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YouTube comments and language ideologies: destigmatising indigenous languages through rap music --Manuscript Draft--

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Abstract:	<p>This article looks at the web comments to two music videos posted on YouTube in 2014. One video features the song 'Sangre Maya', performed by Pat Boy and El Cima, two Maya rappers from the Yucatán peninsula of Mexico, whereas the other song is called 'Rap de la Tierra' and is performed by Luanko, a Mapuche rapper from Santiago in Chile. These youngsters, who along with Spanish use Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun respectively in their songs, are prime examples of the increasing adoption of indigenous languages in modern music genres and the embeddedness of musical production in digital media with a view to promoting it. First, I briefly discuss significant developments of institutional language policy and planning aiming at the recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity in Mexico and Chile as well as grassroots initiatives that exploit new technologies and rap music for language revitalisation purposes. Drawing from discourse analysis and language ideologies I then look at a selection of comments that these two relatively successful songs (with over 170,000 views at the time of writing) have generated on YouTube and discuss the emerging topics triggered by these two video clips. I will argue that the overwhelmingly positive comments to the songs and, particularly, to the choice of indigenous languages for rapping, strengthens the ongoing revalorisation process of Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun and works towards their destigmatisation, especially among youths. Furthermore, I will show how the discursive space generated by these web comments and the language ideologies therein become an arena for broader social debates which index the subordinated social position of indigenous peoples in Latin American societies.</p>

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This article looks at the web comments to two music videos posted on YouTube in 2014. One video features the song ‘Sangre Maya’, by Pat Boy and El Cima, two Maya rappers from the Yucatán peninsula of Mexico, whereas the other song is called ‘Rap de la Tierra’ and is performed by Luanko, a Mapuche rapper from Santiago in Chile. These youngsters, who along with Spanish use Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun respectively in their songs, are prime examples of the increasing adoption of indigenous languages in modern music genres and the embeddedness of musical production in digital media with a view to promoting it. First, I discuss significant developments of institutional language policy and planning aiming at the recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity in Mexico and Chile as well as grassroots initiatives that exploit new technologies and rap for language revitalisation purposes. Drawing from language ideologies I then look at a selection of comments that these two relatively successful songs (with over 170,000 views at the time of writing) have generated on YouTube and discuss the emerging topics triggered by these two video clips. I will argue that the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the songs and, particularly, to the choice of indigenous languages for rapping, strengthens the ongoing revalorisation process of Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun and works towards their destigmatisation, especially among youths. Furthermore, I will show how the discursive space generated by these web comments and the language ideologies therein become an arena for broader social debates which index the subordinated social position of indigenous peoples in Latin American societies.

Keywords: YouTube, rap, language ideologies, micro language policy, indigenous languages

Institutional languages policies in Mexico and Chile

Language policy and planning in Latin America has considerably evolved in the last two decades. As a consequence of indigenous demands and mobilisation across the continent (Jackson & Warren, 2005), institutional language policy for indigenous languages has been mainly developed in the domains of language legislation and rights,

on the one hand, and the formal education system on the other. Thus, a large number of national constitutions (Colombia 2005; Ecuador 2008; Bolivia 2009, just to mention a few) have included the recognition of cultural diversity and, particularly, multilingualism as an important component of the nation-state (Sieder, 2002). From an international perspective the recognition of minority rights has also been gaining some ground and the ILO Convention 169, a binding instrument approved in 1989, has been ratified by most Latin American countries, Mexico (1990) and Chile (2008) amongst them.

In the case of Mexico, in the aftermath of the Zapatista uprising, the Constitution was amended in 2001 to recognise the contribution of indigenous peoples to the making of the nation. Indigenous languages, however, are not 'official' languages *de jure*, but neither is Spanish sanctioned as the official language in the Mexican Constitution. In 2003 a specific law on language rights targeted at speakers of indigenous languages was passed and all indigenous languages of Mexico were given the status of 'national' languages. Three years later a federal agency called INALI (National Institute for Indigenous Languages) was created with the primary goal of cataloguing and standardising those languages (PINALI, 2009). The Catalogue yielded the following figures that try to pinpoint the enormous linguistic diversity of Mexico: 11 language families, 68 language groups, and 364 language varieties. One of the most widespread languages is Yucatec Maya, which, despite ongoing language shift to Spanish, is still a vital language spoken by some 800,000 speakers according to the last official census (INEGI, 2010). Also, levels of Yucatec Maya language retention and self-ascription to the status of indigenous person are still prominent in the Yucatán, particularly in inland areas of the Peninsula (Bracamonte et al., 2011).

As for Chile, along the lines of the Mexican Constitution, the Chilean Constitution does not grant official status to any language, not even Spanish, although this is de facto the official language. In 1993, an 'Indigenous Law' (Law 19.253) was passed, which includes an article on 'the acknowledgement, respect, and protection of indigenous cultures and languages'. This law spells out the names of the indigenous groups (not 'peoples') which are officially recognised (Mapuche, Aymara, Rapa Nui, Atacameña, Quechua, Colla, Kawashkar and Yamana), but as in the Mexican case the emphasis is on the heritage value of the languages and cultures of these groups, which, in a highly centralised state such as Chile, are either invisible or stand in a subordinate position to Spanish in all public domains of usage. Mapudungun, spoken by some 250,000 Mapuche people, is the major minoritised language of Chile. While the traditional territory of the Mapuche has been southern Chile, Araucanía and Bío Bío regions (and also contiguous regions in Argentina), an increasing percentage of Mapuche live in large cities such as Santiago and Concepción (Lagos et al., 2013). Unlike the socio-political situation in Yucatán, it is important to note that demands for self-determination and autonomy and continued political mobilisations and struggle are rife among the Mapuche people in Chile (Haughney, 2006; Richards, 2010; Pairicán, 2013).

Apart from these positive but mainly tokenistic legislative changes, Intercultural Bilingual Education programmes, also known as Indigenous education and Ethnoeducation in other parts of Latin America, have been implemented in the education system of both countries, which is indeed the principal domain for national language policy and planning on the continent (Lopez, 2008). Despite important pitfalls, which have been analysed extensively in the literature (Hamel, 2008; Garcia & Velasco, 2012; Dietz, 2014 for some examples of Mexico; Sir, 2008; Lagos, 2015; Espinoza,

2016 for Chile), these top down policies have been significant milestones in acknowledging rights to education in indigenous languages, although less so in actually promoting their use and securing intergenerational transmission.

In contrast to the vast body of literature that focuses on macro perspectives of language policy in Latin America, and especially on Intercultural Bilingual Education, scholars have paid considerably less attention to grassroots initiatives for language revitalisation (but see Hornberger, 1996), particularly when these efforts emerge from the micro level, focus on oral uses, and, crucially, involve the agency of speakers themselves as policy makers (Baldauf, 2006; McCarty, 2011; Moriarty & Pietikäinen 2011). In the sphere of popular culture, for instance, a blossoming musical scene has recently emerged in Latin America and youngsters are creatively using indigenous languages in their performances for language and cultural reclamation purposes (xxx 2015). The embeddedness of the musical production of indigenous youths in new technologies, a central domain in the lives of youngsters, is a critical feature that adds complexity to these grassroots language planning efforts worth exploring in their own right (Wyman et al., 2014). I turn to these two domains in the next sections before I delve into the analysis of a selected sample of YouTube comments on the two songs.

Rapping in indigenous languages

A growing number of bands in Latin America are adopting several music genres (rock, ska, reggae, rap, etc.) and choosing indigenous languages as a vehicle for both artistic expression and cultural activism. Some authors have highlighted the ways in which this cultural adaptation among youths may work towards the functional expansion of minoritised languages and, therefore, language maintenance (see López Moya et al., 2014 for southern Mexico).

In the specific case of rap, a key component of hip hop culture, several studies (Mitchell, 2001; Pennycook, 2007; Alim et al., 2009; Terkourafi, 2010) have analysed the intersection of this music genre with the use of complex linguistic repertoires in the context of globalisation. Moreover, Alim (2007) has focused the role of hip hop in the development of critical language pedagogies which may have an emancipatory impact among students. In a similar vein, recent works have looked at the possibilities that rap offers for empowerment and language pedagogy within grassroots and non-institutional contexts in Latin America (for the Andean area see Swinehart, 2012; Tarifa, 2012; also Rekedal, 2014 for the Mapuche in Chile). However, the impact that rapping in indigenous languages may have on language revitalisation processes is still an under-researched topic (but see the recent work by Novelo, 2015 for the case of Yucatán; also the relatively extensive look at Inari Sami in northern Europe by Ridanpää & Pasanen 2009; Leppänen & Pietikäinen, 2010; Moriarty & Pietikäinen, 2011).

In contrast to institutional policies that prioritise the formal education system and put the emphasis on literacy and standardisation, as noted above, some salient sociolinguistic features make rap an especially productive genre for language revitalisation. On one hand, the centrality that orality, verbal fluency, and creativity play in its performance. Unsurprisingly, owing to the saliency of oral skills, rap has smoothly adapted to the sociocultural practices of indigenous peoples for whom verbal arts are still a salient part of their cultural practices (for Yucatec Maya see Hull & Carrasco, 2012; for Mapudungun see Golluscio 2006), notwithstanding the substantial body of written literature that exists in both Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun. On the other hand, it should be noted the fact that rap is a kind of global music genre associated with modernity, ‘coolness’, and ‘keeping it real’. This latter feature has consequences on the linguistic code chosen to rap, which more often than not is based on non-standard

vernacular varieties of not only subordinate languages but also dominant ones. As the journalist Paul McInness has recently put it when writing about rapping in local varieties of British English, “Rap music, the art of rhyming on a beat, has always been an art form that spoke directly about the world in which it was made.”ⁱ Moreover, it is known that one of the ideological pillars of contempt for indigenous languages is their alleged unsuitability to express modern concepts and their association to rural, traditional and exotic areas and socio-economic and cultural backwardness (Dorian, 1998). Against this backdrop, rapping in an indigenous language has proved to bridge the gap between representations of tradition and modernity while contesting the negative stereotypes associated with these languages, which are often considered unfit for use in cutting-edge domains such as modern music genres (Ridanpää & Pasanen, 2009), and new technologies such as digital media.

