

The New Global Transnational Citizen: The Role of Multilingualism in the lives of Latino/ Indigenous Immigrants in the U.S.

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RESUMEN

Utilizando el análisis narrativo, este estudio de tres años de investigación cualitativa explora cómo mexicanos, salvadoreños, guatemaltecos y los inmigrantes de origen indígena hacen uso del lenguaje como una herramienta de supervivencia para entrar y salir de espacios sociales transnacionales. Así, este estudio explora la construcción del multilingüismo en el discurso de la transnacionalidad de los indígenas, los inmigrantes latinos en Carolina del Norte, y de sus definiciones, a fin de ser más incluyente de los multilingües a menudo ignorado las comunidades indígenas latinas en los EE.UU. Además, este artículo examina las consecuencias de los espacios culturales transnacionales, lingüística, sus efectos y consecuencias para los inmigrantes en varios idiomas. También plantea preguntas sobre el multilingüismo de forma afecta a la movilidad transfronteriza y transnacional, así como la forma indocumentados de las familias utilizan el multilingüismo como un puente transnacional para facilitar su supervivencia en un entorno hostil EE.UU. mientras que las escuelas permanecer indiferente e ignorante de estas cuestiones.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lenguaje como herramienta de supervivencia, multilingüismo, cultura transnacional

ABSTRACT

Utilizing narrative analysis, this three year qualitative research study explores how Mexican, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan immigrants of indigenous backgrounds use language as a survival tool to move in and out of transnational social spaces. Thus, this study explores the construction of multilingualism in the discourse of transnationality among Latino indigenous immigrants in North Carolina, and questions its definitions in order to be more inclusive of the often ignored multilingual Latino indigenous communities in the U.S. In addition, this article examines the implications of transnational cultural and linguistic spaces and its effects and implications for multilingual immigrants. It also raises questions about the ways multilingualism affects border mobility and transnationality as well as how undocumented families use multilingualism as a transnational bridge to

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facilitate their survival in a hostile US environment while schools remain indifferent and unaware of such issues.

KEY WORDS: Language as a survival tool, multilingualism, transnational culture

INTRODUCTION

Alma's story speaks to the changing dynamics of the U.S. Today, immigrants are no longer unaware and unconscious of the benefits of having access to multiple communities, multilingualism, and being transnational. Yet, schools and educational programs aimed at educating minority non English speakers often do not take into consideration the language diversity and versatility of its student population. Alma's comment creates awareness about the complexities of immigrants' multiple linguistic identities, experiences, and lives. Her comments illustrate that for many multilingual and multicultural communities, the ability to communicate in several languages is a necessary survival tactic as new immigrants in the U.S. Furthermore, the ability to use multiple languages as U.S immigrants serves a way to show solidarity to multiple language spoken among many other marginalized immigrant communities in the U.S. Alma's makes us aware that she is purposely using various languages with her friend and her friends child, and that she is aware of the economic, cultural, educational benefits of multilingualism, and of coexisting in diverse linguistic communities. As stated by Machado-Casas (2009), indigenous Latino multilingual families provide a counterstory to numerous stereotypes many Latino families hold of being passive and not caring for the well-being and education of their children.

While applying the concept of transnationality to the lived experiences and realities of multilingual Latino indigenous communities who reside in North Carolina, in this article, I explore the ways in which Alma's comments leaves many questions unanswered which I use to guide this study: 1) how does multilingualism affect border mobility, accessibility, and transnationality? 2) How can multilingualism serve as a bridge for Latino indigenous immigrants to become global citizens? 3) What are the implications for U.S. education and the international education of children of multilingual families?

Current definitions of U.S.-born transnationals claim that they take into consideration the rapidly changing demographics and linguistic shifts currently experienced in the U.S. US (Trueba, 2004, Ong, 1999, Vertovec, 1999), these definitions have failed to take into consideration the complicated and often subjugated lives of Latino indigenous communities who live outside of border towns' and do not have immediate access to the border and the immediate necessity to maintain more than one language; to be multilingual.

Thus, this study explores the construction of multilingualism in the discourse of transnationality among Latino indigenous immigrants in North Carolina, and questions its definitions in order to be more inclusive of the often ignored multilingual Latino indigenous communities in the U.S. Several researchers have expressed the need to “fill many gaps that remain” (Fox & Rivera-Salgado, 2004, p. 45) when researching the lives of indigenous immigrants in the US (Besserer, 2002, 2004; Fox & Rivera-Salgado, 2004; Machado-Casas, 2009; Sanchez & Machado-Casas, 2009). This paper looks at how indigenous communities legitimize fluid linguistic and cultural processes of multilingual identity movements, and how discourses about transnationality and current schooling practices fail to differentially position Latino indigenous immigrants within this movement as global transnational citizens, and how Latino indigenous communities have been “*ocultos*” (hidden) (Machado-Casas, 2009), omitted or ignored from the global transnational discourse. Therefore, making existing research on indigenous immigrants in the US and abroad more widely available

