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Social Media as a Tool for Linguistic Maintenance and Preservation among the Mapuche

Introduction

Since the arrival of Spanish colonists, the Mapuche people have watched as their territory has shrunk from its original size, more than half of today's Chile, to a few isolated pieces of hotly disputed land. A history of oppression and forced migration has contributed both directly and indirectly to language loss among the Mapuche. Using theories of language death and maintenance, I assert that this oppression was linguistically devastating, but may also serve as a catalyst for community building and linguistic maintenance and preservation in this and future generations. Secondly, through the analysis of the social media networks Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, I will make the case that, while by no means sufficient in and of itself, social media use among the Mapuche can be seen as a locus for a nascent linguistic preservation movement among the Mapuche. Further, I will analyze social media as a tool both for overt language preservation and for the process of cultural revalorization, herein referred to as incidental preservation, which most scholars agree is intrinsic to successful language preservation[1]. While the unique history of the Mapuche people may, arguably, have allowed for comparably better linguistic preservation than other similar groups, the oppression of the last few decades has created an increasingly urgent situation.

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[1] David Bradley in "Language Attitudes: the key factor in language maintenance" and Stephen A. Wurm in "Strategies for Language Maintenance and Revival" both write extensively on the attitude of speakers and the larger public as a key factor in language preservation efforts.

The Mapuche

The Mapuche are an ethnic group originally found in Southern Chile and (to a lesser extent, Argentina), south of the Bío-Bío River. According to the most recent Chilean census (2002), There are 604,349 self-identified Mapuche in Chile, accounting for almost 4% of the total population of Chile, estimated in 2002 at 15,116,435 (2002 Census, 24). Other estimates place the Mapuche as high as 10% of the population, but the 4% estimate of the census is the most recent official figure. According to the Universidad Austral de Chile, roughly 50% of self-identified Chilean Mapuche speak *Mapudungún*[2] (the language of the Mapuche people) with some degree of fluency, an admittedly difficult term to define. However, this number is an estimate, and no official statistic exists at this time.

While the Mapuche originally controlled most of the land south of the Bío-Bío, due to centuries of invasion by Chilean forces, their land has shrunk to a fraction of what it once was. This process of land seizure has had myriad negative effects, one of which is the disproportionately high displacement rate of many Mapuche. According to the 2002 census, just over 6% of this population is migratory (2002 Census, 24.) Current figures place the percentage of the total Mapuche population living in the metropolitan Santiago region at 33.6% (2002 Census, 2004) and over 60% of Mapuche now live in an urban center (Saavedra Peláez, 30.)

Clearly, what was once a relatively centralized population has seen incredible dispersal since Chilean Independence and the so-called "Pacification of Araucania." A

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[2] While the language of the Mapuche can be spelled in many ways, this spelling appears to be gaining acceptance as the standard. I have thus opted to use it in this paper for the sake of continuity. Other spellings include Mapuzungun and Mapundungu.

de facto agreement between the Spanish crown and the Mapuche had meant that, until Chilean independence, incursions into Mapuche territory by colonists were few and far between. By and large, the Spanish crown had respected the Bío-Bío as the boundary between Nueva Extremadura (Chile) and Mapuche territory. The Mapuche are the only indigenous population in Spanish colonial America that never succumbed to the Spanish *conquista.* The Pacification of Araucania refers to a period of intense post-independence Chilean invasion into Mapuche territory, which ultimately resulted in the official conquest of Mapuche territory by Chilean forces, taking place between 1861 and 1883 (Pinto Rodríguez, 185-207). Chenard postulates that the forced dispersal of the Mapuche and their transition from a largely rural society to a largely urban one has, until recently, weakened the voice of a once extant Mapuche counterpublic and encouraged both cultural and linguistic assimilation into greater Chilean society (Chenard, 1).

Perhaps the most brutal oppression of the Mapuche occurred during the Pinochet regime, from 1973-1990. Pinochet is famous for having remarked, "There are no longer Mapuche, because we are all Chilean[3]." The remark was made in 1973 as a justification for Legal Decree (Decreto Ley) 2.568. This decree undid the agrarian reform of deposed President Salvador Allende, which had returned between 100 and 200,000 hectares of former Mapuche land, previously seized by the Chilean government (www.serindigena.org). Pinochet's oppression of the Mapuche was not, however, purely economic.