New technologies and language revitalisation

New technologies have increasingly become a central domain for the promotion of minoritised languages worldwide. Since the seminal article by Buszard-Welcher (2001), which explored the incipient use of the Internet by Native American language communities, there has been growing research with various strands on the possibilities of new technologies for the revitalisation as well as for the documentation of minoritised languages. The presence of these languages on the web has gained attention for the potential benefits in language maintenance and revitalisation, particularly among youths (Moriarty, 2011). The introduction of minoritised languages in digital contexts entails not only their actual promotion through functional expansion but also the transformation of their ‘ideological valuation’ (Eisenlohr, 2004). In this sense, unlike traditional passive consumption of ‘old’ media, the advent of web 2.0 technologies and social media in particular offer a range of possibilities for active engagement by the

user, who becomes both a consumer and a producer of contents. New digital media have, therefore, become a prominent site for interaction and constant creation of contents, in this case rap songs, with a move from medium-related to user-related analyses (Cunliffe 2007; Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2016). Furthermore, electronic media and communication on the web is a productive field for examining language choice and the use of non-standard varieties, which include ‘translingual’ practices and vernacular literacies, as I show below, among multilingual users (Leppänen & Peuronen, 2012; Iorio, 2016; Lee, 2016).

In spite of the promising opportunities offered by new technologies for language promotion especially in raising the status of languages, there are significant limitations, and even threats, such as the dominance of highly equipped and digitally ready languages which are usually supported by nation-states (Prado, 2012). The Internet may become a ‘digitally hostile environment’ (Soria, 2017) and, thus, a domain where further language minorisation takes place. The dangers of placing too much reliance on new technologies was already noted almost two decades ago by Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer (1998) according to whom too much confidence and hope is often given to the ‘technical fix’ offered by new technologies, even if development in this domain may not be enough, or even a priority, for successful language revitalisation.

While these caveats must be taken into account, the embeddedness of musical production in digital media deserves closer inspection not only because of the centrality of the latter in youths’ practices but also because of its rapid evolution, continuous innovation, and extension, which may have practical consequences for the functional expansion of minoritised languages.

YouTube comments as a site of ideological debates

The website where the two video clips are hosted is YouTube, which is the best known

content-sharing site and the second most popular website globally.ⁱⁱ Despite this popularity and its consideration as a prototype of ‘participatory culture’, namely, a sphere where the production and distribution of the videos come from below (Jenkins, 2006), YouTube has received from scholars less attention than other social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter. This is arguably because of the prominence of images in this environment (Androutsopoulos & Tereick, 2016). Comments on YouTube videos, however, provide fertile ground to explore language ideologies and representations of vernacular language practices, which are “voluntary and self-generated rather than being framed and valued by the needs of social institutions’ (Barton & Lee 2012, p. 283). These comments to the songs are also useful to gauge the knock-on effects that rapping in indigenous languages have on the audience.

Drawing from a “discourse-centred online ethnography” (Androutsopoulos, 2008), which combines discourse analysis of online texts with ethnography, I will argue that YouTube comments, because of their evaluative quality, are key to understanding ideologies underlying processes of indigenous language reclamation (see also the work of Androutsopoulos, 2010, 2013 on German dialects). Indeed, metalinguistic discourses on this unregulated discursive space online may underpin not only representations and conceptualisations of language practices but also interrelated aspects such as ethnic identity and political ideologies (Sharma, 2014). Whereas traditional media have long shaped public opinions and sparked language ideological debates (Blommaert, 1999; Kelly-Holmes, 2012), online participatory spaces such as YouTube have increasingly gained ground and weakened “the power of mass media in defining social reality and truth” (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 49). This approach to discourse as social practice is at the core of language ideologies, which reflect attitudes, beliefs and values attached to languages choice but also index broader social issues inextricably linked to power

relations and inequality among individuals, groups, and even nations. From this perspective, language ideologies are more often than not part and parcel of broader sociopolitical struggles and conflicts (see Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994; Woolard, 1998; Schieffelin et al., 1998; Kroskrity, 2010; Piller 2016).

As I show below through the analysis of selected comments to both video clips and the emerging themes therein, the discursive space generated by this YouTube space and their dialogic nature becomes an arena for language ideological debates which, I maintain, have a positive impact on both the visibility and the legitimization of indigenous languages.

The data: YouTube comments

The video clips ‘Sangre Maya’ (Mayan Blood) and ‘Rap de la Tierra’ (Rap from the Land) were published on YouTube in 2012 and have gathered since then more than 160,000 views each (and counting), which is a relatively significant number for songs performed in indigenous languages. At the time of writing just over 250 comments have been published for each song. These figures are in steady flow, a cautionary note when dealing with online data which is in constant flux in participatory spaces. Due to the relatively manageable number of comments, the approach stems from a qualitative analysis that aims at pinning down recurring themes and debates that these video clips have prompted among the audience. The observation of this environment focuses on a plain textual analysis of the comments and does not consider, because of their complexity, the multisemiotic nature of YouTube pages where the comments are inserted. It should be noted, however, that the written comments are a response to oral/visual material, in this case the video clips and the songs, an example of the ubiquitous interaction of the two modes of communication on the Internet.

The research process has involved mixed methods as the observation online and the textual analysis has been complemented with ethnographic procedures such as fieldwork both in Mexico and Chile, conversations with both rappers (online and face-to-face), and attendance to some of their gigs. The analysis that follows will look at a small sample of comments, some of them metalinguistic, which are prominent in this space and epitomise current sociolinguistic and sociopolitical topics and debates around indigenous languages and indigeneity in Latin America.

An overwhelming majority of the comments to the two songs show a positive valuation to the rappers' performances. Two salient themes emerge in them, praise for choosing indigenous languages to rap on the one hand, and pride in being indigenous or singing in an indigenous language, on the other. Thus, the majority of comments assess the performances in a favourable way, a position which is further expressed by the 'likes' and 'dislikes' that each song has gathered (Sangre Maya 1083 vs 74, Rap de la Tierra 1613 vs 57).

Before I analyse some illustrative comments, it bears mention that rapping in an indigenous language is viewed by commenters as an extraordinary choice which is worth commenting upon. Thus, rapping in Maya and Mapudungun is perceived as an 'anomaly' which stands in stark contrast with a widespread perception of indigenous languages as a 'thing of the past'. Indeed, a good number of comments address the issue of language choice. Thus, the fact that metalinguistic comments are numerous undergirds the central role that this conscious choice, in this case selecting an indigenous language and Spanish, plays in music (rap) and digital media (YouTube) production and consumption. In the case of Sangre Maya, both Maya and Spanish are used in the song with a parallel structure of singing one stanza first in Maya and then following with a free translation into Spanish. Rap de la Tierra, instead, is mostly sung

in Spanish but the performance is interspersed with some words in Mapudungun and the inclusion of a key phrase in the chorus, which I analyse in the next section. It is worth pointing out that both artists have uploaded other songs on YouTube which are exclusively performed in Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun.

Although most comments to the video clips are written in Spanish, both indigenous languages also appear in a few comments, a critical fact for language revitalisation purposes to which I also return below. Based on the varieties and informal registers of Spanish used in the comments, and also information inferred from user names, commenters seem to be mostly from Mexico, Chile, where the rappers are from, and other Latin American countries, although a few comments from transnational settings are also present. As for ethical issues, fuzzy boundaries between the public and the private poses a challenge for data collection and presentation that is increasingly being discussed in the literature (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2016, p. 5). For anonymity reasons, user names have been changed, even if the comments appear on a public space and its contents can be searchable on the web. Worth noting again is the fleeting nature of these online spaces and the possibilities for edition and deletion of its contents. The following selection of comments attest to the valuation process that indigenous languages are undergoing through music and salient debates spurred by them when these video clips are embedded in an interactive digital domain such as YouTube.

Sangre Maya comments

Comments to this bilingual song are often of a metalinguistic nature. The following comment posted by Alberto encapsulates a recurrent topic that surfaces in this space, namely, praising the song. I will use normal typeface for Spanish and bold for Maya. An English translation is provided in brackets below the original comment:

Alberto

Amo la rola! si pueden hagan una versión con subtítulos.. ya se, es una vergüenza que soy yucateco y no entiendo maya u_u (solo las groserías) jejej pero si estaria chido para entender esas partes

>>> patboy maya

es bilingüe la canción primero en maya y luego español... saludos

[I love this song. If you can, do a version with subtitles, I know, it's a shame that I am Yucatecan and I don't understand Maya u_u (only swear words) jejej but it would be cool to understand those parts

>>> patboy maya

the song is bilingual, first in Maya and then in Spanish... greetings]

As noted, this comment begins with Alberto expressing admiration for the song and then asking for a version with subtitles. Unlike Pat Boy, the commenter is not bilingual, a fact of which he is ashamed, and only understands some swear words in Maya. This clarification is significant since this particular register can be one of the last ones to disappear when language shift is underway (Muehlmann, 2008). Some other commenters also ask for subtitles to the song. It is not explicitly stated whether the subtitles should be in Maya or in Spanish but insistence on subtitling may be explained, on the one hand, as a further move to legitimise Maya since indigenous languages are mainly used in their oral form and, on the other, as a way to learn some Maya and improve some receptive skills. Alberto shows a positive stance towards Maya and regrets not understanding it even if he is Yucatecan, his implication being that, at least, passive bilingualism in Maya should be the norm in the Yucatán. Pat Boy states in his reply that the song is in itself bilingual: the chorus is sung in Maya while the rappers go back and forth between Maya and Spanish by singing one stanza in Maya and then doing a free translation into Spanish in the next one.

