

# Language Ideologies and Choices: Tojol-ab'al and Spanish in Las Margaritas, Chiapas, Mexico

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*The town of Las Margaritas, Chiapas, is a locus for language contact between Tojol-ab'al and the local dialect of Spanish. Younger speakers are receiving education in Spanish, and the way they speak Tojol-ab'al reflects this. I examine the recorded speech of one young man, who passionately discusses the importance of maintaining Tojol-ab'al language and culture; however, the ways he uses Spanish while speaking Tojol-ab'al reveals several moments of tension between his expressed hopes and desires for the language and his current practice. I focus my analysis on these points of tension. He uses a good deal of Spanish "mixed," as he says, into the Tojol-ab'al he speaks, which goes against traditional Tojol-ab'al principles or ideologies of language use. The ways in which he incorporates Spanish reflect the linguistic structure of Tojol-ab'al. Additionally, on the recording we hear his son's voice calling out to him in Spanish, revealing that bilingual education may not be occurring in his home. It remains to be seen if language use by young Tojol-ab'al speakers represents a trend toward incorporating more Spanish into the language, or if speakers will become more conservative as they become more mature adults.*

*Key words: Tojol-ab'al, Spanish, language ideology, linguistic purism, bilingualism*



## Introduction

In this paper I engage an ethnographically informed analysis of the use of Tojol-ab'al and Spanish in the speech of one young bilingual man to reveal general tensions of language ideologies and identities in a bilingual community: the town of Las Margaritas, a municipal center located in the Mexican state of Chiapas, adjacent to the border with Guatemala (Figure 1). The two languages are Tojol-ab'al, a Mayan language (*tojol* means 'true'; *ab'al* means 'language') and the local dialect of Spanish, the national language of Mexico. The linguistic lens I use is the way that he incorporates words and phrases through borrowing from and code-switching into Spanish while speaking Tojol-ab'al. The orthographic norms for Tojol-ab'al were finalized in 2011 (Skujlayub'il). According to England (2017), all Mayan languages are in a state of endangerment, as they are threatened predominately by Spanish, the long-term colonial language of most of the Mayan-speaking area.

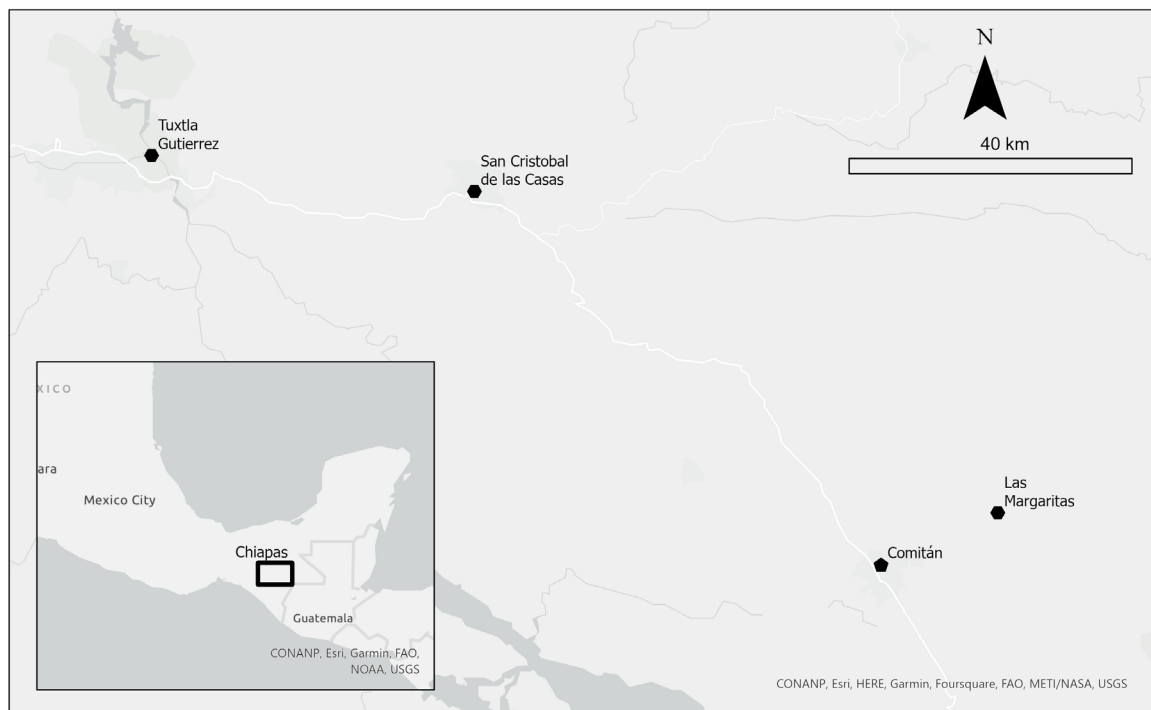
In the 2020 Mexican census (INEGI 2020), 67,000 speakers of Tojol-ab'al were counted in Chiapas. In the municipality of Las Margaritas in 2020, 47% of inhabitants were speakers of indigenous languages, 84.5% of which were Tojol-ab'al speakers. 15% of indigenous language speakers were monolingual. In the previous census of 2010 (INEGI 2010), Las Margaritas – which is inhabited by both Tojol-ab'al speakers and Mestizos, who are speakers of Spanish only – registered a population of 20,786; by 2020 it had grown to 24,326 (INEGI 2020) despite considerable out-migration. Some of this growth is due to Tojol-ab'al speaking people migrating into Las Margaritas from the small surrounding villages (Sp. *comunidades*, *colonias*) in search of better economic prospects (Figures 2, 3, 4). They and other inhabitants of Las Margaritas also move away – to Comitán, the nearest city, and to Tuxtla Gutierrez, the state capital; some venture further – to Veracruz, to the so-called Riviera Maya, to Mexico City, and even to the U.S.A., in search of work.