> The Chilean dictator Pinochet exercised absolute power from 1973 to
> 1990… he wanted to destroy the cultural uniqueness of indigenous
> peoples in Chile - primarily those of the Mapuche people - in the name of
> the national state. A committee of the United Nations in 1978 confirmed

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[3] Translation mine, from Spanish, from a speech by Pinochet in Villarrica, Chile.

the consequences of this policy: "From the day of the coup, landowners,
the military and the police have started a real Mapuche hunt."

In 1979, the Inter-American Committee for Human Rights in Latin
America (Comité Interamericano de Derechos Humanos en América
Latina) noted that the Mapuche were persecuted as an indigenous
population. Mark Münzel, ethnologist and supporter and member of the
Association for Threatened Peoples (STP) in 1992 said: "The bloody
struggle against Indian rebels is the most important tradition of the
Chilean Army[4] (Parmelee).

In Pinochet's remarks and subsequent repressive actions, the Mapuche are clearly

conceptualized as an obstacle to total Chilean unity, as their separate ethnic and cultural

identity directly contradicts the ideology of *mestizaje* championed by the military regime.

Pinochet's oppression of the Mapuche continued throughout the 1980's. In July of 1986

alone, the Chilean military invaded the Mapuche communities of Piedra Alta, Isla Huapi,

Cahuemu, Malalhue, Colco, Rucapanque, Santa Maria, Huelleko, Mallai, Carahue and

Lumaco (Parmelee). The invasions continue even now, and have recent seen an increase

in frequency and intensity under the government of President Sebastián Piñera. This

legacy of violence and oppression has undoubtedly contributed to a process known as

language death.

Theoretical lens

According to most language death scholars, one of the key factors in a language's

survival is the attitude of its speakers toward the language and its preservation. David

Crystal states:

If people believe, rightly or wrongly, that it is their ancestral language
which has kept them down, or that they were held back from social
advancement by an inability to speak the dominant language well, it is not
surprising to find them antipathetic towards preservation, and
unsupportive when language maintenance projects are in place (such as in

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[4] Translation mine, from Italian

schools.) And when this view is reinforced by the opinions of the young
people themselves—who may also see the old language as irrelevant or a
hindrance, and think of the older people who do still speak it as backward
or ignorant—it is only to be expected that negative attitudes pervade the
whole of a community. (Crystal, 85-86)

Given the social status of the Mapuche in Chile, it is easy to see how the Mapuche, or any

colonized population, might come to feel that their native language is in fact a hindrance

to their success in the new society being imposed upon them. In the case of the

Mapuche, their long history as fierce warriors against colonization has worked in their

favor; nonetheless, years of forced migration and integration into Chilean society have

obviously taken their toll on the Mapuche, both in terms of linguistic and cultural

cohesion.

Another factor that contributes greatly to language death is what Fishman refers to

as "folklorization (in Crystal, 83). Crystal paraphrases Fishman saying:

The language gradually disappears from the 'serious' side of life…Its
presence may still be strong in some domains, such as the arts, popular
entertainment, and folklore, but these are perceived to be domains with
less status. From a political point of view, the language is becoming
invisible…(Cyrstal, 83.)

Crystal goes on to explain that this process of folklorization can be the death knell for a

language.

With each loss of a domain, it should be noted, there is a loss of
vocabulary, discourse patterns, and stylistic range. It is easy to see how a
language could eventually die, simply because, having been denuded of
most of its domains, there is hardly any subject-matter left for people to
talk about, and hardly any vocabulary left to do it with. (83)

Fishman's concept of language folklorization, and Crystal's explanation of its

consequences, is easily applicable to the case of Mapudungún. While there has, since the

return to democracy (1990), been an increase in the amount of cultural production in

Mapudungún (poetry and music for example), there is a clear lack of Mapudungún in the Chilean public sphere, contributing to the perception that use of Mapudungún is only appropriate in the contexts; the website of the Chilean government serves as a prime example. The website is written in Spanish, the only official language of Chile; while it *is* available in English, no versions exist in any of the indigenous languages of the country, including Mapudungún, the ancestral language of 87% of the indigenous population[5]. This exclusion can be read both as a tool of oppression of people who do not speak or read Spanish and as a relegation of Mapudungún to a folklorized, pre-Internet context.