INMIGRANTES INDÍGENAS NO LATINOS: INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANTS NOT LATINOS

Indigenous immigrants in the U.S. and abroad have had a long history of oppressive treatment and marginalization. For many indigenous immigrants, migrating to the U.S. often times adds an extra layer of complexity to the already complex lives experienced by immigrants in the U.S. As stated by Machado-Casas (2009). Many indigenous immigrants are:

*“The term *oculto* means hidden—something or someone that is behind or under something, not seen, or ignored. When we think about indigenous communities in the US, one often thinks about US Native American communities who have inhabited this land long before the US existed as a country. Yet when we think of indigenous communities, we rarely think about contemporary immigrants who are members of indigenous tribes and who speak indigenous languages. Typically, when one thinks of Latino immigrants, one thinks of people who speak Spanish as their first language and who are mestizos. According to Grinberg and Saavedra (2000), mestizo connotes a cultivation of “Spanish heritage’ which at its core is a colonial discourse” (p. 427). By embracing Spanish as an ethnic identity, it tends to *ocultar* (hide) the complexities and localities of class types, ethnic politics, gender and the subjugation of indigenous populations who were forced to mix by colonizers (Gallego, 1998). Usually, members of an indigenous community who speak a language other than Spanish are not mentioned when one thinks about Latino immigrants. As Grande (2000) points out when referring to the identity experiences of Native Americans, “the borderlands [are] the*

space to create a new culture—una cultura mestiza—which the only normative standard is hybridity and all subjects are constructed as inherently transgressive” (p. 469). Therefore, the use of a pan-ethnic term such as “Latino”—used to include all people of Latin American descent without looking at regional differences—serves only as another form of continued oppression, marginalization, and colonization of indigenous communities. And although the use of the term Latino (or Latina/o) is a more inclusive term than Hispanic—because its definition is supposed to include peoples of indigenous and African descent—one needs to be careful not to generalize the characteristics of those who are considered Latinos and its implications on people’s lives”(pg. 84).

As noted by Foucault (1973), through languages one creates new regimes of truth which are constructed around race and then used to racialize, to marginalize, and oppress. The use of terms such as “Latino/Hispanic” without taking into consideration regional differences among different groups serve as “acts of communication which influence those being studied, are always generated from the ‘paradigm of value and authority’ on whose basis the order is instituted” (Wynter, 1992, pg. 21)

Aside from terms used by participants, Latino indigenous is the terminology I will continue to use throughout this article, as it provides regional and cultural differences within the term. This is not an attempt to essentialize concepts, but rather as a way to understand minorities multiple consciousness, and how they help develop specific epistemological stances informed by their own cultural and identity positions.

Migration particularly to the United States has been predominantly rural in origin (Flores, Hernandez-Leon, and Massey, 2004), yet research studies have found that current demographic changes and migration shifts show migration from indigenous rural areas of Mexico and Latin America is rapidly increasing.

DISCOURSE OF TRANSNATIONALITY IN THE LIVES UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

Current definitions of transnationality tend to overlook the US’s rapidly changing demographics—the growth of rural migration and the increased number of indigenous immigrants now migrating to the US. Fox (2006) notes that “more than one in ten Mexicans come from a family in which an indigenous language is spoken” (p. 39). And, researchers such as Rivera-Salazar (1999), Stephen (2007) and Beserrer (2002 & 2004) have explored the need to look at indigenous immigrants when analyzing and critiquing transnationality. In this research study I expand various discourses on transnationality in order to be inclusive of the growing number of Latino indigenous immigrant peoples now in the US.

Today, the term transnationalism moves beyond the demographic movements fueled by discourses of labor and capital (Machado-Casas, 2006 & 2009; Vertovec, 1999). Instead, transnationality is a variegated discourse and conceptualizations of the term often take into consideration social mobility, migration, identity, and change of those communities involved. Ong (1999) refers to transnationalism as “cultural specificities of global processes” (p. 4). That is, cultural traditions migrate and transcend borders thereby becoming global processes employed by transnational communities, such as here in the US. Vertovec (1999) states that transnationalism has also been conceptualized as a form of social morphology by anthropologists that define transnationality with “a kind of social formation spanning border” and ethnic diasporas (p. 1). In this way, borders can be defined as transcending sites of entrance and exit, such as social networks, identities, and types of consciousness among different ethnic groups. This is the case of the research conducted by Schiller, Basch, and Szanton-Blanc (1992) who conceptualize transnationalism as a type of consciousness in which migrants identify with one ethnic identity more than the other. Transnationals have the capability to straddle more than one identity, but prefer one identity over the other. For example, some participants in this study know that it is necessary to straddle more than one consciousness/reality, to be indigenous and Latino, but prefer or identify with one more than the other, with the indigenous more than the Latino. The discourse of transnationality proposes new ways of engagement where acknowledgement of consciousness can trespass or transcend issues of identity and identification to other issues such as the need for political engagement. Yet, the discourse of transnationality also includes other conceptualizations of what a transnational person can or cannot do.

