, therefore, a triangular conflict between Otomí as the starting point for the pupils, the regional variant of Spanish, which in general meets the needs of oral communication, and the standard form of the national language as reflected in the textbooks.

The preference for the standard language can also be seen in the extracurricular activities of the teachers. In discharging their functions as community leaders, they are required to perform ceremonies and make formal speeches in which they try to use formal and complex language. The use of a turgid style conflicts, on such occasions, with the need to communicate and this means that the audience does not understand the formal speech, the main function of which is to reflect the social status of the teacher-leaders.

Thirdly, it was noticed that the teachers had an ambivalent attitude towards Otomí as a product of the generalized system of values and beliefs. On the one hand, they go along to a certain extent with the arguments of the supporters of Indian culture emphasizing the value of the Otomí culture and language. On the other hand, their civilizing mission, closely linked to Spanish, forces them to combat the Indian language in the areas under their control, that is, the schools and the political and administrative apparatus.

Undoubtedly, the treatment of Otomí as a subsidiary language has a decisive cultural effect on the socialization of the school: the teachers succeed in transmitting to the students the notion that the languages in conflict are of unequal value, reaffirming the school's role as a hispanized institution and thus supporting the main trend towards the displacement of the Indian language.

Apart from the specific curricula, the opinions of the teachers concerning the conflict between the two languages are also worth considering since they largely determine the possibilities of hispanization in the schools and the development of the mother-tongue.

Final remarks

What conclusions can be drawn from this situation?

By any reckoning the situation is a complex one that rules out any facile solution or simplistic recommendation. It is not enough to point out that the bilingual school is part of its socio-cultural context—that much is self-

evident. Problems arise when it comes to demonstrating in detail what factors are inter-related and in what way a given set of sociolinguistic factors fosters or thwarts certain educational processes. Some observations on this relationship emerge from the research reported here.

It seems obvious that the historical, socio-economic and ideological factors that come into play in the schools are stronger than the curricula themselves, so that the school cannot dissociate itself too much from these processes. It would be hard, for it to become the driving force behind a historical process. In this sense it has been shown that the school as an institution is in itself incapable of preserving or eradicating a minority language; it could however contribute to these processes.¹⁹

In respect of bilingual speakers themselves, there seems to be a need to define more clearly the function and historical prospects of each language in the conflict between the two. The social relationships of domination are not adapted to a simplistic model: Spanish = dominant language, Otomí = dominated language. Dominant ideas can be expressed equally well in the two languages: on the other hand there is an 'Indian' way of using the national language with its own socio-cultural patterns. These uses of Spanish and Otomí with changed functions form part of a kind of passive, diluted cultural resistance which is able to preserve some ethnic values of the group precisely because it does not openly question the integrationist policy of the state and does not provoke a violent reaction (Stavenhagen, 1979, p. 22). All educational policies will have to be based on this complex reality. A bilingual programme would be of little use if it focused on the 'pure', standardized forms of Spanish and Otomí when the objective is the development of communicative skills in both languages.

If greater integration of the school into the community is to be achieved,²⁰ it seems necessary to become aware at least of the obvious contradiction in the concepts of



Otomí girl. Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

Spanish as a national language. In the schools, refined standard Spanish is set as an indicative goal (not as an attainable one); in other words, Spanish and the written word are considered primarily as an asset that confers prestige on those who uphold them. On the other hand, in out-of-school situations bilingual speakers quite clearly recognize the communicative value (use-value) that the regional variant of Spanish represents for them.²¹ This contradiction doubtless supports the functioning of the school as a linkage and means of transmission of national culture; however, it does not allow the community as a whole (not merely the teachers) to take over

the schools as their own preserve, linked to their own interests and needs.

The functions of each language will have to be defined more clearly within the schools, since the 'intermediate' curricula used in those studied do not permit the attainment of any of the possible goals (hispanization, literacy, encouragement of the mother-tongue).²² It will certainly be necessary to teach Spanish for purposes of communication as well as for the acquisition of knowledge and academic skills. However, the two objectives should not be confused as is now the case (pre-school and first grade, hispanization and literacy). At any

rate, it will be necessary to design a programme for the teaching of Spanish as a second language and the methods to be used will have to be determined according to the language in which the other subjects (mathematics, social sciences and natural sciences) are taught.²³

However, the most critical problem in regard to preserving or revitalizing the indigenous language and culture²⁴ will not be solved

in the schools. In the final analysis, it will depend on the capacity for ethnic resistance of the Indian people and presupposes a redefinition, on the basis of the conflict of 'divided identities' (Stavenhagen, 1979), of the role of the Otomí as a specific ethnic group in Mexican society in all its socio-economic, political and linguistic aspects.