Every linguistic community maintains an ideology regarding their language(s), consisting of the underlying notions that speakers have about the nature, value, and proper use of the community's language(s) (Woolard and Schiefflin 1994). The Tojol-ab'al speaking community has traditionally participated in a language ideology of purism (Brody 2010). Bilinguals avoid code-switching, a language contact phenomenon that commonly occurs in bilingual communities, where speakers move between languages in the same discourse. They also traditionally avoid borrowing words from Spanish while speaking Tojol-ab'al, with the exception of long-term borrowings, which have lost their association with Spanish. The inventory of long-term borrowings in the language sample considered here appears in Table 1. Many of the borrowed words in Table 2 appear with Tojol-ab'al verbal or nominal morphology attached, incorporating these borrowings further into the language, e.g., *jcultura* (*j-cultura* – (Toj.)1e- (Sp.) *cultura*; 'my culture'). In all examples and Tables, the words from Spanish are spelled in Spanish and are underlined, except for the long-term borrowings, see below; abbreviations used are given in the appendix.<sup>1</sup>

Another component of the Tojol-ab'al language ideology is pride in their indigenous language; this pride, however, is tainted with ambivalence. The ambivalence is spurred by long-term

<sup>1</sup> The standardized orthography is consonant with that for other Mayan languages. An apostrophe after a consonant indicates that the consonant is glottalized; in between vowels it indicates a glottal stop, also represented as a dash after non-glottalized consonants. The letter x represents the English sound "sh".



**Figure 1.** Map showing the location of Las Margaritas and other key Chiapas towns (map by Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire).

confrontation with the ideology and actions reflecting the colonial majority Spanish-speakers' general disparagement of indigenous languages and peoples. In Mexico, and other places in Latin America, Spanish is considered the language of prestige by both Spanish-speakers and speakers of indigenous languages, which are sometimes called *dialectos* (Sp. 'dialects') by Mestizos; implying that, unlike Spanish, they are not quite full languages in themselves. In my early fieldwork days (late 1970s) I was chastised by some Mestizos for interacting with "dirty Indians." Pellicer (1996:92) identifies a linguistic and cultural ideology of "fear of diversity" (my translation) held by Mexican Mestizos who are monolingual in Spanish with reference to indigenous languages and cultures. Given that Tojol-ab'al people lived in indentured servitude to wealthy local Mestizo landowners within living memory of the elders (Gómez Hernández and Ruz 1992), they retain a wariness of Spanish as a language of oppression. Concurrently, younger speakers now increasingly receive education in Spanish, and have come to see it as a language of opportunity. There is also a growing interest in English; Tojol-ab'al men and, less frequently, women, have been slower to venture to work across the border in the U.S. than have their Tzeltal and Tsotsil Mayan speaking neighbors. Nevertheless, I have performed court interpretations for dozens of monolingual Tojol-ab'al speakers who have found their way to the U.S.; obviously, these represent a tiny proportion of those Tojol-ab'al speaking people (monolingual or bilingual) residing – most often temporarily – in the U.S. (Brody 2017).