This folklorization of Mapudungún creates a situation in which the Mapuche must choose between resisting "the language of the conqueror" and being able to participate in the government that legislates their rights and freedoms. This is especially problematic for a people such as the Mapuche who regularly find themselves under violent attack from government forces. Paradoxically, the Mapuche find themselves obligated to operate in Spanish in order to advance Mapuche causes in any official way. This situation sends a subconscious yet clear message that Mapudungún is not a viable political language in Chile, and that interaction with the larger state apparatus must be conducted in Spanish. This is evidence of a long tradition of linguistic homogeneity in political policy.

Linguistic Politics in Chile

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[5] It should be noted that even the website of Bolivia, led by Aymara speaker Evo Morales, appears to be available only in Spanish. It is not my intent to imply that other countries in the region are greatly succeeding where Chile is failing, but rather that this points to a larger global problem, *especially* severe in Chile due to Mapudungún's lack of legal status.

Chile and Argentina remain the only two countries in the region with only one official language, Spanish, despite the fact that the Mapuche represent a significant portion of the indigenous population of these two countries. This lack of official recognition of indigenous languages indicates an obvious need for increased recognition on the state level. In 1996 the Chilean government began the implementation of a program with this goal, a pilot project of bilingual education following the EIB (Educación Intercultural Bilingüe) model, used in much of Latin America. This program is based on Indigenous law Nº 19.253 D. O. 5.10.1993 which, while theoretically recognizing the necessity of the preservation and diffusion of native languages, falls short of outlining a specific plan or curriculum[6]. What's more, while the EIB program appears to have been applied with at least limited success in the more rural parts of Chile, the program is almost completely non-existent in urban areas, most notably Santiago. Even though Santiago contains roughly one-third of the Chilean population, and a third of the Mapuche population, there are zero Mapudungún/Spanish schools in the Metropolitan Santiago area. This situation is especially problematic given that the Mapuche population with the greatest need for linguistic exposure are those who live outside of traditional Mapuche territory, namely those living in the greater Santiago area[7].

While it is clear that much more needs to be done on the part of Chilean government to 1) recognize the importance of indigenous languages, 2) prevent their disappearance, and 3) foment their use in the greater public sphere, in this paper I will argue that the recent advent of social media technology has empowered the Mapuche to

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[6] Educación Intercultural. Ministerio de Educación de Chile. Web.
<http://www.mineduc.cl/index2.php?id_portal=28&id_seccion=3442&id_contenido=140
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[7] Síntesis de Resultados, Censo 2002

begin to safeguard and nurture their ancestral language in an innovative way, independent of the national government. By analyzing Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, I will paint a picture of how the Mapuche are using each platform toward a goal of linguistic preservation. Furthermore, I will analyze the advantages, limitations, and intersectionalities of these three media platforms in terms of their potential effectiveness as tools to combat language death.

Technological Proliferation in Chile

Studying the use of social media in a Latin American country may not initially seem like a logical choice; the region is generally considered to be underdeveloped in this area. Nonetheless, Chile has the highest percentage of Internet penetration of any country in Latin America, having recently reached 53.9 users per 100 inhabitants (La Tercera, 9/26/12). This is up from just 45% in 2010 (International Telecommunication Union.) While this is still far below the percentages of penetration of most industrialized countries, this rapid rate of change is staggering. The Sub-Secretary of Telecommunications of Chile (Subtel) attributes this growth both to the increased proliferation of new Internet use platforms (smartphones) as well as increased government spending on Internet access for schools and rural areas (ICT Statistics Newslog). In fact, more Chileans now access broadband Internet through their phones, tablets, or laptops than through traditional desktop computers. In 2011, 2.9 million people had mobile broadband access (17.5% of the total population), according to the Chilean Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications (Pérez-Ferreiro).

Thus, it should come as no surprise that there is an ever-growing social media presence in Chile. A 2011 study by the consulting firm ComScore showed that not only

does Facebook reach 9 out of 10 Internet users in Chile, but that 1 out of every 4 minutes spent online in Chile and Argentina is spent on a social networking site. Similarly, Chile ranks 11th in the world in terms of Twitter usage (ComScore, 2011), while ranking 62nd in population (CIA World Fact Book.) With this level of proliferation, it is logical to use social media as a tool for larger analysis.