Trueba (2004) explains that a person is transnational when s/he has “a unique capacity to handle different cultures and lifestyles, different social statuses, different roles and relationships, and to function effectively in different social, political, and economic systems” (p. 39). From this definition, one might say that all who assume these characteristics can become transnationals. However, Trueba (2004) excludes some non-US natives from this definition such as migrants, emigrants, immigrants, and refugees. He explains that “physical access” to the border is important in order to become transnational. Access to transnationality is highly dependent on the way in which those who are not US-born arrived in the United States. Trueba (2004) informs us that the main difference between an immigrant and a transnational person is that the immigrant does not have frequent and intensive contact with his original culture and consequently can eventually lose his home language and culture and assimilate into mainstream society. Yet, other researchers have expanded this definition in order to be more inclusive of non-border populations who do not have frequent contact with his/her

country—they are still transnationals (Aranda, 2006; Levitt, 2001; Wolf, 2002). While conducting research with immigrant the Dominican Republic, Levitt (2001) shows that actual migration is not required to be a member of a transnational social field. Levitt (2001), Aranda (2006), and Wolf (2002) point out that even without physical access to immigrants' home towns, participants were transnationals who act across borders and maintain transnational ties to culture and language. This is particularly important to undocumented immigrants who may not have the legal paperwork to physically criss-cross borders. Especially for those who are undocumented and are unable to cross borders easily, language maintenance becomes an important aspect of their transnational realities in the US.

According to Trueba (2004), language maintenance, that is, the ability to maintain one's own language(s) as well as English is important in maintaining transnational ties; he states that "a transnational person cannot afford to lose her language and culture because her contact with home and culture is intensive" (p. 40). Therefore, maintaining one's language is not a luxury but a need. Other researchers have partially agreed with Trueba by stating that language is an important aspect of transnationality because it promotes cultural and identity validation in addition to providing a way to maintain connected with families in the US and back home (Beserrer, 2002 & 2004; Machado-Casas, 2006; Rivera-Salazar, 1999; Stephen, 2007). Because transnationals have the ability to maintain several languages and cultures, many believe that this groups of immigrants gets the best of different worlds. And that in addition to benefiting from having access to different social spaces, they have the ability to retain values, beliefs, and characteristics of more than one culture (Sánchez, 2007, 2008). As undocumented indigenous immigrant parents raise undocumented indigenous children in the US, they are aware of the difficulties their children will face when living under constant surveillance and fear. Therefore, they know the high degree of risk they undertake on a daily basis and the importance of intentionally teaching their children about the politics of surviving as undocumented indigenous individuals in the US.

METHODS

This article incorporates data from a larger research study that addresses the migration, mobility, and survival of Latino and Latino indigenous immigrants within the New Latino Diaspora in the South (Machado-Casas, 2006). The larger research study explored racial/ethnic identity and negotiation of this identity, as well as the Latino immigrant experience in U.S. communities and formal educational settings. This research study builds on Portes & Rumbaut's (2001) work on the immigrant second generation, Guadalupe Valdez's (1996) work on differences between culturally diverse families and

schools, Durand & Massey's (1992) work on Mexican migration, as well as Trueba's (2003) work on immigrant Latinos' transnationality.

This research study consist of working with immigrants and their families, therefore narrative research methods (Merriam, 1998) and anthropological research methods (Davies, 2001) were used to conduct this research when collecting data in multiple settings (Creswell, 2003). Narrative research is especially appropriate for this type of study because it entailed working with indigenous communities that have a long history of oral communication and are not often represented in written form. Clandinin and Huber (2002) state that "understanding ourselves and our worlds narratively, our attention is turned to how we engage in living, telling, retelling, and reliving our lives within particular social and cultural plotlines" (p. 20). Furthermore, open-ended interviews were, therefore, utilized to understand the experiences of participants.

Data was collected from 230 participants whom had their children enrolled in one of six urban schools in North Carolina. From 230 participants, thirty participants who were representative of the three largest Latino groups (from Mexico, El Salvador, and Guatemala) were interviewed in depth. Interviews were recorded, analyzed, and compared by country of origin and ethnic origin.