While bilingual education has been nominally mandated in Mexico since 1951 (Modiano 1984),



**Figure 2.** Traditional Tojol-ab'al community showing houses and cornfields (photo by D. Donne Bryant)



**Figure 3.** Traditional Tojol-ab'al women carrying wood and cane (photo by D. Donne Bryant).

its implementation has been and continues to be woefully inadequate (de León 2016; Garcia and Velasco 2012; Pellicer 1996). Recent impulses for bilingual / bicultural education have been sporadically applied and are plagued by shortages of materials and insufficient training of bilingual educators. An ongoing problem is the seniority system of teacher placement, resulting in sending bilingual teachers to indigenous communities where a language different from theirs is spoken, as my collaborator and bilingual educator, Esther Sántis Gómez, has lamented to me. The Zapatista uprising in 1994, the epicenter of which was within Tojol-ab'al territory, represented an important turning point in Chiapas for its Mayan residents, and Zapatista demands included educational reform (de León 2016; Pellicer 1996). There is a great deal to say about the rapid shifts the uprising brought about along multiple dimensions; briefly, these have included improving roads, running electricity, and introducing bilingual education to Tojol-ab'al communities.

In 2019, I initiated a project to collect language samples from young speakers of Tojol-ab'al in Las Margaritas. The impetus for this project was two-fold. First was the realization that my corpus of language samples, collected over a span of 40 years, was not representative of the current Tojol-ab'al speaking population in that the voices were, for the most part, those of speakers currently over the age of fifty. Secondly, I realized that with increasingly confident bilingualism, the Tojol-ab'al spoken by the younger generations was undergoing changes. An earlier pilot study I undertook (Brody 2018) showed that, unsurprisingly, younger speakers used more loanword



**Figure 4.** Women making purchases at a traditional Tojol-ab'al community store (photo by D. Donne Bryant).

borrowings from Spanish than older generations, while continuing to avoid code-switching. This increase in borrowing partially reflects the younger speakers' experiences with a world filled with things and activities for which no Tojol-ab'al words exist. For the present study, recordings were made of young people living in Las Margaritas. My collaborator, Esther Sántis Gómez, mentioned above, collected speech samples from a group of nearly one hundred bilingual speakers ranging in age from 18 to 30. (I have found through experience that people speak more easily and naturally when I am not present.) This was not a systematic sociolinguistic survey, but was based on Sántis Gómez' network of acquaintances; beyond age and gender of speaker, no information was collected regarding factors such as level of education, marital status, or time living in Las Margaritas, although some participants volunteered such biographical data in their accounts.

The prompt for collecting the language samples was open-ended: *a'a walo'il* 'tell your story / a story of yours' (*a'-a-Ø wa-lo'il* – give-tvm-3a 2e-story). Although the speakers who participated are all bilingual to various degrees of confidence, Sántis Gómez had indicated that they would speak in Tojol-ab'al, and the prompt in Tojol-ab'al triggered Tojol-ab'al responses. Topics respondents chose

<sup>2</sup> For more information on San Caralampio, see the following references provided by Ramón Folch:

- Laló, G. (2008). Lo sagrado y lo profano. La entrada de velas y flores de San Caralampio en Comitán, Chiapas. *Diario de Campo*, (98), 36-45.
- Navarrete, C. (1990). Documentos para la historia del culto a San Caralampio. Comitán, Chiapas (*Chiapas: Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas, Consejo Estatal de Fomento a la Investigación y Difusión de la Cultura, Instituto Chiapaneco de Cultura, 1990*).
- Ruiz Beltrán, A., & Limón Aguirre, F. (2019). Presencia tojolabal en las fiestas patronales de Comitán, Chiapas, México. *Nósis. Revista de ciencias sociales*, 28(55), 136-161.

to talk about included their daily lives and Bible stories or folktales; they also related Tojol-ab'al customs or spoke about their education and aspirations for the future. Several respondents chose to recount their family's transition from rural villages in the surrounding municipality to the town of Las Margaritas. The speech sample I will focus on here is representative of this latter category.