A further comment of praise is made by Miryam. Her concise contribution reads:

Miryam

Hach Utsil!!! Necesitamos mas **maaya!**

[Very well!!! We need more Maya!]

Apart from being a further example of a positive valuation, what is worth highlighting in this comment is the use of both Maya and Spanish in the same sentence. The use of Maya is in itself a remarkable fact, as there are very few users and uses of indigenous languages in written domains. Digital spaces, therefore, are opening up productive domains for the functional expansion of written Maya through vernacular literacies. Although Yucatec Maya has a fairly consolidated standard variety, there are orthographic variations still in use (Brody, 2004). In this comment the use of ‘h’ instead of ‘j’ in the word *hach* (very) is an illustration of this heterogeneity. Also worth pointing out is the spelling of the name of the Maya language in Maya (with double ‘a’). This example shows how, unlike official contexts, this non-institutional space provides users with a non-prescriptive language usage which often reflect orality. In this sense, the hybrid nature of this comment is an example of everyday language practice on the ground among Maya speakers whereby code-mixing and code-switching are the rule.

The next comment, which is also one of praise, further touches on normativity and the influence of standard language ideologies on the ordinary use of Maya.

Juan Carlos

que academia ni que la xingada el que quiere cantar canta y sin tantas pinches mamadas. adelante felicidades, chavos

[fuck the academy if you want to sing, you do it without pissing about so much.

Keep it up congratulations, boys]

There are several linguistic features in this comment in Spanish which are typical of

digital environments: idiosyncratic orthography including non-normative spelling (e. g. ‘xingada’ instead of ‘chingada’, use of lower case at the beginning of the comment and after full stop (e.g. ‘que’, ‘adelante’), syntactical ‘errors’ such as the use of ‘la’ with no agreement, erratic punctuation, and abundance of slang terms, in this case of Mexican Spanish (e. g. ‘xingada’, ‘pinche mamada’), with an array of particular vulgar connotations which are not easy to translate. This alternative take on writing conventions, which clearly is neither elite nor institutional, provides a striking contrast with normative, school-based literacies, which have traditionally been the main focus of official language policies in Mexico and beyond. Hence, the sarcastic mention to the role of the ‘academy’ in the comment. According to the author, the involvement of academies, with a well-known focus on normativity, is not needed if you want to sing in Maya. The emphasis on spontaneous language use underpinning this comment needs to be highlighted because language revitalisation efforts, often when driven by official institutions such as INALI, put the emphasis on language norms (standardisation, creation of neologisms, promotion of literacy in formal contexts) rather than on creating the necessary conditions and meaningful domains of usage for the functional expansion of subordinated languages. Indeed, a standardised orthography is not a prerequisite for creating an active writing culture (see Lillehaugen, 2016 for the of Zapotec and Chatino on Twitter, for similar ideologies of standard language ideologies in Chile see Lagos et al., 2013; Rojas et al., 2016).

Another positive comment written in both Maya and Spanish is provided by Elisa.

Elisa

jach man jats'uuts' le bideo' tumen ku e'esikto'on tu'ux ya'anto'on yéetel bix yaanko'on! muy hermoso el video por que nos muestra donde y como estamos!
saludos!

[very beautiful video because it shows us where we are and how we are!
greetings!]

This example illustrates how the Sangre Maya video clip has had a knock-on effect on the production of literacy in Maya. Elisa writes her comments first in Maya and then translates it into Spanish. This kind of parallel text with versions in both languages is common in these public digital environments. The use of standard Maya by Elisa is also indicative of the commenter having studied it at university level. As for its contents, the mention of ‘where we are’ and ‘how we are’, ‘we’ referring to the Maya people, needs to be understood against the backdrop of invisibility and discrimination against indigenous peoples in the Yucatán. Indeed, Elisa’s comment resonates with the slogan of a campaign launched by the Yucatán state agency INDEMAYA (Institute for the Development of the Maya People) in the mid-2000s named *Wey yano ‘one’*, meaning ‘Here we are’, which was produced with a view to raising awareness about the Maya language and culture and fight discrimination in the Yucatán.

However, not all comments are positive, and one specific contribution by Diego sparked a reaction of 40 replies. There is no space to reproduce all the comments here but the complete thread shows how this discursive space can become not only a platform of support for the rappers and their songs but also a battleground for opposing views on the position of indigenous peoples in Latin America. The beginning of the exchange sets the tone for a debate in which language choice figures prominently:

Diego

patboy maya - una cosa amigo.. si vos sos latino y sacas pecho de ser maya entonces habla completamente en español y hace musica de tu pais que creo que es guatemala.. saludos desde europa osea Argentina !!!

[patboy maya – one thing my friend, if you are Latino and brag about being Maya then speak completely in Spanish and do music from your country which I think is guatemala. greetings from europe, that is, Argentina!!!]

Addressing Pat Boy directly, Diego makes a few false assumptions in this statement, which causes a chain reaction of comments. Drawing on racial and linguistic bigotry, Diego demands (quite strongly through the use of imperative verb forms in Argentinian Spanish) that Pat Boy, as an alleged Latino, should sing completely in Spanish and make music from Guatemala (Pat Boy's nationality, he thinks). Not only is Diego prejudiced about the use of an indigenous language for singing and wrong about facts (Pat Boy's country of origin and ethnic identity), but to finish off his comment he conflates his own country (Argentina) with Europe. This sets off an argument about degrees of 'Europeanness' and whiteness and supposedly the lack of indigenous peoples in Argentina compared to other Latin American countries, particularly Mexico. Ernesto replies to Diego's comment above by writing:

Ernesto

xddd ahora me entero de que argentina esta ubicada en europa y no en America xd
[xddd now I find out that argentina is located in europe and not in the Americas xd]

Diego, however, insists that Spanish should be the language the rappers use while singing:

Diego

sacamos pecho de ser euro-argentinos... ok??? ellos se ponen el cartel de maya..
joya.. todo bien.. pero que hablen el español entonces..
[we brag about being euro-argentinians...ok??? they carry the banner of being maya..
nice.. everything good.. but they should speak spanish then]..

According to Diego, even if the singers are proud of being Maya, as 'Latinos' they should speak Spanish, showing a prejudiced monolingual mindset that goes beyond Argentina and encompasses the whole continent (Latin America). The discursive space offered by YouTube comments becomes an even more conspicuous arena for expressing sociopolitical views in the case of the song performed by the Mapuche

rapper Luanko, which I present in the next section.

Rap de la Tierra comments

In contrast to Sangre Maya, metalinguistic comments are not so abundant in the song Rap de la Tierra. This may be explained by the fact that the presence of Mapudungun is more scarce in that song, which is mainly performed in Spanish, although the inclusion of the verse “Willinkoche newenkülen inche” features prominently in the chorus.ⁱⁱⁱ In any event, what stands out again in the comments is the usage of this space to give full vent to political demands by Mapuche people in Chile. The Spanish words ‘luchar’ and ‘lucha’ (to struggle, struggle) emerge in several comments. Struggle (‘weichan’ in Mapudungun) is indeed one of the cornerstones of Luanko’s musical production (Ammerman & Rossi, 2017, p. 5). This is for instance what Gustavo writes. I will use normal typeface for Spanish and bold for Mapudungun. An English translation is provided in brackets below the original comment:

Gustavo

mari mari kom Puche!!! que bueno ... viva nuestra cultura **peñi** ..
luchemossss !!!

[greetings people!!! How nice ... long live our culture, brother ... let’s fight !!!]

What we see in many of the comments to this song is the formulaic use of some Mapudungun in the common greeting ‘mari mari kom puche’, plus the use of the term of address ‘peñi’ (brother, brothers), along with Spanish. As in some examples from the Maya song, this is an instance of use of hybrid language with typical features of vernacular literacies which often appear in this environment, such as inconsistent punctuation and use of lower and upper case (e.g. ‘que’, ‘Puche’), idiosyncratic spelling (e.g. ‘luchemossss’ with three ‘s’ at the end instead of one), and the inclusion of phatic language which is commonly short and informal in tone.

Furthermore, along the lines of the Maya song above, complete comments in Mapudungun are found in this space as well. Thus, Victor writes:

Victor

**Rume kumey tufachi video peñi, kume kuzaw tati. Fentren newen peñi
luangko ka marhi marhi piafimi tami pu kuñil. Pewkayael marhichiweu
marhichiweu**

[Very good video, excellent work, brother, a lot of good energy. Greetings to your family luangko. See you soon ten times we'll win ten times we'll win.]

As is often the case in language standardisation processes, there is a coexistence among several alphabets to represent Mapudungun (see Mariano et al., 2010 for a revision of the four current alphabets with wider circulation). Again, similar to the comments in Maya and Spanish above, we can find instances of idiosyncratic orthography, e.g. 'marhi marhi' instead of 'mari mari', and also in the idiom 'mahrichiwew mahrichiwew', which means 'ten times we will win' and is a well-known 'rallying / war cry' among the Mapuche people. This expression is also used by Fernando with a different spelling in the following comment:

Fernando

muy bueno **peñi...** las letras del disco transmiten mucho, saludos desde la
puelmapu, lemorrria com pu che.... MARICHIWEUUUU!!!
MAEICHIWEUUUU!!!