Most Participants were then interviewed in Spanish and some indigenous participants had native multilingual indigenous translators that provided participants with help when they were having difficulties expressing a word or thought from Spanish to their indigenous language. These translators served as "*traductores ocultos*" (Hidden translators) as they provide the necessary multilingual language negation for indigenous participants in this study. During the interviews participants were asked to expand on their life stories (Gándara, 1995), which included past educational experiences in their country of origin, life experiences, migration to the United States, experiences with the U.S. educational system, and finally, the ways in which being in the United States has affected their cultural linguistic social identity. Interview questions were unscripted and took an average of about three to four hours per interview.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND FINDINGS

Participants involved in this study were from different Latin American countries. Country of origin, language spoken, and nationality were identified through written and verbal surveys provided to participants. It was found that 65% of participants were from Mexico, 20% from El Salvador, 8% from Guatemala, 5% from Honduras, and 1% from other Central and South American countries. Sixty percent of participants involved were of Indigenous decent. Indigenous communities identified in this study include, from Mexico

(Otomí, Náhuatl, Maya, Zapoteco, Mixteco, and Tzotzil), from El Salvador (Pipil, an almost extinct population), and Guatemala (Quiche and Kaqchikel), among others. Overall, there were over 17 Indigenous languages spoken by those who participated in the study. When asked about their knowledge of the school systems in country of their origin, 55% reported that they had some formal education (30% had some (K-12) education, 25% had some higher education) and 45% reported having no formal (K-12) education.

This article explores the lives of three indigenous participants and their families. Pseudonyms were used in order to maintain participants' confidentiality. Francisco is a 30 year-old undocumented indigenous Otomí from Mexico. He has two teenage boys (15 and 17 years old); both boys are undocumented. María is 27 years old and an undocumented immigrant from Guatemala who identifies as Quiché; she has three children: two boys ages 8 and 14 years old and one girl who is 16; all of her children are undocumented. Finally, Carlos is 35 years old, undocumented, and an indigenous Pipil from El Salvador; he is a business owner, and he has three children—two sons who are 13 and 15, and one daughter who is three years old. His two teenage sons are undocumented, and his three year-old daughter is US-born.

TRASPASANDO FRONTRERAS (TRANSCENDING BORDERS): MULTILINGUAL TRANSNATIONAL CHAMELEON IDENTITIES IN THE MAKING

Although participant's responses varied, many had several similarities in regard to their abilities to keep multilingual connections and fluidity from their country of origin while in the United States. This finding is consistent with anthropological and sociological research which states that transnationality can be viewed as form of social morphology (Vertovec, 1999) where social formation spans physical borders. All of the participants were undocumented and unable to go back to their country of origin. Yet, they maintained close-knit relations to people including political connections with their town of origin. Participant's access to multiple languages allowed them to move across multiple identities to maintain their personal cultural identities and survive as immigrants in the United States. This transmission of survival skills created supra local social networks that became a necessity in order to live as immigrants in the U.S. It is through these networks that a multilingual transnational community was created. This correlates with Juan Guerra's (1998) research on the oral and literate practices of transnational Mexican communities in Chicago where he states social networks are imperative for the creation of transnational communities. Guerra confirms that "members of the social network interact with one another more often in, and therefore imagine themselves most closely allied through, a multidimensional, social space...a transnational community" (p. 9). In this ways, the transnationality

created through social networks spans physical and multilingual borders as earlier stated by Vertovec. Immigrants' necessity to move across physical borders in order for Immigrants to be considering transnational is therefore eliminated. Latino indigenous immigrant ability to pass on multilingual, multisituational, multipurpose survival strategies within a transnational social network that transforms immigrants into teachers of the art of survival and invisibility in the United States; this is what I have previously coined as the *Pedagogía del Camaleón* (Pedagogy of the Chameleon) (author, 2006) that leads to the ability to change, shift, and disguised is a necessary one, and according to Lynn Stephen (2007) research on indigenous Oaxacans in Oregon. She stresses that this skill is especially true post 911. Stephen states that immigrants "live in a contradictory state of trying to maintain invisibility while simultaneously being the object of significant surveillance at different points in their journey and work experiences in the United States (p. 143). Stephen goes on to state that because the indigenous immigrants in her study were in a constant state of surveillance they were force to change, shift, in order to survive and appear . For participants in my study being multilingual allowed them to make necessary shifts in order to survive as indigenous immigrants.

Participants in the study use *transas* a term that Luis Urrieta (Urrieta, forthcoming, 2009), theorizes on in his forthcoming *Fighting from Within! Chicana and Chicano Educators in U.S. Schools*. In his book, Urrieta explains that:

Transas literally means transactions (dealings), which in Mexican folk knowledge are strategic and common, yet usually clandestine practices used by people with less power to subvert, survive, or get by in the system. There is for the most part a negative perception of transas by mainstream standards in Mexican culture, but from the view of the oppressed El que no transa, no avanza [S/he who doesn't conduct such transactions, doesn't advance]. Transas are usually calculated practices that purposefully do not follow mainstream, or in the U.S., the whitestream, malestream pre-scriptions, and are conducted to benefit the oppressed against the injustices of the system.