Below I analyze three portions of the account related by one young man, who I will refer to by the pseudonym Caralampio—the name of a beloved local saint with a church in the nearby city of Comitán; originally from the Greek Orthodox Saint Charalombos, whose name means “glowing with joy,” resonating with the Hispanicized Caralampio (Sp. ‘shining face’).<sup>2</sup> As I listened and transcribed the corpus of stories, I noted a great deal of Spanish. Originally, I chose to analyze Caralampio's speech for its content: an impassioned argument for the continued use of Tojol-ab'al and an eloquent articulation of its language ideologies. On careful examination, the form of Caralampio's use of Spanish while speaking Tojol-ab'al proved also to be interesting and rewarding for analysis.

### Case Study

I specifically focus here on three instances of tension between the form of Caralampio's speech and its content, with reference to the Tojol-ab'al language ideology of purism in avoiding the use of Spanish while speaking Tojol-ab'al. The underlying tension is that adherence to the ideology of purism seems to be in direct opposition to the frequent Spanish borrowings that appear in Caralampio's speech. Each instance of borrowing is listed in one of the Tables below. The three examples excerpted below highlight the unconscious nature of Caralampio's deviation from traditional Tojol-ab'al purism ideology as it comes into conflict with the actual content of what he is saying. Example 1 occurred early in the recording, Example 2 close to the end, with Example 3 coming shortly after Example 2. Caralampio was about 25 years old at the time of the recording, married, with at least one child. He was recorded at his home on the outskirts of Las Margaritas, where most of the town's growth has occurred; the central part of the town is commercial or inhabited by wealthier Mestizos. After the initial prompt, he spoke for four and a half minutes; the recording was made indoors, and other voices and music can be heard faintly in the background. He was not shy when confronted with the recorder and spoke confidently and passionately to Esther. Like the younger speakers in my earlier pilot study (Brody 2018), his speech is characterized by a considerable number of loanwords from Spanish found also in the speech of the oldest generation of speakers. As mentioned above, Table 1 shows the inventory of long-term borrowings that Caralampio used. The borrowings shown in Table 1A are of Spanish discourse markers: those linguistic signposts that make discourse cohesive (e.g., *kwando* (Sp. *cuando* ‘when’), *pwes* (Spanish *pues* ‘well’), *entonses* (Sp. *entonces* ‘then’), *parake* (Sp. *para que* ‘so that’). It turns out that these are borrowings of very long standing in Tojol-ab'al, in that the youngest and oldest speakers use them at a comparable rate (Brody 2018). For this reason, I use Tojol-ab'al orthography for these discourse markers in Table 1A and in the examples, as well as for other long-term borrowings (see Table 1B), and do not underline them, as I do the more recent borrowings (see Tables 3 and 4).

In the recording, Caralampio begins by talking about his parents having come from a *colonia* or rural community, saying that life is different there than it is in the town of Las Margaritas, where he grew up and now lives. He claims that the traditional ways of the *colonia* are being forgotten, and



A. Discourse Markers		
<i>abeses</i> (Sp. <i>a veces</i> ‘sometimes’)	<i>este</i> (Sp. <i>este</i> ‘this’)	<i>por lo mismo</i> (Sp. <i>por lo mismo</i> ‘at least’)
<i>ai</i> (Sp. <i>ahí</i> ‘there’)	<i>ke</i> (Sp. <i>que</i> ‘that’)	<i>porke</i> (Sp. <i>porque</i> ‘because’)
<i>asta</i> (Sp. <i>hasta</i> ‘until, even’)	<i>komo</i> (Sp. <i>como</i> ‘as, since’)	<i>pwes</i> (Sp. <i>pues</i> ‘well’)
<i>bweno</i> (Sp. <i>bueno</i> ‘good’)	<i>mas</i> (Sp. <i>más</i> ‘more’)	<i>si</i> (Sp. <i>si</i> ‘if’)
<i>entonses</i> (Sp. <i>entonces</i> ‘so, then’)	<i>nada</i> (Sp. <i>nada</i> ‘nothing’)	<i>todo eso</i> (Sp. <i>todo eso</i> ‘all that’)
<i>es de</i> (Sp. <i>es de</i> ‘it’s that’)	<i>pero</i> (Sp. <i>pero</i> ‘but’)	
B. Nouns		
<i>eskwela</i> (Sp. <i>escuela</i> ‘school’)	<i>koloniya</i> (Sp. <i>colonia</i> ‘small community’)	<i>pweblo</i> (Sp. <i>pueblo</i> ‘town’)
<i>kastiya</i> (Sp. <i>castellano</i> ‘Castilian, Spanish’)	<i>kostumbre</i> (Sp. <i>costumbre</i> ‘custom’)	