[Translated from Spanish]

Notes

1. Any bilingual education programme runs up against the old but persistent belief that education in a minority mother-tongue is detrimental to learning the official national language and thus slows down the learning of reading and writing and other academic skills. For that reason, the argument goes, balanced bilingual education is harmful for children belonging to minority groups and hampers their rise in the society. This argument is one of the powerful weapons which have been used against bilingual education by its most conservative opponents (Cummins, 1980; Tucker, 1977).

2. There is no room here for a detailed account of the history of language policy in Mexico (Brice Heath, 1977; Scanlon and Lezama Morfin, 1982). The first position was reflected in the use of direct hispanization methods (submersion programmes in modern parlance), while the second could be better classified as an indirect assimilation programme, in which the Indian language would have, at least, a supportive educational role (Hamel, 1979).

3. Mexico now has a population of approximately 7 to 8 million

Indians (10 per cent of the total population) who speak one of the fifty-six indigenous languages of the country. The very fact that there is such a variety of languages reduces their chances of being preserved, since there is no language in such a commanding position that it could become the second national language and thus serve as a basis for a unified educational programme, as in Peru, Bolivia or Paraguay.

4. This choice of programme cannot be explained only as a result of an ideological debate. It is rather due to socio-

economic and political factors that leave some latitude for the preservation of Indian languages and cultures. As the national economic system cannot absorb the entire labour force available in rural areas with a low agricultural yield (especially Indian areas), the system tends to assign new functions to traditional forms of production and social organization in order to offset migration towards the cities and avoid the collapse of the rural system of social organization (Sierra, 1981a).

5. Five linguists and one sociologist took part in this project and, working as an interdisciplinary team, covered the following subjects: the socio-economic, political and cultural structure of the region (María Teresa Sierra); distribution and functions of the two languages in different situations of communication (Rainer Enrique Hamel, Jose Antonio Flores); the use and learning of Spanish and teaching practice in bilingual schools (Rainer Enrique Hamel, Gerardo Lopez, Hector Muñoz); the attitudes and linguistic awareness of Otomí speakers in respect of the language conflict (Hector Muñoz); the ideology and form of the economic debate (Victor Franco); the establishment and retention of power through public speaking (Maria Teresa Sierra). In the area studied, 60 per cent of the population is Indian; the majority (more than 70 per cent) are bilingual and the remainder speak only Otomí, whereas the majority of the urban population speak only Spanish. The Mezquital valley, in Hidalgo State, is one of the most disadvantaged rural areas by reason of geographical and economic conditions. In its semidesert climate the predominant form of agriculture is seasonal and carried out on

smallholdings; the percentage of irrigated lands is very low.

6. Of course, the term 'diglossia' was coined by Ferguson (1959) to indicate a stable relationship between two functionally differentiated variants of a given language (standard German (*Hochdeutsch*) and Swiss German (*Schweizerdeutsch*) in Switzerland for example). This term is now being increasingly used to describe situations in which languages in contact conflict, as is the case in this study. For further discussion, see Marcellesi (1981) and GRECSO (1982).

7. It must be realized that the distribution of attitudes varied from one area to another. There were Indian areas where the indigenous language and culture were highly rated and where various aspects of resistance had developed much more than in the Mezquital valley. Furthermore, the factors that indicate resistance are much more difficult to pin down, since they are masked by the assignment of new functions to elements in the dominant culture and rarely take the form of open resistance. It should not be forgotten, moreover, that scientific research tends to be, in one way or another, part of the dominant trend itself (see studies in GRECSO, 1982).

8. In regard to methods of data collection and analysis, the main approach was of an ethnographic and pragmatic nature and concentrated on verbal communication and a series of interviews with teachers (Lopez 1982a, b; Hamel, 1983).

9. The use of the same textbooks throughout the republic is justified according to teachers and educational authorities under Article 3 of the Constitution which

mandates equal education for all Mexicans. In this case, it can be seen how, in practice, unity is confused with conformity to the obvious detriment of the Indian population (Nahmad, 1982). A plan is emerging for the establishment of a national identity, in which education will play a defensive role against external influences and a homogenizing role at home.

10. The enormous success of the methods proposed by Paulo Freire is due precisely to the relationship that he established between the promotion of literacy and the promotion of awareness.

11. This outline is valid for the pre-school course and for first grade in three of the four schools studied. The fourth community is much more hispanized and the school uses Spanish practically from the very beginning.

12. A very important characteristic of the 'school society' in these schools is the absolute absence of violence or aggression on the part of the teachers. The pupils have great liberty of action and freedom to take part or not to take part in school activities; this is in considerable contrast with urban schools (Hamel, 1983).