While I have yet to find any specific statistics about Internet or smartphone usage/ownership specifically among the Mapuche[8], it would be foolish to assume that they have been entirely left out of the rapid technological advances currently taking place in Chile, especially considering that a majority of Mapuche now live in urban centers. Furthermore, the spending patterns of economically depressed people often defy logic, skewing towards luxury purposes as status symbols. Under this assumption, this paper focuses primarily on the ways in which certain Mapuche use social media, both as a tool for language preservation and to penetrate the hegemonic public sphere.

I have chosen to narrow my focus in this paper to YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, largely because of the great freedom of access they afford their users and their relatively global proliferation. Nonetheless, it must be said that each platform grants varying levels of freedom at different costs. Unlike Facebook, Twitter does not require a user-to-user approval, or "friending," process in order to access user content; one needs only a username and password and virtually the entire "Twittersphere" is a mouse-click away. Equally important, Twitter virtually never censors its content, except when this content violates the laws of the country of origin. Twitter, however, limits its users to 140 characters at a time. Facebook, conversely, places no limitations on the quantity of

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[8] Given the lack of official data on the Mapuche in general, this is unsurprising.

user content, but does require a registration process and "friending" in order to view most content. Facebook also monitors user content, periodically removing content deemed "offensive." This may result in skewed data, due both to "offensive" content being removed and self-censorship due to the threat of content removal. Finally, YouTube requires no username or password, but is probably the most heavily censored of the three platforms[9]. All three platforms can be accessed via traditional computers, smartphones, and tablets.

It must also be stated that, in general, social media cannot be viewed as a purely democratic medium. Access to social media, and the technology required for use, is far from universal, especially in Latin America. Furthermore, they are inextricably linked to the concerns and power dynamics of large, US corporations (Goldberg). Nonetheless, social media are undeniably gaining force in Chile; while they do not present a complete solution to the threat of language death, their influence in this matter is undeniably important. Acknowledging and deconstructing these differences in levels of freedom, anonymity, and access, while also acknowledging their growing importance, allows me to access a broader range of content, and presumably a wider range of views. However as with all fieldwork, social media based research presents its own unique set of challenges and concerns.

Ethical Concerns

Although my research does not involve direct human contact in the traditional context of fieldwork, it is sometimes easy to forget that there is a person (or people)

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[9] YouTube's terms of use state that videos may be blocked for hate speech, "shocking or disgusting" content, and dangerous or illegal acts, among other violations. (http://www.youtube.com/t/community_guidelines)

attached to each virtual account. This creates interesting and new ethical dilemmas,

which are only just beginning to be discussed in literature on field ethics. Largely, I have

struggled with the question of using real names and directly quoting user content. These

questions become even more difficult because in terms of academic propriety, there *is* no

dilemma. Technically, all of my research data comes from the public domain, and thus

can legally be used. As Kozinets[10] explains:

> In a major departure from traditional face-to-face methods like
> ethnography, focus groups, or personal interviews, netnography uses
> cultural information that is not given specifically, in confidence, to the
> researcher. The uniquely unobtrusive nature of the approach is the source
> of much of netnography's attractiveness as well as its contentiousness
> (Kozinets, 143).

The question becomes, despite the lack of *official* preclusions, could the use of this

information put anyone at a disadvantage, in danger, or remove her/his agency? Possibly.

Paradoxically, the assignation of pseudonyms (a standard anthropological

technique) can be equally problematic, removing agency, especially from people we may

deem "activists." This point becomes especially salient in my research, as the majority of

the sources I have analyzed can be seen, in one way or another, as activists. Ultimately, I

have opted for a mixture of anonymity and verbatim content. Using what I can only

deem "my best judgment," I have attempted to live up to my ethical and moral

responsibilities as a researcher and a person. Real account names and Twitter handles

will be used unless otherwise indicated. In situations where I feel that increased

discretion is warranted (private messages or potentially sensitive content), the author's

name is not given, and her/his words may be paraphrased so as to protect her/his

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[10] Kozinets' book has been my main source of guidance in these matters. Other sources
include Gove N. Allen et al, Nancy Baym, and Amy Bruckman

anonymity.