**Table 1.** Long-term borrowings from Spanish into Tojol-ab’al in Caralampio’s speech.

<u><i>adelante</i></u> (‘forward’)	<u><i>bilingüe</i></u> (‘bilingual’)	<u><i>calle</i></u> (‘street’)
<u><i>cultura</i></u> (‘culture’)	<u><i>dialecto</i></u> (‘dialect’)	<u><i>experiencia</i></u> (‘experience’)
<u><i>federal</i></u> (‘federal’)	<u><i>gobierno</i></u> (‘government’)	<u><i>mestizo</i></u> (‘Mestizo, Spanish speaker’)
<u><i>nunca</i></u> (‘never’)	<u><i>papá</i></u> (‘dad’)	<u><i>pasado</i></u> (‘past’)
<u><i>revuelto</i></u> (‘mixed’)	<u><i>tarea</i></u> (‘task’)	<u><i>tradición</i></u> (‘tradition’)
<u><i>una vez</i></u> (‘one time’)	<u><i>usos</i></u> (‘uses’)	<u><i>vale</i></u> (‘be worth’)

**Table 2.** Borrowings from Spanish in Caralampio’s speech (as these are recent borrowings, I use Spanish orthography and underline them).

states that his family is living half in the ways of the *colonia* and half in the ways of the town. This half-and-half existence extends to language, as he goes on to complain that his bilingual companions or age-mates in Las Margaritas do not speak Tojol-ab’al purely. In making this accusation, he uses the same word I introduced earlier in the name of the language Tojol-ab’al – *toj* ‘true, straight, pure’. He says that he knows *jk’umanikon* (j-k’uman-ikon – 1e-language-1epl ‘our language’) and criticizes his companions for speaking Tojol-ab’al mixed with Spanish, which is a violation of the traditional language ideology of purism discussed above. During this critique of his peers’ language

<i>jk'ulan revolver</i> – ‘I mix it’ (Sp. <i>revolver</i> ‘to mix’)
<i>k'ulanik pensar</i> – ‘think (pl) about it’ (Sp. <i>pensar</i> ‘to think’)
<i>ojjk'ulajex exhortar</i> – ‘I will exhort you (pl)’ (Sp. <i>exhortar</i> ‘to exhort’)
<i>ojjk'ulan entender de existió la cultura tojol-ab'al</i> – ‘that it be understood that the Tojol-ab'al culture existed’ (Sp. <i>entender</i> ‘to understand’)
<i>ojjk'ultik fomentar la cultura y nuestro raíz</i> (Sp. – ‘we will encourage the culture and our root(s)’ (Sp. <i>fomentar</i> foment/encourage/promote)
<i>ojjk'uluk awilex contar</i> – ‘I will tell you (pl)’ (Sp. <i>contar</i> ‘to tell’)

**Table 3.** Borrowing of verbs incorporated with *k'ulan*.

<i>aunque sea un recuerdo</i> – ‘even though it is a memory’	<i>cien porciento</i> – ‘one hundred percent’
<i>el tiempo</i> – ‘the time’	<i>en la misma barca</i> – ‘in the same boat’*
<i>más adelante</i> – ‘further along’	<i>ni modos</i> – ‘never mind’
<i>otra cosa</i> – ‘other thing’	<i>papá te están hablando</i> – ‘Daddy, they are speaking to you’*
<i>que sea un libro un cuento no sé</i> – ‘be it is a book or a story I don’t know’	<i>recuerdo para siempre</i> – ‘memory for always’
<i>sería en este mensaje</i> – ‘it will be in this message’	<i>tipo de</i> – ‘type of’
<i>yo creo</i> ‘I think’	

**Table 4.** Phrases code-switched from Spanish into Tojol-ab'al (\* indicates that these are quotes).

practice, he uses the Spanish verb *revolver* ‘to mix’ rather than the Tojol-ab'al verb *soko* ‘to mix’. He goes on to include himself with those age-mates he is critical of, admitting that he also mixes languages.