[very good brother... the lyrics of the album transmit a lot, greetings from
puelmapu, greetings people TEN TIMES WE'LL WIN, TEN TIMES WE'LL
WIN]

Fernando's comment is a further example of a bilingual contribution that, apart from praising the contents of the song, combines Spanish and formulaic expression in Mapudungun both for greeting and identity reclamation purposes. Also worth mentioning is the use of 'puelmapu', which means 'land from the East' and refers to

traditional Mapuche territory located over the Andes in Argentina. This example further shows, on the one hand, how digital environments supersede national borders creating opportunities for connection among indigenous peoples who live in different nation-states while, on the other, it reminds us of the central place that the Wallmapu (traditional Mapuche territory) occupies in the Mapuche socio-political struggle.

Whereas most comments on Luanko's song are positive, the public evaluation space provided by YouTube is often interspersed with abusive and offensive language, prompting heated debates about representations of Mapuche people and ethnic identities against the background of Chile as an allegedly monolingual and monocultural nation (Pinto, 2003). The following thread illustrates this kind of sustained interaction:

Francisco

ya pero donde estan las micros quemandose no puedes ser un the real mapuche sin quemar una micro UNA MICRO PO WN es mucho pedir?

[ok but where are the burning buses you cannot be a the real mapuche without setting bus on fire ONE BUS THEN DICKHEAD is that too much to ask?]

>>>Mariana

Francisco eres tonto te caiste de la cama que onda

[Francisco you are silly you fell off the bed what the hell]

>>>Daniel

Francisco que wea este tontito? tipico comentario del wingka txewa que no ha venido al wallmapu jamás y no tiene nada de kimün

[Francisco what a load of bullshit this stupid guy? typical comment from the evil wingka who has never been to wallmapu and has no kimün at all]

>>>Francisco

no entendi ni wea pero parece que teni que volver al colegio

[I didn't understand shit but it seems that you need to go back to school]

Francisco begins the comment by stereotyping Mapuches as those who set buses on fire in social protests, thus, arguing tongue-in-cheek, for the inclusion of such quintessential image in the video clip. Negative images are often portrayed in mainstream media and

held by the elites in Chile which tend to focus on the violent side of the so called ‘conflict’ between the Mapuches and the Chilean state (Vergara & Foerster, 2002; Muñoz, 2010). Actually, anti-terrorist legislation, drafted during Pinochet’s dictatorship, is being applied to repress Mapuche people against the background of the current political conflict with the state (Richards, 2010). Language wise, it is worth noting the use of English as an unmarked language on the web in the phrase “a *real Mapuche*” which, according to Francisco, should be represented committing violent acts. Both Mariana and Daniel respond to this insulting and prejudiced comment by calling Francisco ‘silly, idiot’. This thread is indeed a fine example of the use of slang in Chilean Spanish and the creative ways in which literacy is put to practice in this environment. Thus, the digraph ‘WN’ stands for the vulgar pronunciation of ‘huevón’, a swear word with myriad (usually negative) meanings depending on the context in which is uttered. A related word ‘wea’ (standard orthography ‘huevada’) is included in Daniel’s comments, which, on the other hand, features several nouns in Mapudungun (wingka, txewa, wallmapu, kimün)^{iv} which are easily comprehensible for anyone minimally familiar with Mapuche culture. Based on Francisco’s reply, we can safely say that he is not that kind of person. His closing remark mentioning the school as a place where one is supposed to learn and write in Standard Spanish, as he does not understand Daniel’s comment, also speaks volumes about the lack of a real intercultural dialogue in Chile.

A further exchange illustrates the negative reaction that a modern music genre such as rap causes when is performed by an indigenous person. Again, using quite strong language the first comments triggers both a counter reaction by Alvaro defending hip hop as an appropriate form of expression for the Mapuche culture and a further

comment by Juan picking upon Bryan's name and surname, clearly neither from Spanish nor Mapuche origin, to bring up issues of authenticity and national identity.

Bryan Muller

rap mapuche, a donde mierda llegaremos

[Mapuche rap, how shitty can we get']

>>>Alvaro

a la concha de tu madre pendejo el hip hop es una forma de expresion esta perfecto que una cultura reprimida como la mapuche se exprese con el hip hop

[the cunt of your mother fucker hip hop is a form of expression it's perfect for an oppressed culture like the mapuche to express itself through hip hop]

>>>Juan

Un Chileno que se llama BRYAN MULLER!! a donde mierda llegaremos??

[A Chilean person whose name is BRYAN MULLER!! how shitty can we get!]

Bryan's comments must be seen against the background of widespread negative representations of indigenous peoples and their cultures as backward, uncivilised and primitive, or as ancestral at best. Therefore, the choice of this modern music genre is not without its critics, not only in an abusive manner from non-Mapuche, as is the case here, but also from older generations of Mapuche who hold rather essentialist views on Mapuche culture. Crucially, though, performing hip hop and rap in these languages breaks these stereotypes and, more importantly, may trigger an interest in learning or reactivating these languages among youths, as Luanko himself acknowledges (Ammerman & Rossi, 2017, p. 11).

The last thread of comments delves into a topic which is salient in the specific context of Chile and contrasts with the Yucatecan case, namely, the fact that an indigenous identity and a national identity can be mutually exclusive, rather than complementary. This is what Domingo writes as a reaction to the song:

Domingo

orgullosa de mi sangre mapuche orgullosa de ser chilena.

[proud of my mapuche blood proud of being chilean]

>>>Antonio

si te sientes orgulloso de ser chileno y mapuche, creo que algo no calza....

[if you feel proud of being chilean and mapuche, I think there is something that does not fit]

>>>Manuel

No entiendo qué tiene de malo ser mapuche y chileno al mismo tiempo ???

[I don't understand what is wrong with being mapuche and chilean at the same time???]

Antonio's reply to Domingo's comment on feeling both Mapuche and Chilean challenges the success which the discourse of 'mestizaje', that is racial and cultural mixing, has had in other Latin American countries (Richards, 2010, p. 62). This has to do with particular historical reasons that date back to the relationship between the Spaniards and the Mapuche in colonial times (peripheral position of the territory within the Spanish empire and signing of treaties recognising sovereignty of Mapuche and establishing a border) through to the Independence period and nation building in Chile (negotiations of autonomy and late incorporation of Mapuche territory into the Chilean nation-state in 1883 after military defeat) and, finally, up to present sociopolitical processes of increasing ethnonationalism among the Mapuche (Bengoa, 2002; Crow, 2017; Foerster & Vergara 2000). What can be highlighted from this thread, therefore, is the ongoing negotiation and challenging of nationhood and identity in contemporary Chile against the backdrop of demands for autonomy and political recognition among the Mapuche.

Conclusion

The space provided by YouTube to make comments on the video clips sung in indigenous languages is a fertile ground to explore the language ideologies which

revolve not only about the sociolinguistic situation of these minoritised languages but also around broader sociopolitical struggles of recognition and rights among indigenous peoples in Latin America. As I have shown, this YouTube space becomes a prominent arena to debate, often in an insulting and offensive way, sociopolitical issues that have to do with nationhood, ethnicity, race, indigeneity, and, of course, an array of representations and values given to languages and language use. Thus, from the sociolinguistic point of view, these comments are all examples of vernacular literacies which voice through both Spanish and indigenous language, mostly positive valuations about the choice of rapping in an indigenous language. Unlike highly regulated domains such as schools, user-generated digital spaces are opening up opportunities for the production of meaningful writing in indigenous languages which accrue to their visibility. Crucial for the reproduction of these languages is the fact that vernacular literacies supersede thorny issues such as purism and institutional emphasis on standardisation, reflecting widespread communicative practices of code mixing as normal, which are more often than not seen as illegitimate in processes of language revitalisation. This is not to mean that formal registers of these languages need not to be cultivated, in fact the production of belle-lettres in both languages is abundant, but these easily available and affordable digital spaces create opportunities for relevant language practices to a wider range of users.

Although these examples suggest that positive valorisation and destigmatisation of minoritised languages is underway through these performances, it is necessary to further investigate the potential knock-on effects that music, and other under-researched artistic expressions, may have on the actual transmission and reproduction of these languages. Micro language policies that emerge from the grassroots are essential in a context where institutional language policies are mostly tokenistic and where language

shift toward Spanish is driven by relentless marginalisation of indigenous populations in both Mexico and Chile.

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- i Why doesn't everyone rap in scouse? How British hip-hop broke free of London. Paul McInnes. Published on 9 March 2017 Online at:
<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/mar/09/why-doesnt-everyone-rap-in-scouse-how-british-hip-hop-broke-free-of-london> (Accessed 18.7.2017). For the African context, see: Uncool to use English: the rise of 'dialectal rap'. Published on 25 February 2016. Online at: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/feb/25/clicks-dips-and-double-consonants-dialectal-rap-makes-a-comeback> (Accessed 18.7.2017)
- ii Ranking based on Alexia Traffic Rank: <http://www.alexa.com/topsites> (Accessed 18.7.2017)

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- iii Willinkoche: a person from Willinko (Huillinco is the Spanish spelling) a territory in the Bio Bio region of Chile, where Luanko's family comes from. Newenkülen inche: I'm feeling energetic/strong. 'Newen' roughly means energy/strength in Mapudungun.
- iv Wingka: non-Mapuche person, originally 'thief, usurper'; txewa: dog, evil person; wallmapu: Mapuche territory; kimün: knowledge, wisdom.