It is through "calculated" multilingual transnational movements or *transas* (dealings) that Latino indigenous participants in the study are able to maintain strategies, teachings, which then became their pedagogy of survival helped to facilitate life as multilingual immigrants in the Unites States. This also enhanced immigrant's ability to interact globally both here in the U.S. and abroad through their countries of origin.

According to Urrieta's research on Chicana/o teachers these *transas* are an integral part of survival among marginalized groups in the U.S.

Therefore, the multilingual global transnational chameleon identities are expressed and performed through the ability for Latino/Indigenous community members to utilize multiple language repertoires to live in the United States and thrive while maintaining strong community ties and compete as transnational global citizens.

MULTILINGUALISM AND GLOBAL TRANSNATIONAL CITIZEN

According to Skutnabb-Kangas (1995), “A majority of the fewer than 200 states of the world are officially monolingual (have one official language only), and the fact that these states contain speakers of some 4-5,000 languages” (pg. 40). In a wider context this illuminates the means by which transnational global communities negotiate multiple multilingual hybrid identities in response to the changing socio-political contexts while remaining committed to cultural and ethnic maintenance. Furthermore, as multilingual global transnational citizen Latino indigenous immigrant communities’ fight against colonization and genocide. “One of the most powerful claims made by Fanon (1967) was that colonization worked best when the colonized internalized an inferior status” (Urrieta, 2004, citing Fanon). The multilingual global transnationalism as expressed by participants in this study aims to work against colonization, internalization, power structures and beliefs that migrate with immigrants from their country of origin to the United States. Furthermore, it is a means to fight against white dominance and to maintain their *Indiginidad* alive, to maintain culture and avoid extinction. For participants in this study this was expressed through movement across: multilingualism and multiple Identities which are; (1) Multilingualism: gaining access and status, (2) Multilingualism: Survival and avoidance of poverty and, (3).Multilingualism: To avoid discrimination & abuse.

MOVEMENT ACROSS: MULTILINGUALISM AND MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

The process of migration, of leaving ones home and removing oneself from all that it is known to explore a new territory, language, and culture is a difficult one that affects immigrants in different ways. According to Chávez (1992) migration processes includes phases of *separation* from the origin society, *transition* into a new country, and *incorporation* into a new social space. Participants in this study experienced these processes with the exception that the last two phases *transition* and *incorporation* which were intertwined and mixed. Chávez’s research supports other research studies which state that the differences between *separation*, *transition*, and *incorporation* are fluid, and blurred (Chávez, 1992, p. 4, citing Portes & Bach, 1985). The differences between *separation*, *transition*, and *incorporation* in this study were most complex among indigenous immigrants.

MULTILINGUALISM: GAINING ACCESS AND STATUS

Most of the participants experienced many moments of transition and incorporation which required a constant shifting, the use of multiple languages as movement, a change of social identity. Carlos had this to say about his ability to move across multiple social identities:

Everyday, every moment, we are “en un estado de cambio” (state of change). Depending on who we are with and what we are doing we act differently we speak a different language. Well, let me give you an example, when I go to the Mexican store I act like a regular Mexican person. I even try to speak like a Mexican. Saying words like “chido”, “güey” which are words that I don’t say at home everyday. For me that is a different language. In my country we don’t say that. I have noticed that I have to do this so that they [the Mexican immigrants] don’t know that I’m from El Salvador. Even if you don’t believe it, there are a lot of differences between us and we are treated differently when people see the differences. When I go to the “Bodega Salvadoreña” (Salvadorian eatery) I would not act that like a Mexican.

This type of behavior provided camouflaged in the aims of acquiring invisibility of his indigenous ethnic background and not only from surveillance from those in dominant groups, but also from other Latino groups who manifest bias against those who did not have the same nationality. This was important because by doing this he was gaining social status because he was “perceived” to be an immigrant of Mexican descent and not a Salvadorian Pipil immigrant. Gaining access to commonly used social spaces such as the grocery stores, Latino markets, and public spaces was critical when surrounded by others who many dislike the fact that he is an indigenous man. The desire to fit in and the necessity to shift in order to hide national identity were constant among all participants in the study. This is what María had to say about this:

I do pretend—when I go out and I see a group of people Mexican or not. Or people who look like they are educated, or have money to be Mexican. I do—I guess that’s why a lot of people say we are Mexican when they see a brown face—I think it is true. Sometimes, I even wear shirts that say Mexico... All the stores are Mexican, all the schools prepare things for Mexican—so we have to act Mexican to fit in and to be treated better! I do the same when I see... Salvadorian... there is a lady who comes around the apartments to check them and she is from El Salvador—I told her I was from there too... She treats me better like I’m at their level. When they find out that I’m not one of them they look down and treat you bad... One day at the market a lady told me that she would not help me... as I walked away she said... Indian!