### Example 1.

*asta ke `n wa x-j-k'ulan-Ø- -revolver sok Kastiya sok Tojol-ab'al*  
 as.for me prog inc-1e do-3a- -to.mix with Spanish with Tojol-ab'al  
 ‘as for me I mix Spanish with Tojol-ab'al’

The Spanish verb *revolver* (‘to mix’) is a loanword borrowed into Tojol-ab'al, and it is

grammatically incorporated in the customary manner of verbs borrowed from Spanish (Lenkersdorf 2004), with the Tojol-ab'al verb *k'ulan* 'to do' appropriately conjugated and shown shaded in the examples. In this construction, the Spanish verb is always borrowed in the infinitive form. Caralampio uses this compound as he admits that he himself speaks in a mixed manner. The tension here is demonstrated by Caralampio admitting to engaging in language mixing, a practice that he has just disparaged, by using the Spanish verb *revolver*. The general topic of his discourse shows that Caralampio is aware of both the Tojol-ab'al language ideology of purism and his own general violation of this ideology. However, he is unlikely aware that he is violating that ideology in saying what he said in that specific way. In other words, he does not seem to be participating in what Silverstein (2001) calls metapragmatic awareness (i.e., he does not appear at this moment to be aware that he is violating the ideological norm of Tojol-ab'al language use by using a Spanish loanword in this particular utterance). The tension here is between the Tojol-ab'al linguistic ideology of purism and the actuality of incorporating a Spanish word into Tojol-ab'al.

Additionally, Caralampio laments both linguistic and cultural loss. Meanwhile, he recalls that in the past people were ashamed to speak Tojol-ab'al on the street, which is no longer the case (see below). Furthermore, he emphasizes the importance of teaching Tojol-ab'al to the children so that the language is not lost, and that it is good to speak two languages. It is while he is proclaiming the values of bilingual education that I identify what I call the second point of tension in Caralampio's discourse: he again violates the traditional linguistic ideology of language purism, this time engaging in what appears to be code-switching, moving from speaking in one code – Tojol-ab'al – to speaking in another code – Spanish. The tension is especially notable in that it is in the very midst of championing the use of Tojol-ab'al that he switches into Spanish.

### Example 2.

*es kwando mas oj jak-tik adelante parake oj jachuk oj k'ul-tik*

it's when more fut arrive-1apl forward in.order.that fut thus fut do-1pl

*fomentar la cultura y nuestro raíz*

foment/encourage/promote the culture and our root(s)

'that's when we [Tojol-ab'al speaking people] will move further forward in order that thus we will encourage the culture and our roots'

The apparent code-switch and the borrowed term *adelante* (Sp. 'forward') are underlined in the text, but the discourse markers from Spanish are not, as they are long-term borrowings (see Table 1A). Caralampio's use of the phrase *fomentar la cultura y nuestro [sic] raíz* ('foment/encourage/promote the culture and our root(s)') appears at first glance to be a full-fledged case of code-switching. On closer examination, however, we can see that Caralampio is actually incorporating the entire verbal phrase in Spanish in the same way that we saw the verb *revolver* (Sp. 'to mix') incorporated in Example 1. Using the verb *k'ulan* 'to do' (highlighted in the example) to incorporate the Spanish infinitive verb *fomentar* 'to foment/encourage/promote', the rest of the phrase in Spanish – *la cultura y nuestro [sic] raíz* ('the culture and our root(s)') – seems to be hitching a ride, constituting a combination of a borrowing and code-switch. This incorporation of a Spanish phrase into Tojol-ab'al is something I had not encountered before analyzing this corpus of young people's speech. See

Table 3 for a comprehensive list of Caralampio’s use of borrowing / code-switching using *k’ulan* ‘to do’ including an additional example of incorporating a verbal phrase.