Methodology

For this paper I have chosen to analyze three social media platforms: YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. The analytical techniques I use vary depending on the format of each platform. In general, however, my initial data analysis process has involved traditional content analysis techniques. In my preliminary research I attempted to record and categorize content in Mapudungún, whether in full sentences or interspersed with content in Spanish. Some of the categories I chose included food, religion, and kinship terms, as well other *in vivo* codes, which made themselves apparent throughout the course of my data collection.

By analyzing the prevalence of vocabulary in these and other categories, I was able to interpret the data through the lens of language death, specifically the concept of folklorization. In my study, a heavy emphasis on traditional terms combined with a neglect of more modern terminology would indicate that given sources are contributing more directly to the process of folklorization. Conversely, complete ignorance of these traditional terms in favor of "modernization" may be seen as equally problematic, risking total abandonment of cultural relevance in favor of relevance in post-colonial society. According to most scholarship on the issue, language death can be most effectively prevented through a relatively balanced focus on past and future. Ideally, language-learning tools should not overly emphasize either end of the gamut.

I also analyzed my data in terms of overt or incidental preservation. I make a clear distinction between overt preservation and incidental preservation because both processes are at work, to varying degrees, in each of the three platforms. For the

purposes of this paper, I will define overt linguistic preservation as any effort whose primary purpose is the propagation of linguistic knowledge, competence, or interest. This excludes efforts which may tacitly transmit linguistic knowledge, competence, or interest but whose primary goal is different. These accounts contribute to what I call incidental preservation.

Social Media Use for Overt Linguistic Preservation

Youtube

Perhaps the most noteworthy overt linguistic preservation effort on YouTube is the "Amulzugun" channel. The meaning of Amulzugun is indicative of its goals: Go forward speaking.[11] Juan Huincabal, a software engineer and native speaker of Mapudungún, and Maximiliano Lobos, a well-known online teacher, spearhead this effort. The Amulzugun channel currently contains 14 videos, ranging from basic vocabulary (greetings, etc.) to grammar. The first video is most indicative of the intent behind this project. While the viewer learns a few words (hello, brother, sister, boy, girl, etc.) what is most important is the introduction to the video[12].

Lobos, dressed in pants and a button-up shirt sits next to Huincabal, dressed in a traditional *makuñ*, a Mapuche poncho[13]. This image alone points to the cross-cultural potential of YouTube, and presents an *a priori* desire to reach Mapuche and non-Mapuche alike. In their introduction, Lobos and Huincabal outline their objectives for the course. First, they hope to foment the spoken component of the language. Huincabal explains that while efforts are now being made to foment written Mapudungún (as in the

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[11] Translation mine, from Mapudungún

[12] Later videos contain much more linguistic content

[13] The makuñ, now called a *manta* in Spanish, has been co-opted from the Mapuche and now forms part of the national costume of Chile.

aforementioned EIB) what is lacking is a strong emphasis on the spoken language. He

explains that in many families, the grandparents and parents speak Mapudungún, but the

children do not. "The idea of this course is to support them so that someday they can

come home and at least say 'mari mari papay' (hello Mother) or 'mari mari chachay'

(hello Father[14].) In this quote, we can see a clear emphasis on language preservation

among the Mapuche themselves. Nonetheless, the teachers go on to explain that they

hope to unite people across Chile, as well as the Mapuche living in Chile with those in

Argentina. However, Amulzugun is not solely targeted at Mapuche audiences.

> What we want to do, Juan and I, in these videos that we're sharing with
> you all, is to bring the Mapuche culture, through its language, to the entire
> country (Chile), but also to the entire world, because we're going to reach,
> through YouTube, the entire world.[15]

Here we can clearly see that Lobos and Huincabal have more global intentions for their

program. Apart from their overt statements to this effect, there are several subtle

indications that Amulzugun is for everyone. This point is perhaps best illustrated when

Huincabal is teaching Lobos the word for "brother." *Peñi*, brother in Mapudungún, has a

wider meaning than its English equivalent. While it means biological brother, it is also

used, especially among modern Mapuche, as a marker of belonging. Modern Mapuche

tend to refer to other Mapuche as peñi or *lamnguen* (sister) so as to separate themselves

from greater Chilean society, even when speaking in Spanish.

After explaining this, Huincabal presents Lobos with his own makuñ, and says

that they may address each other as peñi. Lobos wears this makuñ in all subsequent

videos. This seemingly simple act is, in fact, an invitation to the non-Mapuche learner.