YouTube comments and language ideologies: destigmatising indigenous languages through rap music

Josep Cru

Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

School of Modern Languages

Old Library Building

Newcastle University

NE1 7RU

UK

Email: josep.cru@ncl.ac.uk

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This article looks at the web comments to two music videos posted on YouTube in 2014. One video features the song ‘Sangre Maya’, by Pat Boy and El Cima, two Maya rappers from the Yucatán peninsula of Mexico, whereas the other song is called ‘Rap de la Tierra’ and is performed by Luanko, a Mapuche rapper from Santiago in Chile. These youngsters, who along with Spanish use Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun respectively in their songs, are prime examples of the increasing adoption of indigenous languages in modern music genres and the embeddedness of musical production in digital media with a view to promoting it. First, I discuss significant developments of institutional language policy and planning aiming at the recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity in Mexico and Chile as well as grassroots initiatives that exploit new technologies and rap for language revitalisation purposes. Drawing from language ideologies I then look at a selection of comments that these two relatively successful songs (with over 170,000 views at the time of writing) have generated on YouTube and discuss the emerging topics triggered by these two video clips. I will argue that the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the songs and, particularly, to the choice

of indigenous languages for rapping, strengthens the ongoing revalorisation process of Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun and works towards their destigmatisation, especially among youths. Furthermore, I will show how the discursive space generated by these web comments and the language ideologies therein become an arena for broader social debates which index the subordinated social position of indigenous peoples in Latin American societies.

Keywords: YouTube, rap, language ideologies, micro language policy, indigenous languages

Institutional languages policies in Mexico and Chile

Language policy and planning in Latin America has considerably evolved in the last two decades. As a consequence of indigenous demands and mobilisation across the continent (Jackson & Warren, 2005), institutional language policy for indigenous languages has been mainly developed in the domains of language legislation and rights, on the one hand, and the formal education system on the other. Thus, a large number of national constitutions (Colombia 2005; Ecuador 2008; Bolivia 2009, just to mention a few) have included the recognition of cultural diversity and, particularly, multilingualism as an important component of the nation-state (Sieder 2002). From an international perspective the recognition of minority rights has also been gaining some ground and the ILO Convention 169, a binding instrument approved in 1989, has been ratified by most Latin American countries, Mexico (1990) and Chile (2008) amongst them.

In the case of Mexico, in the aftermath of the Zapatista uprising, the Constitution was amended in 2001 to recognise the contribution of indigenous peoples to the making of the nation. Indigenous languages, however, are not ‘official’ languages de jure, but neither is Spanish sanctioned as the official language in the Mexican Constitution. In 2003 a specific law on language rights targeted at speakers of indigenous languages was

1 passed and all indigenous languages of Mexico were given the status of ‘national’
2 languages. Three years later a federal agency called INALI (National Institute for
3 Indigenous Languages) was created with the primary goal of cataloguing and
4 standardising those languages (PINALI, 2009). The Catalogue yielded the following
5 figures that try to pinpoint the enormous linguistic diversity of Mexico: 11 language
6 families, 68 language groups, and 364 language varieties. One of the most widespread
7 languages is Yucatec Maya, which, despite ongoing language shift to Spanish, is still a
8 vital language spoken by some 800,000 speakers according to the last official census
9 (INEGI, 2010). Also, levels of Yucatec Maya language retention and self-ascription to
10 the status of indigenous person are still prominent in the Yucatán, particularly in inland
11 areas of the Peninsula (Bracamonte et al., 2011).
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26 As for Chile, along the lines of the Mexican Constitution, the Chilean
27 Constitution does not grant official status to any language, not even Spanish, although
28 this is de facto the official language. In 1993, an ‘Indigenous Law’ (Law 19.253) was
29 passed, which includes an article on ‘the acknowledgement, respect, and protection of
30 indigenous cultures and languages’. This law spells out the names of the indigenous
31 groups (not ‘peoples’) which are officially recognised (Mapuche, Aymara, Rapa Nui,
32 Atacameña, Quechua, Colla, Kawashkar and Yamana), but as in the Mexican case the
33 emphasis is on the heritage value of the languages and cultures of these groups, which,
34 in a highly centralised state such as Chile, are either invisible or stand in a subordinate
35 position to Spanish in all public domains of usage. Mapudungun, spoken by some
36 250,000 Mapuche people, is the major minoritised language of Chile. While the
37 traditional territory of the Mapuche has been southern Chile, Araucanía and Bío Bío
38 regions (and also contiguous regions in Argentina), an increasing percentage of
39 Mapuche live in large cities such as Santiago and Concepción (Lagos et al., 2013).
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1 Unlike the socio-political situation in Yucatán, it is important to note that demands for
2 self-determination and autonomy and continued political mobilisations and struggle are
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4 rife among the Mapuche people in Chile (Haughney, 2006; Richards, 2010; Pairicán,
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6 2013).
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10 Apart from these positive but mainly tokenistic legislative changes, Intercultural
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12 Bilingual Education programmes, also known as Indigenous education and
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14 Ethnoeducation in other parts of Latin America, have been implemented in the
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16 education system of both countries, which is indeed the principal domain for national
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18 language policy and planning on the continent (Lopez, 2008). Despite important pitfalls,
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20 which have been analysed extensively in the literature (Hamel, 2008; Garcia & Velasco,
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22 2012; Dietz, 2014 for some examples of Mexico; Sir, 2008; Lagos, 2015; Espinoza,
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24 2016 for Chile), these top down policies have been significant milestones in
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26 acknowledging rights to education in indigenous languages, although less so in actually
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28 promoting their use and securing intergenerational transmission.
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34 In contrast to the vast body of literature that focuses on macro perspectives of
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36 language policy in Latin America, and especially on Intercultural Bilingual Education,
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38 scholars have paid considerably less attention to grassroots initiatives for language
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40 revitalisation (but see Hornberger, 1996), particularly when these efforts emerge from
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42 the micro level, focus on oral uses, and, crucially, involve the agency of speakers
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44 themselves as policy makers (Baldauf, 2006; McCarty, 2011; Moriarty & Pietikäinen
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46 2011). In the sphere of popular culture, for instance, a blossoming musical scene has
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48 recently emerged in Latin America and youngsters are creatively using indigenous
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50 languages in their performances for language and cultural reclamation purposes (xxx
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52 2015). The embeddedness of the musical production of indigenous youths in new
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54 technologies, a central domain in the lives of youngsters, is a critical feature that adds
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1 complexity to these grassroots language planning efforts worth exploring in their own
2 right (Wyman et al., 2014). I turn to these two domains in the next sections before I
3
4 delve into the analysis of a selected sample of YouTube comments on the two songs.
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8 **Rapping in indigenous languages**

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11 A growing number of bands in Latin America are adopting several music genres (rock,
12 ska, reggae, rap, etc.) and choosing indigenous languages as a vehicle for both artistic
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14 expression and cultural activism. Some authors have highlighted the ways in which this
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16 cultural adaptation among youths may work towards the functional expansion of
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sociolinguistic features make rap an especially productive genre for language revitalisation. On one hand, the centrality that orality, verbal fluency, and creativity play in its performance. Unsurprisingly, owing to the saliency of oral skills, rap has smoothly adapted to the sociocultural practices of indigenous peoples for whom verbal arts are still a salient part of their cultural practices (for Yucatec Maya see Hull & Carrasco, 2012; for Mapudungun see Golluscio 2006), notwithstanding the substantial body of written literature that exists in both Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun. On the other hand, it should be noted the fact that rap is a kind of global music genre associated with modernity, ‘coolness’, and ‘keeping it real’. This latter feature has consequences on the linguistic code chosen to rap, which more often than not is based on non-standard vernacular varieties of not only subordinate languages but also dominant ones. As the journalist Paul McInness has recently put it when writing about rapping in local varieties of British English, “Rap music, the art of rhyming on a beat, has always been an art form that spoke directly about the world in which it was made.”ⁱ Moreover, it is known that one of the ideological pillars of contempt for indigenous languages is their alleged unsuitability to express modern concepts and their association to rural, traditional and exotic areas and socio-economic and cultural backwardness (Dorian, 1998). Against this backdrop, rapping in an indigenous language has proved to bridge the gap between representations of tradition and modernity while contesting the negative stereotypes associated with these languages, which are often considered unfit for use in cutting-edge domains such as modern music genres (Ridanpää & Pasanen, 2009), and new technologies such as digital media.

New technologies and language revitalisation

New technologies have increasingly become a central domain for the promotion of minoritised languages worldwide. Since the seminal article by Buszard-Welcher (2001),

1 which explored the incipient use of the Internet by Native American language
2 communities, there has been growing research with various strands on the possibilities
3 of new technologies for the revitalisation as well as for the documentation of
4 minoritised languages. The presence of these languages on the web has gained attention
5 for the potential benefits in language maintenance and revitalisation, particularly among
6 youths (Moriarty, 2011). The introduction of minoritised languages in digital contexts
7 entails not only their actual promotion through functional expansion but also the
8 transformation of their ‘ideological valuation’ (Eisenlohr, 2004). In this sense, unlike
9 traditional passive consumption of ‘old’ media, the advent of web 2.0 technologies and
10 social media in particular offer a range of possibilities for active engagement by the
11 user, who becomes both a consumer and a producer of contents. New digital media
12 have, therefore, become a prominent site for interaction and constant creation of
13 contents, in this case rap songs, with a move from medium-related to user-related
14 analyses (Cunliffe 2007; Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2016). Furthermore, electronic
15 media and communication on the web is a productive field for examining language
16 choice and the use of non-standard varieties, which include ‘translingual’ practices and
17 vernacular literacies, as I show below, among multilingual users (Leppänen &
18 Peuronen, 2012, Iorio, 2016; Lee, 2016).