13. Much of the research on bilingual education and the learning of second languages has traditionally focused on psycholinguistic and pedagogical factors (Tucker, 1977; Felix, 1980), relating scholastic performance to methods, materials and social factors; in such research, sociolinguistic factors were taken into account as one of several variables. In the study reported here, the sociolinguistic problem was a central theme and so the school was analysed primarily as a factor in the socio-cultural and language conflict, while

psycholinguistic and pedagogical factors were relegated to second place (Hamel and Muñoz, 1981, 1982a).

14. The first two aspects can be summed up as follows. First, although plans have been drawn up recently for a truly bicultural-bilingual education programme (Lezama Morfin, 1982; Nahmad, 1982), it is not certain that they will prevail against the old-established strength of the historical real plan for national integration through the eradication of ethnic differences. This doubt arises because the vision of assimilation as a dominant ideology has proved capable of winning wide acceptance among the Otomí in the Mezquital valley. In fact they have separated ethnic claims from the struggle for justice and improved social status and are seeking to fulfil their socio-economic expectations through greater integration into the national culture, as 'peasants' and 'Mexicans' (Hamel and Muñoz, 1983a, b). It is therefore not surprising that school is held in high esteem by the Otomí, not for its supposedly bilingual nature, but as a hispanizing factor that offers greater opportunities of better social status for its graduates.

The second factor that justifies hispanization in schools is related to differences in the way the Otomí themselves conceive the two languages. As demonstrated by the research work done under the project, Spanish is held in very high esteem, while Otomí is considered to be a 'dialect', with no grammar and of very little use for communication outside the Otomí communities. In the minds of the speakers, recognition of the actual decline of the Indian language is hampered by a stereotyped belief that there is no need to teach Otomí in the schools,

since, it is widely held, it will remain alive for the simple reason that it belongs to the area and has been spoken there since time immemorial (Muñoz, 1981a, b; Hamel and Muñoz, 1981, 1982a).

15. María Teresa Sierra (1981b) is carrying out research work on this relationship as a specific subject under the project.

16. However, there are a large number of Indian professional workers who have become aware of this situation. They have created an autonomous association, the Alianza Nacional de Profesionales Indígenas Bilingües, A.C. (ANPIBAC), with the main objective of involving teachers and Indian groups directly in language policies and educational planning for the Mexican ethnic groups (ANPIBAC, 1981). Under the present government, ANPIBAC members hold key posts in the Indian education section of the Secretariat of Public Education.

17. This phenomenon is not restricted to Indian teachers; on the other hand, it is undoubtedly a recurrent practice among many primary-school teachers, who usually come from the *petit bourgeoisie* or the lower classes and who seek by their preference for refined standard Spanish to attain a double objective—to invest their professional capital in the schools and to increase their chances of gaining access to and being successful in the linguistic and social markets where usage of the standard language is an asset (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 27). In other words, they are interested in climbing the social ladder, by adjusting to the cultural values of the social classes of which they want to become members.

18. Subjective tension, that is to say, the discrepancy between

recognition and domination of the standard, is compensated for to a certain degree by the fact that its use in speech in such situations is an important symbolic asset for the teachers *vis-à-vis* their audience (Otomí pupils and peasants), who have much less command of Spanish and consequently accept the symbolic superiority established by the teachers.

19. The experience reported here, like experience in other cases, would seem to suggest that the schools could contribute more 'effectively' to eliminating rather than promoting minority languages.

20. It is to be hoped that current Indian policies, based on decentralization and the concept of 'integrated ethnic development', will support initiatives in this direction (Lovera, 1983).

21. Research work by Muñoz (1981a, b) points precisely to its value for communication purposes as a major reason why Spanish is considered superior by those who speak it.

22. Many of these problems have, at least, already been recognized by the educational authorities (Scanlon and Lezama Morfin, 1982).

23. It will be recalled that Cummins (1980) has made a fundamental distinction between what he called 'basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS)' and 'cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP)'. He maintains that the use of the vernacular language for academic activities has a positive cumulative effect on the development of the academic linguistic abilities (reading and writing, etc.) in the second language. He therefore proposed that bilingual programmes be developed in

which educational content is taught in the mother-tongue, at least at the beginning. For further discussions on this subject, also see Swain and Lapkin (1982).

24. Discussion on the ethnolinguistic vitality of a minority group is becoming increasingly important in sociolinguistics, social psychology and related fields

(Eckert, 1983; Johnson et al., 1983; Lowy et al., 1983; for Mexico, Hamel and Muñoz, 1983a, b).

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