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[14] Translation mine, from Spanish. Video 1 of the Amulzugun series.
[15] Translation mine, from Spanish. Video 1 of the Amulzugun series.

Especially in Chile, the perception that the Mapuche are somewhat insular and mysterious is pervasive. In my own experience, even finding a language tutor can be difficult, as some Mapuche are (perhaps rightfully) distrustful of colonial forces attempting to learn their language. As one teacher explained to me, "For reasons of ethics and security, we don't give classes to people who aren't Mapuche, but we can always make an exception, as long as it will be used for good[16]." This overt invitation to non-Mapuche to join the online community does much to combat this stereotype.

Given Amulzugun's global intentions, it is no surprise that the channel's first video has received over 20,000 hits as of November 29, 2012. This may be in part due to the surprising amount of publicity surrounding the channel when it first went online. Mainstream *and* alternative media such as El Mercurio, Radio Bío-Bío, Radio Cooperativa, and Diario la Opiñón all ran stories on the new channel. This no doubt increased the traffic for Amulzugun's first video, piquing the curiosity of people with no intention of completing the full course. It is important to note that this interest alone, without any actual language learning, helps de-folklorize Mapudungún. According to the analytics on the first video, the top three countries with the most viewers are Chile, Argentina, and Sweden, in that order; this is clearly a testament to this tool's effectiveness both in Chile and internationally. While it must be said that the later videos have received less traffic, viewers still number in the thousands. It is undeniable that Amulzugun is successfully working toward its intended purpose, both by overtly teaching the language and by generating interest in the language among new segments of the general (and global) public.

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[16] Translation and paraphrasing mine, from Spanish. Facebook conversation, April 16, 2012. Identity withheld for reasons of privacy.

Facebook

There are a number of pages on Facebook dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of Mapudungún. In this paper, I will focus specifically on "Idioma y Cultura Mapuche" and "Kimelkelu Mapuzugun." From my initial analysis, the latter has more politically radical bias but is simultaneously more specifically dedicated to linguistic instruction. The former, on the other hand, attempts to blend cultural and historical education with basic linguistic instruction.

Idioma y Cultura Mapuche was created on May 17, 2011. It describes itself as "The teaching of Mapuche language and culture by Mapuche teachers.[17]" The content posted on this account varies. Largely, rather than overt vocabulary or grammar lessons, this account focuses on language education through code switching. Briefly, code switching is the practice of (often-subconsciously) mixing elements of two or more languages in a single conversation or utterance, often seen in people who are raised in multilingual environments. Take for example this story about a historical famine:

> So all of the *longcó* (chiefs) got together. A *futa chraum* (great meeting) they had. So they sent delegations to get help. What little they had was distributed. After a time, a *coná* (young warrior) returned. He brought *nguilliú*. He said that when he was in the mountains he came across an old man. He told him what was happening to his paper, the old man asked him why they didn't eat pine nuts, as that was the true food of the Mapuche, that *Nguenechén* (God figure and owner of human beings) had authorized. He talked about all the different ways to make use of the *nguilliu* (pine nut) From then on, the *coná* lost track of the *fücha huenchrú* (old man) who had disappeared into the snow. All the people got together to listen to the new that new arrival had brought and one said: that was a command from *Nguenechén*. They gathered all the pine nuts that they could find. They put them together and ate. And to thank Nguenechén for saving them from death, they did a *futa nguillipun* (great

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[17] Translation mine, from Spanish. I have maintained the Mapudungún while translating the Spanish to allow for comprehension while still demonstrating the process of code switching at work. Taken from the Facebook account of Idioma y Cultura Mapuche.

public prayer ceremony). And from them on, whenever there is a nguillatún, [in] the *rehue* (pure and sacred central place) there are pinenuts and *chavi* (alcohol made of pinenuts) and *muzai* (fermented grain alcohol) are consumed[18].

As we can see, the format of the linguistic instruction used by Idioma y Cultura Mapuche is vastly different from that used in the Amulzugun series. While Amulzugun takes a direct approach to language instruction, mixing in elements of culture, this Facebook account attempts to instruct *through* culture. We notice that all of the Mapuche words interspersed in the Spanish text are of cultural significance. Social categories, such as: longcó, coná, fücha huenchrú, foods such as nguilliú, chavi, and muzai, and words of spiritual importance such as Ngenechén, rehue, and nguillatún.