19 In spite of the promising opportunities offered by new technologies for language
20 promotion especially in raising the status of languages, there are significant limitations,
21 and even threats, such as the dominance of highly equipped and digitally ready
22 languages which are usually supported by nation-states (Prado, 2012). The Internet may
23 become a ‘digitally hostile environment’ (Soria, 2017) and, thus, a domain where
24 further language minorisation takes place. The dangers of placing too much reliance on
25 new technologies was already noted almost two decades ago by Dauenhauer &

1 Dauenhauer (1998) according to whom too much confidence and hope is often given to
2 the ‘technical fix’ offered by new technologies, even if development in this domain may
3
4 not be enough, or even a priority, for successful language revitalisation.
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7 While these caveats must be taken into account, the embeddedness of musical
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9 production in digital media deserves closer inspection not only because of the centrality
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11 of the latter in youths’ practices but also because of its rapid evolution, continuous
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13 innovation, and extension, which may have practical consequences for the functional
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15 expansion of minoritised languages.
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21 **YouTube comments as a site of ideological debates**

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23 The website where the two video clips are hosted is YouTube, which is the best known
24
25 content-sharing site and the second most popular website globally.ⁱⁱ Despite this
26
27 popularity and its consideration as a prototype of ‘participatory culture’, namely, a
28
29 sphere where the production and distribution of the videos come from below (Jenkins,
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31 2006), YouTube has received from scholars less attention than other social media sites
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33 such as Facebook or Twitter. This is arguably because of the prominence of images in
34
35 this environment (Androutsopoulos & Tereick, 2016). Comments on YouTube videos,
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37 however, provide fertile ground to explore language ideologies and representations of
38
39 vernacular language practices, which are “voluntary and self-generated rather than
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41 being framed and valued by the needs of social institutions’ (Barton & Lee 2012, p.
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43 283). These comments to the songs are also useful to gauge the knock-on effects that
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45 rapping in indigenous languages have on the audience.
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53 Drawing from a “discourse-centred online ethnography” (Androutsopoulos,
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55 2008), which combines discourse analysis of online texts with ethnography, I will argue
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57 that YouTube comments, because of their evaluative quality, are key to understanding
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59 ideologies underlying processes of indigenous language reclamation (see also the work
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of Androutsopoulos, 2010, 2013 on German dialects). Indeed, metalinguistic discourses on this unregulated discursive space online may underpin not only representations and conceptualisations of language practices but also interrelated aspects such as ethnic identity and political ideologies (Sharma, 2014). Whereas traditional media have long shaped public opinions and sparked language ideological debates (Blommaert, 1999; Kelly-Holmes, 2012), online participatory spaces such as YouTube have increasingly gained ground and weakened “the power of mass media in defining social reality and truth” (Androutsopoulos, 2013, p. 49). This approach to discourse as social practice is at the core of language ideologies, which reflect attitudes, beliefs and values attached to languages choice but also index broader social issues inextricably linked to power relations and inequality among individuals, groups, and even nations. From this perspective, language ideologies are more often than not part and parcel of broader sociopolitical struggles and conflicts (see Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994; Woolard, 1998; Schieffelin et al., 1998; Kroskrity, 2010; Piller 2016).

As I show below through the analysis of selected comments to both video clips and the emerging themes therein, the discursive space generated by this YouTube space and their dialogic nature becomes an arena for language ideological debates which, I maintain, have a positive impact on both the visibility and the legitimization of indigenous languages.

The data: YouTube comments

The video clips ‘Sangre Maya’ (Mayan Blood) and ‘Rap de la Tierra’ (Rap from the Land) were published on YouTube in 2012 and have gathered since then more than 160,000 views each (and counting), which is a relatively significant number for songs performed in indigenous languages. At the time of writing just over 250 comments have been published for each song. These figures are in steady flow, a cautionary note when

1 dealing with online data which is in constant flux in participatory spaces. Due to the
2 relatively manageable number of comments, the approach stems from a qualitative
3 analysis that aims at pinning down recurring themes and debates that these video clips
4 have prompted among the audience. The observation of this environment focuses on a
5 plain textual analysis of the comments and does not consider, because of their
6 complexity, the multisemiotic nature of YouTube pages where the comments are
7 inserted. It should be noted, however, that the written comments are a response to
8 oral/visual material, in this case the video clips and the songs, an example of the
9 ubiquitous interaction of the two modes of communication on the Internet.

10
11 The research process has involved mixed methods as the observation online and
12 the textual analysis has been complemented with ethnographic procedures such as
13 fieldwork both in Mexico and Chile, conversations with both rappers (online and face-
14 to-face), and attendance to some of their gigs. The analysis that follows will look at a
15 small sample of comments, some of them metalinguistic, which are prominent in this
16 space and epitomise current sociolinguistic and sociopolitical topics and debates around
17 indigenous languages and indigeneity in Latin America.

18
19 An overwhelming majority of the comments to the two songs show a positive
20 valuation to the rappers' performances. Two salient themes emerge in them, praise for
21 choosing indigenous languages to rap on the one hand, and pride in being indigenous or
22 singing in an indigenous language, on the other. Thus, the majority of comments assess
23 the performances in a favourable way, a position which is further expressed by the
24 'likes' and 'dislikes' that each song has gathered (Sangre Maya 1083 vs 74, Rap de la
25 Tierra 1613 vs 57).

26
27 Before I analyse some illustrative comments, it bears mention that rapping in an
28 indigenous language is viewed by commenters as an extraordinary choice which is

1 worth commenting upon. Thus, rapping in Maya and Mapudungun is perceived as an
2 ‘anomaly’ which stands in stark contrast with a widespread perception of indigenous
3 languages as a ‘thing of the past’. Indeed, a good number of comments address the issue
4 of language choice. Thus, the fact that metalinguistic comments are numerous
5 undergirds the central role that this conscious choice, in this case selecting an
6 indigenous language and Spanish, plays in music (rap) and digital media (YouTube)
7 production and consumption. In the case of Sangre Maya, both Maya and Spanish are
8 used in the song with a parallel structure of singing one stanza first in Maya and then
9 following with a free translation into Spanish. Rap de la Tierra, instead, is mostly sung
10 in Spanish but the performance is interspersed with some words in Mapudungun and the
11 inclusion of a key phrase in the chorus, which I analyse in the next section. It is worth
12 pointing out that both artists have uploaded other songs on YouTube which are
13 exclusively performed in Yucatec Maya and Mapudungun.

14 Although most comments to the video clips are written in Spanish, both
15 indigenous languages also appear in a few comments, a critical fact for language
16 revitalisation purposes to which I also return below. Based on the varieties and informal
17 registers of Spanish used in the comments, and also information inferred from user
18 names, commenters seem to be mostly from Mexico, Chile, where the rappers are from,
19 and other Latin American countries, although a few comments from transnational
20 settings are also present. As for ethical issues, fuzzy boundaries between the public and
21 the private poses a challenge for data collection and presentation that is increasingly
22 being discussed in the literature (Georgakopoulou & Spilioti, 2016, p. 5). For
23 anonymity reasons, user names have been changed, even if the comments appear on a
24 public space and its contents can be searchable on the web. Worth noting again is the
25 fleeting nature of these online spaces and the possibilities for edition and deletion of its

1 contents. The following selection of comments attest to the valuation process that
2 indigenous languages are undergoing through music and salient debates spurred by
3 them when these video clips are embedded in an interactive digital domain such as
4 YouTube.
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10 **Sangre Maya comments**

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12 Comments to this bilingual song are often of a metalinguistic nature. The following
13 comment posted by Alberto encapsulates a recurrent topic that surfaces in this space,
14 namely, praising the song. I will use normal typeface for Spanish and bold for Maya.
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21 An English translation is provided in brackets below the original comment:
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25 Alberto

26 Amo la rola! si pueden hagan una versión con subtítulos.. ya se, es una vergüenza
27 que soy yucateco y no entiendo maya u_u (solo las groserías) jejej pero si estaria
28 chido para entender esas partes
29
30

31 >>> patboy maya

32 es bilingüe la canción primero en maya y luego español... saludos
33
34
35

36 [I love this song. If you can, do a version with subtitles, I know, it's a shame that I
37 am Yucatecan and I don't understand Maya u_u (only swear words) jejej but it
38 would be cool to understand those parts
39
40

41 >>> patboy maya

42 the song is bilingual, first in Maya and then in Spanish... greetings]
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46 As noted, this comment begins with Alberto expressing admiration for the song and
47 then asking for a version with subtitles. Unlike Pat Boy, the commenter is not bilingual,
48 a fact of which he is ashamed, and only understands some swear words in Maya. This
49 clarification is significant since this particular register can be one of the last ones to
50 disappear when language shift is underway (Muehlmann, 2008). Some other
51 commenters also ask for subtitles to the song. It is not explicitly stated whether the
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1 subtitles should be in Maya or in Spanish but insistence on subtitling may be explained,
2 on the one hand, as a further move to legitimise Maya since indigenous languages are
3 mainly used in their oral form and, on the other, as a way to learn some Maya and
4 improve some receptive skills. Alberto shows a positive stance towards Maya and
5 regrets not understanding it even if he is Yucatecan, his implication being that, at least,
6 passive bilingualism in Maya should be the norm in the Yucatán. Pat Boy states in his
7 reply that the song is in itself bilingual: the chorus is sung in Maya while the rappers go
8 back and forth between Maya and Spanish by singing one stanza in Maya and then
9 doing a free translation into Spanish in the next one.