Caralampio’s apparent code-switch in Example 2 may have been triggered by activities in another part of his household. It seems that someone speaking Spanish has come looking for him at his home. In this part of the recording, we can make out faint voices in the background, most saliently those of his wife and child. The child calls out “*papi*” (Sp. ‘daddy’) to his father, then his wife seems to be instructing the child in Spanish that his “*papi*” is busy. Caralampio is distracted. He repeats a series of discourse markers and then articulates what I identify as the third instance of tension of the situation, shown in Example 3.

**Example 3.**

*k’ela-a=ta komo s-k’uman-Ø ja y-al kerem ay ma’ jak-Ø s-le’-on*

notice-2a=already how 3e-speak-3a det 1e-dim boy det who arrive-3a 3e-look-1a

“*papá*” *x-chi-Ø*

“papa” inc-say-3a

*ja=xa ke `naj=i “tat” wa x-k-al-Ø- -y-ab’-Ø ja j-tat=i*

det=now me=term “father” prog inc-1e-say-3a- -3e-hear-3a det 1e-father=term

‘notice how the little boy says someone has come to see me

“*papá*” he says

as for me I say “*tat*” to my father’

In Example 3, Caralampio calls attention to the fact that his child is speaking to him in Spanish, noting that he speaks to his own father in Tojol-ab’al. At the very moment he is speaking of the importance of teaching Tojol-ab’al to the children so that their language and culture will not be lost, he hears his own child addressing him in Spanish rather than in Tojol-ab’al. Caralampio does not hesitate to use this as an example, this time consciously, of how the Tojol-ab’al language is being lost and how it is not being taught in the schools in Las Margaritas; he goes on to contemplate how the language might somehow be preserved in a book or a story.

With the realization that his own son is speaking to him in Spanish at the very moment when he is lamenting the loss of Tojol-ab’al and promoting teaching it to children, Caralampio seems to come one step closer to a metapragmatic awareness of his family’s use of Tojol-ab’al and Spanish, and the consequences of that practice for the preservation of the language. Caralampio’s speech is rife with Spanish borrowings (see Tables 2, 3, and 4); his inventory of borrowed discourse markers (Table 1A) is higher than that of the younger speakers in the pilot group I investigated earlier (Brody 2018). He and other young bilinguals are caught between the Tojol-ab’al linguistic ideology of purism and the reality of the increasing incursion of Spanish; between valuing Tojol-ab’al and raising a bilingual child who receives education in Spanish. The general underlying tension throughout is that the generation of speakers that is most keenly aware of language change and loss is perhaps not teaching the language to their children. Whether Caralampio and his age cohort will



continue to speak with Spanish loanwords and code-switches, or whether they will become more conservative and purist speakers as they grow older remains to be seen.

At the beginning of his account, Caralampio indexes place with language, with the *colonias* representing Tojol-ab'al speech, and Las Margaritas representing Spanish, his own existence being a mixed experience. Tojol-ab'al speaking people come to live in partial accommodation to the town environment, which includes accommodation to Spanish linguistic practices, and perhaps even ideologies. The situation for individuals' choices is complicated, as Caralampio's words illustrate. As he mentioned, and as has been my experience, in the mid-70s it was in fact uncommon to hear Tojol-ab'al spoken openly in Las Margaritas, except in some market transactions. My attempts to speak Tojol-ab'al to people in public at that time were ignored or rebuffed. Today, in post-Zapatista Las Margaritas, Tojol-ab'al is heard not only in the market, but also in the streets of the town center, at internet venues frequented by bilingual educators (these venues of course did not exist in the 70s), in restaurants, and at the new Aurrera store (a Walmart subsidiary!) It is now easy for me to strike up conversations in Tojol-ab'al in these contexts, and I am even approached on the street as an obvious foreigner by people asking if I am from the U.S. and telling me where they have been to work there. Whether the Tojol-ab'al spoken in these venues is *toj* 'true' or *revuelto* 'mixed' is a matter for further investigation.

## Appendix

Abbreviations: 1,2,3a – first, second, third person absolutive; 1,2,3e – first, second, third person ergative; det – determiner; fut – future; inc – incomplete aspect; pl – plural; prog – progressive; term – terminal; tvn – transitive verb marker.

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