Participants have gained an ability to scan to track people who are different than they are or situations in which they could be exposed and reverted them by shifting their performances. In the case of María she understands that there is animosity towards indigenous immigrants—she herself has experienced it. She also understands that she need the access to these critical spaces—therefore she shifts gears and adjust in order to fit in and gain social status within in the outside community. Sometimes the shifting of the gear requires a shift in language or the use of multiple languages.

MULTILINGUALISM: SURVIVAL AND AVOIDANCE OF POVERTY

Participants all felt that it was necessary to change or shift social identities when encountered with different scenarios where they felt they were not welcomed or felt threatened. Many times for María this meant speaking a different language. María had this to say about her necessity to move across multiple ethnic and language identities:

Truthfully, it is a necessity to act differently when we are faced with different experiences. We are always changing, when I'm talking to my family at home I speak in Quiche, but I would not dare to speak Quiche in public. When I leave my house I speak Spanish like any other Mexican or Guatemalan. Like any other immigrant in the street. I make sure that nobody finds out what I am. When I go to the library or to any office I try to speak the little I know of English and I act, and dress differently. Like a person who has more money and education. I feel that it helps to do this because they treat me better and I am able to get more. If I did not know how to speak Spanish, Quiche, and English—uy, I would not be able to live like I live today—with tranquility.

Because language is closely embedded in identity, an attack on language becomes another oppressive tactic used to abolish their indigenous identities. Yet, in the case of the participants, language also serves as a “*coyote* tool.” According to Machado-Casas, (2009): “A *coyote* is a person who helps immigrants cross borders (Murillo, 2002). In this case, language became the needed coyote tool to facilitate entrance and participation in cross-cultural and linguistic borders (Machado-Casas, 2008). Participants encountered these borders when entering social spaces where languages other than theirs were used. For example, when entering Latino-owned Spanish-speaking grocery stores, when communicating with an English speaker, or when speaking to their children’s teachers who were mostly white, middle-class women. Linguistic borders exist everywhere and language is the coyote that facilitates access to them” (pg. 90). But this is also the case for those who own a business like Carlos:

Oooo, I'm far from my country, and I must say that the farther I am, yes, the more it is necessary to maintain all languages. You already know that I'm indigenous and I speak my language (Pipil) as well as Spanish and now English. The Spanish is used so much, and the English too. But don't think that I speak it (English) well. I don't speak English well, but I know some words. I do speak Pipil and with that I speak to my people. I use it often, and need it when I call home to buy something for the family or to donate money... Many of us cannot lose our language...ooo, it would be like killing who we are and our ability to do business back in our countries...our pueblos. We need it. And to answer your question, the further we are, the more we need it. We cannot lose it. That is why my family has not lost it...yet.

As a person who is engaged in transnational business transactions, Carlos explicitly states, in the above quote, the component that is so often critical in accessing different sites of culture—the use of (multiple) language(s). For Carlos, the use of multiple languages provides him with access to cultures—business world, home life, and community life—that include being a part of both US and Salvadoran business cultures. Often in mainstream US society, when English is not included in the repertoire of languages spoken, then a person's multilingualism is ignored. Too many people in the US, in other words, for bilingualism/multilingualism to matter, one of the languages has to be English. This deficit and exclusionary view of non-English languages is what participants in this study actively resist in their daily lives. They know that in order to have access to different cultural and social settings, they have to have an additive approach to language. But most importantly in order to avoid discriminatory practices and abuse they need to be multilingual chameleons.

MULTILINGUALISM: TO AVOID DISCRIMINATION & ABUSE

To participants in this study the ability to use more than one language repertoire provides them the ability to become multilingual chameleons (Machado-Casas, 2006, 2009). This became pedagogy of survival used daily as indigenous immigrant in the United States. And, although María stated that many times, it was impossible to hide identity markers such as an accent. Trying to speak English represented higher status, a better treatment, as if trying to speak English made her a “better” immigrant, an immigrant that was trying to adopt U.S. ways, to assimilate, a model immigrant. The pedagogy of the multilingual chameleon practiced by these participants became part of the process of migration and survival—it was the ability to separate from the self, to transition and incorporate to otherness in order to gain access to places readily available to them, to be able exists in some way.

Francisco had this to say about his necessity to act in different ways, to have different identities:

In this country we have to have different personalities. We have to act like we have different ways of being or identities. Yes, I would call them identities. Well yes, because me and my family are Otomi, we are not your normal person who is an immigrant we are not mestizos who could just blend in with the regular group of immigrant we are different. We are Indians. We don't speak their language the same way, or the language of the gringos, so with the Mestizos and the gringos we pretend to and act like they do; we try to be like them [when around them]. When we go to different places we change, we have to. "Si no nos humillan" If not, they humiliate us.