10
11 A further comment of praise is made by Miryam. Her concise contribution
12 reads:

13
14 Miryam

15 **Hach Utsil!!! Necesitamos mas **maaya**!**

16 [Very well!!! We need more Maya!]

17
18 Apart from being a further example of a positive valuation, what is worth highlighting
19 in this comment is the use of both Maya and Spanish in the same sentence. The use of
20 Maya is in itself a remarkable fact, as there are very few users and uses of indigenous
21 languages in written domains. Digital spaces, therefore, are opening up productive
22 domains for the functional expansion of written Maya through vernacular literacies.
23
24 Although Yucatec Maya has a fairly consolidated standard variety, there are
25 orthographic variations still in use (Brody, 2004). In this comment the use of ‘h’ instead
26 of ‘j’ in the word *hach* (very) is an illustration of this heterogeneity. Also worth
27 pointing out is the spelling of the name of the Maya language in Maya (with double ‘a’).
28 This example shows how, unlike official contexts, this non-institutional space provides
29 users with a non-prescriptive language usage which often reflect orality. In this sense,

1 the hybrid nature of this comment is an example of everyday language practice on the
2 ground among Maya speakers whereby code-mixing and code-switching are the rule.
3

4 The next comment, which is also one of praise, further touches on normativity
5 and the influence of standard language ideologies on the ordinary use of Maya.
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10 Juan Carlos

11 que academia ni que la xingada el que quiere cantar canta y sin tantas pinches
12 mamadas. adelante felicidades, chavos
13

14 [fuck the academy if you want to sing, you do it without pissing about so much.

15
16 Keep it up congratulations, boys]
17
18
19

20 There are several linguistic features in this comment in Spanish which are typical of
21 digital environments: idiosyncratic orthography including non-normative spelling (e. g.
22 ‘xingada’ instead of ‘chingada’, use of lower case at the beginning of the comment and
23 after full stop (e.g. ‘que’, ‘adelante’), syntactical ‘errors’ such as the use of ‘la’ with no
24 agreement, erratic punctuation, and abundance of slang terms, in this case of Mexican
25 Spanish (e. g. ‘xingada’, ‘pinche mamada’), with an array of particular vulgar
26 connotations which are not easy to translate. This alternative take on writing
27 conventions, which clearly is neither elite nor institutional, provides a striking contrast
28 with normative, school-based literacies, which have traditionally been the main focus of
29 official language policies in Mexico and beyond. Hence, the sarcastic mention to the
30 role of the ‘academy’ in the comment. According to the author, the involvement of
31 academies, with a well-known focus on normativity, is not needed if you want to sing in
32 Maya. The emphasis on spontaneous language use underpinning this comment needs to
33 be highlighted because language revitalisation efforts, often when driven by official
34 institutions such as INALI, put the emphasis on language norms (standardisation,
35 creation of neologisms, promotion of literacy in formal contexts) rather than on creating
36 the necessary conditions and meaningful domains of usage for the functional expansion
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of subordinated languages. Indeed, a standardised orthography is not a prerequisite for creating an active writing culture (see Lillehaugen, 2016 for the of Zapotec and Chatino on Twitter, for similar ideologies of standard language ideologies in Chile see Lagos et al., 2013; Rojas et al., 2016).

Another positive comment written in both Maya and Spanish is provided by Elisa.

Elisa

jach man jats'uuts' le bideo' tumen ku e'esikto'on tu'ux ya'anto'on yéetel bix yaanko'on! muy hermoso el video por que nos muestra donde y como estamos! saludos!

[very beautiful video because it shows us where we are and how we are! greetings!]

This example illustrates how the Sangre Maya video clip has had a knock-on effect on the production of literacy in Maya. Elisa writes her comments first in Maya and then translates it into Spanish. This kind of parallel text with versions in both languages is common in these public digital environments. The use of standard Maya by Elisa is also indicative of the commenter having studied it at university level. As for its contents, the mention of 'where we are' and 'how we are', 'we' referring to the Maya people, needs to be understood against the backdrop of invisibility and discrimination against indigenous peoples in the Yucatán. Indeed, Elisa's comment resonates with the slogan of a campaign launched by the Yucatán state agency INDEMAYA (Institute for the Development of the Maya People) in the mid-2000s named *Wey yano 'one'*, meaning 'Here we are', which was produced with a view to raising awareness about the Maya language and culture and fight discrimination in the Yucatán.

However, not all comments are positive, and one specific contribution by Diego sparked a reaction of 40 replies. There is no space to reproduce all the comments here

1 but the complete thread shows how this discursive space can become not only a
2 platform of support for the rappers and their songs but also a battleground for opposing
3 views on the position of indigenous peoples in Latin America. The beginning of the
4 exchange sets the tone for a debate in which language choice figures prominently:
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10 Diego

11 patboy maya - una cosa amigo.. si vos sos latino y sacas pecho de ser maya
12 entonces habla completamente en español y hace musica de tu pais que creo que es
13 guatemala.. saludos desde europa osea Argentina !!!
14 [patboy maya – one thing my friend, if you are Latino and brag about being Maya
15 then speak completely in Spanish and do music from your country which I think is
16 guatemala. greetings from europe, that is, Argentina!!!]
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24 Addressing Pat Boy directly, Diego makes a few false assumptions in this statement,
25 which causes a chain reaction of comments. Drawing on racial and linguistic bigotry,
26 Diego demands (quite strongly through the use of imperative verb forms in Argentinian
27 Spanish) that Pat Boy, as an alleged Latino, should sing completely in Spanish and
28 make music from Guatemala (Pat Boy's nationality, he thinks). Not only is Diego
29 prejudiced about the use of an indigenous language for singing and wrong about facts
30 (Pat Boy's country of origin and ethnic identity), but to finish off his comment he
31 conflates his own country (Argentina) with Europe. This sets off an argument about
32 degrees of 'Europeanness' and whiteness and supposedly the lack of indigenous peoples
33 in Argentina compared to other Latin American countries, particularly Mexico. Ernesto
34 replies to Diego's comment above by writing:
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51 Ernesto

52 xddd ahora me entero de que argentina esta ubicada en europa y no en America xd
53 [xdd now I find out that argentina is located in europe and not in the Americas xd]
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58 Diego, however, insists that Spanish should be the language the rappers use while
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singing:

Diego

sacamos pecho de ser euro-argentinos... ok??? ellos se ponen el cartel de maya..
joya.. todo bien.. pero que hablen el español entonces..
[we brag about being euro-argentinians...ok??? they carry the banner of being maya..
nice.. everything good.. but they should speak spanish then]..

According to Diego, even if the singers are proud of being Maya, as ‘Latinos’ they should speak Spanish, showing a prejudiced monolingual mindset that goes beyond Argentina and encompasses the whole continent (Latin America). The discursive space offered by YouTube comments becomes an even more conspicuous arena for expressing sociopolitical views in the case of the song performed by the Mapuche rapper Luanko, which I present in the next section.

Rap de la Tierra comments

In contrast to Sangre Maya, metalinguistic comments are not so abundant in the song Rap de la Tierra. This may be explained by the fact that the presence of Mapudungun is more scarce in that song, which is mainly performed in Spanish, although the inclusion of the verse “Willinkoche newenkülen inche” features prominently in the chorus.ⁱⁱⁱ In any event, what stands out again in the comments is the usage of this space to give full vent to political demands by Mapuche people in Chile. The Spanish words ‘luchar’ and ‘lucha’ (to struggle, struggle) emerge in several comments. Struggle (‘weichan’ in Mapudungun) is indeed one of the cornerstones of Luanko’s musical production (Ammerman & Rossi, 2017, p. 5). This is for instance what Gustavo writes. I will use normal typeface for Spanish and bold for Mapudungun. An English translation is provided in brackets below the original comment:

Gustavo

mari mari kom Puche!!! que bueno ... viva nuestra cultura **peñi** ..
luchemossss !!!
[greetings people!!! How nice ... long live our culture, brother ... let's fight !!!]

What we see in many of the comments to this song is the formulaic use of some Mapudungun in the common greeting 'mari mari kom puche', plus the use of the term of address 'peñi' (brother, brothers), along with Spanish. As in some examples from the Maya song, this is an instance of use of hybrid language with typical features of vernacular literacies which often appear in this environment, such as inconsistent punctuation and use of lower and upper case (e.g. 'que', 'Puche'), idiosyncratic spelling (e.g. 'luchemossss' with three 's' at the end instead of one), and the inclusion of phatic language which is commonly short and informal in tone.

Furthermore, along the lines of the Maya song above, complete comments in Mapudungun are found in this space as well. Thus, Victor writes:

Victor

**Rume kumey tufachi video peñi, kume kuzaw tati. Fentren newen peñi
luangko ka marhi marhi piafimi tami pu kuñil. Pewkayael marhichiwew
marhichiwew**

[Very good video, excellent work, brother, a lot of good energy. Greetings to your family luangko. See you soon ten times we'll win ten times we'll win.]

As is often the case in language standardisation processes, there is a coexistence among several alphabets to represent Mapudungun (see Mariano et al., 2010 for a revision of the four current alphabets with wider circulation). Again, similar to the comments in Maya and Spanish above, we can find instances of idiosyncratic orthography, e.g. 'marhi marhi' instead of 'mari mari', and also in the idiom 'mahrichiwew mahrichiwew', which means 'ten times we will win' and is a well-known 'rallying / war cry' among the Mapuche people. This expression is also used by Fernando with a

different spelling in the following comment:

Fernando

muy bueno **peñi...** las letras del disco transmiten mucho, saludos desde la

puelmapu, lemorrria com pu che.... MARICHIWEUUUU!!!

MAEICHIWEUUUU!!!

[very good brother... the lyrics of the album transmit a lot, greetings from

puelmapu, greetings people TEN TIMES WE'LL WIN, TEN TIMES WE'LL

WIN]

Fernando's comment is a further example of a bilingual contribution that, apart from praising the contents of the song, combines Spanish and formulaic expression in Mapudungun both for greeting and identity reclamation purposes. Also worth mentioning is the use of 'puelmapu', which means 'land from the East' and refers to traditional Mapuche territory located over the Andes in Argentina. This example further shows, on the one hand, how digital environments supersede national borders creating opportunities for connection among indigenous peoples who live in different nation-states while, on the other, it reminds us of the central place that the Wallmapu (traditional Mapuche territory) occupies in the Mapuche socio-political struggle.

Whereas most comments on Luanko's song are positive, the public evaluation space provided by YouTube is often interspersed with abusive and offensive language, prompting heated debates about representations of Mapuche people and ethnic identities against the background of Chile as an allegedly monolingual and monocultural nation (Pinto, 2003). The following thread illustrates this kind of sustained interaction:

Francisco

ya pero donde estan las micros quemandose no puedes ser un the real mapuche sin

quemar una micro UNA MICRO PO WN es mucho pedir?

[ok but where are the burning buses you cannot be a the real mapuche without

setting bus on fire ONE BUS THEN DICKHEAD is that too much to ask?]

>>>Mariana

Francisco eres tonto te caiste de la cama que onda

[Francisco you are silly you fell off the bed what the hell]

>>>Daniel

Francisco que wea este tontito? típico comentario del wingka txewa que no ha venido al wallmapu jamás y no tiene nada de kimün

[Francisco what a load of bullshit this stupid guy? typical comment from the evil wingka who has never been to wallmapu and has no kimün at all]

>>>Francisco

no entendi ni wea pero parece que teni que volver al colegio

[I didn't understand shit but it seems that you need to go back to school]

Francisco begins the comment by stereotyping Mapuches as those who set buses on fire in social protests, thus, arguing tongue-in-cheek, for the inclusion of such quintessential image in the video clip. Negative images are often portrayed in mainstream media and held by the elites in Chile which tend to focus on the violent side of the so called 'conflict' between the Mapuches and the Chilean state (Vergara & Foerster, 2002; Muñoz, 2010). Actually, anti-terrorist legislation, drafted during Pinochet's dictatorship, is being applied to repress Mapuche people against the background of the current political conflict with the state (Richards, 2010). Language wise, it is worth noting the use of English as an unmarked language on the web in the phrase "a *real Mapuche*" which, according to Francisco, should be represented committing violent acts. Both Mariana and Daniel respond to this insulting and prejudiced comment by calling Francisco 'silly, idiot'. This thread is indeed a fine example of the use of slang in Chilean Spanish and the creative ways in which literacy is put to practice in this environment. Thus, the digraph 'WN' stands for the vulgar pronunciation of 'huevón', a swear word with myriad (usually negative) meanings depending on the context in which is uttered. A related word 'wea' (standard orthography 'huevada') is included in Daniel's comments, which, on the other hand, features several nouns in Mapudungun (wingka, txewa, wallmapu, kimün)^{iv} which are easily comprehensible for anyone

1 minimally familiar with Mapuche culture. Based on Francisco's reply, we can safely
2 say that he is not that kind of person. His closing remark mentioning the school as a
3 place where one is supposed to learn and write in Standard Spanish, as he does not
4 understand Daniel's comment, also speaks volumes about the lack of a real intercultural
5 dialogue in Chile.
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11 A further exchange illustrates the negative reaction that a modern music genre
12 such as rap causes when is performed by an indigenous person. Again, using quite
13 strong language the first comments triggers both a counter reaction by Alvaro defending
14 hip hop as an appropriate form of expression for the Mapuche culture and a further
15 comment by Juan picking upon Bryan's name and surname, clearly neither from
16 Spanish nor Mapuche origin, to bring up issues of authenticity and national identity.
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27 Bryan Muller

28 rap mapuche, a donde mierda llegaremos

29 [Mapuche rap, how shitty can we get']

30 >>>Alvaro

31 a la concha de tu madre pendejo el hip hop es una forma de expresion esta perfecto

32 que una cultura reprimida como la mapuche se exprese con el hip hop

33 [the cunt of your mother fucker hip hop is a form of expression it's perfect for an

34 oppressed culture like the mapuche to express itself through hip hop]

35 >>>Juan

36 Un Chileno que se llama BRYAN MULLER!! a donde mierda llegaremos??

37 [A Chilean person whose name is BRYAN MULLER!! how shitty can we get!]

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47 Bryan's comments must be seen against the background of widespread negative
48 representations of indigenous peoples and their cultures as backward, uncivilised and
49 primitive, or as ancestral at best. Therefore, the choice of this modern music genre is not
50 without its critics, not only in an abusive manner from non-Mapuche, as is the case
51 here, but also from older generations of Mapuche who hold rather essentialist views on
52 Mapuche culture. Crucially, though, performing hip hop and rap in these languages
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breaks these stereotypes and, more importantly, may trigger an interest in learning or reactivating these languages among youths, as Luanko himself acknowledges (Ammerman & Rossi, 2017, p. 11).

The last thread of comments delves into a topic which is salient in the specific context of Chile and contrasts with the Yucatecan case, namely, the fact that an indigenous identity and a national identity can be mutually exclusive, rather than complementary. This is what Domingo writes as a reaction to the song:

Domingo

orgullosa de mi sangre mapuche orgullosa de ser chileno.

[proud of my mapuche blood proud of being chilean]

>>>Antonio

si te sientes orgullosa de ser chileno y mapuche, creo que algo no calza....

[if you feel proud of being chilean and mapuche, I think there is something that does not fit]

>>>Manuel

No entiendo qué tiene de malo ser mapuche y chileno al mismo tiempo ???

[I don't understand what is wrong with being mapuche and chilean at the same time???]

Antonio's reply to Domingo's comment on feeling both Mapuche and Chilean challenges the success which the discourse of 'mestizaje', that is racial and cultural mixing, has had in other Latin American countries (Richards, 2010, p. 62). This has to do with particular historical reasons that date back to the relationship between the Spaniards and the Mapuche in colonial times (peripheral position of the territory within the Spanish empire and signing of treaties recognising sovereignty of Mapuche and establishing a border) through to the Independence period and nation building in Chile (negotiations of autonomy and late incorporation of Mapuche territory into the Chilean nation-state in 1883 after military defeat) and, finally, up to present sociopolitical

1 processes of increasing ethnonationalism among the Mapuche (Bengoa, 2002; Crow,
2 2017; Foerster & Vergara 2000). What can be highlighted from this thread, therefore, is
3
4 the ongoing negotiation and challenging of nationhood and identity in contemporary
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6 Chile against the backdrop of demands for autonomy and political recognition among
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8 the Mapuche.
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11 **Conclusion**

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13 The space provided by YouTube to make comments on the video clips sung in
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15 indigenous languages is a fertile ground to explore the language ideologies which
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17 revolve not only about the sociolinguistic situation of these minoritised languages but
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19 also around broader sociopolitical struggles of recognition and rights among indigenous
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21 peoples in Latin America. As I have shown, this YouTube space becomes a prominent
22
23 arena to debate, often in an insulting and offensive way, sociopolitical issues that have
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25 to do with nationhood, ethnicity, race, indigeneity, and, of course, an array of
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27 representations and values given to languages and language use. Thus, from the
28
29 sociolinguistic point of view, these comments are all examples of vernacular literacies
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31 which voice through both Spanish and indigenous language, mostly positive valuations
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33 about the choice of rapping in an indigenous language. Unlike highly regulated domains
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35 such as schools, user-generated digital spaces are opening up opportunities for the
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37 production of meaningful writing in indigenous languages which accrue to their
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39 visibility. Crucial for the reproduction of these languages is the fact that vernacular
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41 literacies supersede thorny issues such as purism and institutional emphasis on
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43 standardisation, reflecting widespread communicative practices of code mixing as
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45 normal, which are more often than not seen as illegitimate in processes of language
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47 revitalisation. This is not to mean that formal registers of these languages need not to be
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49 cultivated, in fact the production of belle-lettres in both languages is abundant, but these
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1 easily available and affordable digital spaces create opportunities for relevant language
2 practices to a wider range of users.
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4 Although these examples suggest that positive valorisation and destigmatisation
5 of minoritised languages is underway through these performances, it is necessary to
6 further investigate the potential knock-on effects that music, and other under-researched
7 artistic expressions, may have on the actual transmission and reproduction of these
8 languages. Micro language policies that emerge from the grassroots are essential in a
9 context where institutional language policies are mostly tokenistic and where language
10 shift toward Spanish is driven by relentless marginalisation of indigenous populations in
11 both Mexico and Chile.
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23 **Acknowledgements**

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26 I would like to thank Jaqueline Caniguan for her generous help with translations from
27 Mapudungun.
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20 ii Ranking based on Alexia Traffic Rank: <http://www.alexa.com/topsites> (Accessed 18.7.2017)
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23 Bio region of Chile, where Luanko's family comes from. Newenkülen inche: I'm feeling
24 energetic/strong. 'Newen' roughly means energy/strength in Mapudungun.
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26 iv Wingka: non-Mapuche person, originally 'thief, usurper'; txewa: dog, evil person; wallmapu:
27 Mapuche territory; kimün: knowledge, wisdom.
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