For these participants, language camouflage gives them an opportunity to integrate into a space where they are not commonly allowed, into a nationality, into a sense of acceptance within national identity. Participant's multilingual camouflage allows them access into a mainstream society that they do not come from, and into the mainstream Latino immigrant community in the U.S., a Latino immigrant community that has had a history of hierarchical power structures that leaves indigenous peoples at the bottom of the structure, and therefore discriminates against them. The pedagogy of the multilingual chameleon provides camouflage, temporary protection, and gives indigenous immigrants like Francisco the ability to be part of the Mexican mainstream culture—the one they were often ostracized from back home. Here Francisco elegantly expresses his feelings as an indigenous man who had to face discrimination in his home country and who fears continued segregation as an indigenous immigrant in the United States:

What can I tell you? "No ha sido facil" It hasn't been easy. The good thing that happened when coming here to the United States is that for the first time we're Mexicans. We do speak Otomi with other people who speak it as well or at home and very quietly so that we are not heard. We know that if people found out that we were Otomi they will treat us badly. There are people who are kind, but there are also mean people that would treat us badly. Here the only problem is that people speak either Spanish or English, and we are behind because we didn't know how to read until now that we are learning both. That is why we try our best to learn the Spanish well so that we can hide, be invisible to others and to avoid getting hurt. This is something we teach our kids also. Learn English and Spanish.

Learning to write in Spanish and English is a strategy used by Francisco in order to be able to more easily shift into a mainstream immigrant life. Using Spanish and English gives Francisco the ability at least for a moment, to protect his indigenous identity, and to be accepted as a Mexican immigrant in the U.S. Something that was unreachable to him in Mexico. So for the first time Francisco was treated like a non-indigenous Mexican national—but while in the U.S. Therefore, Francisco was living contradictory states of being in order to fit into his country's national identity. On the other hand, being treated like a non-indigenous Mexican national provides Francisco with added protection against the same type of discriminatory he experienced back home.

Participants, who revealed any type of disconnection or difference between the Meztizo immigrants, and the gringos, were most likely denied access to U.S. immigrant and mainstream society. Any disconnection made life as an immigrant dangerous as it placed them in marginalized spaces similar to the ones lived in their home countries where deeper marginalization was synonymous to *Indignidad* (their indigenous roots). Therefore the strategies of *camaleonalidad* (chameleon like) (Machado-Casas, 2006, 2009) used by participants became tools used for self protection and self preservation. In the following sections I will discuss the way was in which immigrants in this study force us to move beyond traditional notions of immigrant life and the implications to the U.S.

UNDOCUMENTED INDIGENOUS IMMIGRANTS: TOWARD THE NEW GLOBAL CITIZEN

A number of scholars have written about cultural production and transnational approaches that focus on migration (Gupta, 1992, Basch, Szanton-Blank, and Glick Aschiller, 1994; Kearney 1991, Ong, 1997; Rouse 1989, 1991). But few have focused on the rise of undocumented immigrant's ability to move in and out of voluntary association, social movement and organizations through the use of multilingualism and multiculturalism. It is those multisituational aspects of linguistic identity such as having the ability to confront different situation accordingly because a person is a multilingual chameleon that give participants in this study access and movement into forbidden spaces. In their book *Global Visions: Beyond the New World Order* (1993), Jeremy Brecher, John Brown, and Jill Cutler explain that there are four dimensions of global citizenship. (1) Extension of citizenship to global domain "The global citizen, then, adheres to a normative perspective—what needs to happen to create a better world" (pg. 40), (2) Reinforcing globalization trends, "The tendency toward global integration, especially economic integration" (pg. 41) (3) "The adoption of politics of impossibility based on what they call attitudes of necessity" these are the changes need it to avoid extinction, and (4) The implicit and imperative

politics of mobilization. “The conviction that it is important to make “The impossible” happen by dedicated action motivated by what is necessary and desirable, rather than by calculating of what seems likely” (pg. 41).

Participants in this study use of their multiple linguistic and cultural identities to do what they need to do in order to create a better world for them and their children. For example, many use different accents when speaking Spanish while others choose to speak English to “fit in” in different social spaces. Participants do this not only to improve their living conditions but also to improve their financial stance and the financial situation of community members here in the United States and abroad. Participants in this study make all of these changes to avoid their extinction as marginalized indigenous communities in Mesoamerica and now as multilingual Latino Indigenous immigrants in the U.S. In the U.S. Latino indigenous immigrants are triple subjugated minorities. Yet, they have been able to surpass many barriers and use their assets to become model global transnational citizens as they have been able to occupy several social spaces without having to leave the U.S. Noddings (2005) in her book entitled *Educating Global Citizens* explains that Global citizenship requires a commitment to the elimination of poverty and of survival. Participants in this study performed calculated moves in order to eliminate poverty and improve their lives and the lives of their children as Indigenous Latino immigrants in the United States, and the lives of their families back home.

For these participants, borders are constructed spaces where having access to multiple languages is equally as useful as being able to move across territorial/physical borders. Language provides participants with the opportunity to move from one border to another, to do business here or in their country, to maintain their home culture, and to contribute to both countries (the US and their countries of origin). Participants are contributing global citizens as they pay taxes across borders. For these participants, access to languages gives them an opportunity to transcend multiple spaces, providing them with trans-cultural mobility. Language then becomes a transnational tool that transcends figured borders and opens doors to spaces from which many had been marginalized. This is particularly important because these are the tools they teach their children. If these parents did not transfer these transnational tools/tactics of survival to their children, then these would not be accessible to their children otherwise. Francisco, María, and Carlos know that in order for their children to survive, they need to be able to transcend borders—these are a hugely important lesson they are transmitting to their children.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION CHILDREN OF MULTILINGUAL FAMILIES

At the beginning of the article I mentioned Alma an Otomi woman who was speaking to her friend and her son in multiple languages, and the comments made by teachers that Latino families were, “confusing their children and they did not know what they were doing, that they were ignorant”. When I think about the way multilingual education is viewed in the U.S. and in most Latin American countries. I think about the many teachers I have encountered who instead of taking an additive approach feels that people like Alma are making her job as a teacher more difficult. Clearly Alma and participants in this study think otherwise. Several research studies point to the fact that immigrant parents feel that speaking English is imperative to the education and the treatment their children would receive (Ek, Orellana, and Hernandez, 2000). All these studies point to the fact that most Latino parents want their children to accomplish more than what they have done.

Other studies point to specialized areas of expertise as bilingual education programs as a way to meet the needs of language minority students. Yet, bilingual programs may not be the best way to meet the needs of multilingual transnational children and families who have the ability to transcend multicultural and linguistic borders. Instead, bilingual education may serve to legitimize a language status building “vis-à-vis a system that has constructed them as inferior” because one of their languages is not recognized in the bilingual program. In this way, bilingual education programs replace one oppressive discourse with another. Yet, it is important to note, that bilingual programs have proven to be successful for many children who grow up in bilingual/bicultural environment. So, the previous statement is not one against bilingual education—rather is one necessary to bring awareness of the fact that there are many Latino children who are growing up in multilingual homes and school do not have appropriate programs to meet their needs.

When conceptualizing the education of indigenous immigrants, indigenous immigrant children, and children of multilingual person, one needs to consider their funds of knowledge (Moll, 1992) and the languages they speak. One needs to also consider how their lives have been shaped by their ability to speak multiple languages. What “*transas*” (Urrieta, 2009) of survival they have gained from their parents whom as we noted above live as indigenous or multilingual peoples in the U.S. and use different languages to gain access to different social spaces. One needs to consider the emotional ties a person can have with each language they speak and how not including any of those languages in the education of the child that can be harmful. This research study, calls for the need of a growing population who is multilingual to be counted, accounted, and educated in an appropriate manner—that is in a multilingual way.

CONCLUSION

Participants in this study were fully aware of the importance of maintaining multiple linguistic and cultural ways. For participants being multilingual meant avoiding discriminatory and oppressive treatments, but it also a tool to play "*transas*" (Urrieta, 2004) on the colonizers. Getting back to the colonizers with the same tools used to control and over power those who oppressed them. Participants also used their ability to speak multiple languages and strattle multiple cultures as a survival tool necessary to live as indigenous transnational immigrants in the U.S. It is also a survival tool that they are strategically and purposely passing down to their children, a fund of knowledge, a skill that is ignored in most schools.

These stories bring about the continued disconnect between multilingual indigenous immigrant families, communities, and schools. But, it also brings to light the way in which education programs aimed at schooling children of immigrants instead work to reinforce the needs of a "certain" type of immigrant (the Spanish speaking *meztizo*). It also brings to light the power and skills that these families have and their resilience. It forces us to question the notion of global citizens in this era of globalization and transnationalization. Who can be considered a global citizen? What qualities qualify when one thinks of global citizens? Is the ability to move about, perform business transactions, speak multiple languages, and strattle multiple social spaces not qualify? Are undocumented immigrant's models for the new global citizens?

When thinking about these questions one needs to think of the obstacles immigrant families have to surpass, and how many of those obstacles are multiplied in the case of indigenous immigrant families who are fighting against historic oppressive treatment and colonization that migrates with other immigrant counterparts who migrate to the U.S. One needs to question the ways in which these children are being educated, are schools not then acting as colonized spaces as oppressive tools. As educator, policy makers, and citizens of the world we need to look ahead, and no assume that Latino minorities are bilingual, instead we need to move beyond subtractive ways of thinking in order to incorporate and include the changes (linguistic and cultural) in our populations. We need to this is in order to stop the deficit track that has lead education in the U.S. and abroad and to think about Alma's vignette and embrace the fact that we are living in a new era of globalization and transnationality: Where the use of more than one language is a necessity—not a luxury.

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