This approach is interesting because it can be simultaneously viewed as linguistic folklorization and as an effort to rescue cultural heritage through the sacrifice of complete monolingualism; it functions more effectively as a tool of cultural education rather than one of linguistic preservation. On the one hand, any attempt at linguistic preservation should be lauded; to a certain extent, any effort is better than none. The contextualization of this language, however, is where this approach becomes problematic. Partly due to its simultaneous focus on culture and history, it is difficult for Idioma y Cultura Mapuche to present useful vocabulary for current situations. As previously discussed, this relegation of language to a particular (and usually restrictive) cultural space can lead to folklorization; this in turn may serve to foment the idea that Mapudungún is antiquated, mystical, and not for use in the "real world."

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[18] Translation mine, from Spanish and Mapudungún. From the Idioma y Cultura Mapuche Facebook account, posted on November 27, 2012.

This is especially problematic for urban learners who, living outside the tribal and religious structures of their rural relatives, may seldom or never have the opportunity to use this vocabulary in a real world context. While this knowledge is by no means unimportant, it would be akin to attempting to teach English as a second language using the Mayflower Compact. This language, once of pinnacle important to English speakers, no longer has a place in modern contexts; when linguistic exposure is unavoidably limited, it must be streamlined and focused first on a commonly used and frequently relevant lexicon. It must be pointed out, however, that this account has over 26,000 fans, the majority of whom are from the metropolitan Santiago area[19]. While this statistic certainly points to the account's popularity, it remains to be seen if it will contribute meaningfully to language revitalization efforts.

The second account, Kimelkelu Mapuzugun, takes a different pedagogical approach. This account uses what I would deem a much more traditional approach to language instruction, neatly dividing content into lessons on color, numbers, pronouns, and other basic vocabulary. It should be said that Kimelkelu Mapuzugun also has a website independent of Facebook which contains more detailed information. Nevertheless, plenty of information is available directly from the Facebook account, especially for beginning learners. In contrast with Idioma y Cultura Mapuche, Kimekelu Mapuzugun offers users language for everyday situations:

> How do you say "Happy Birthday"?
> AYIWÜN: Happiness
> PUWÜL: Complete, arrive.
> TXIPANTU: Year.

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[19] https://www.facebook.com/pages/Idioma-y-Cultura-Mapuche/218389234856640?sk=likes

NIAIMI: May you have.
"Ayiwun puwul txipantu niaimi[20]".

Not only is the content presented in Kimelkelu Mapuzugun directly applicable to practical situations, as in the above example, it is also logically broken down. This measure allows the learner to learn four new words *and* a useful sentence, as opposed to learning isolated vocabulary or complete sentences. Additionally, the above content can be used the next time learner attends a birthday party, either for direct communication with other Mapuche or for cross-cultural education with non-Mapuche Chileans.

Another area in which Kimelkelu Mapuzugun succeeds is in providing a cultural context for Mapudungún without directly linking it to the language. Unlike Idioma y Cultura Mapuche, which bases its lessons in traditional Mapuche culture, most of the cultural information present on Kimelkelu Mapuzugun's page is current and indirectly related to the specific language being presented. This cultural content includes information about protests, hunger strikes, concerts, and independent films of interest to the Mapuche community. Although all technically "Mapuche" media, these media offer a variety of perspectives from Mapuche people in innumerable social categories. Rather than providing language that is useful only in a specific context, Kimelkelu Mapuzugun is helping to create a new context for the language. In terms of folklorization, the difference is crucial.

Twitter

Twitter is perhaps the least suited of the three platforms for traditional linguistic instruction. This is due in large part to the 140-character limit on each "tweet" (Twitter

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[20] Translation mine, from Spanish. From Facebook account of Kimelkelu Mapuzugun on October 2, 2011

post). Several accounts exist on Twitter with the express purpose of teaching

Mapudungún, such as Unidad Intercultural **@mapudungun**, Curso de Mapudungún

@cursomapudungun, and the identically named Curso de Mapudungún

@mapuzugun[21]. Of the three, only **@mapuzugun** maintains its Twitter account in any

significant way **(@cursomapudungun** has one tweet, from June 15, 2011. Ironically it

says "¡¡¡ AMULEPE !!! (Let's go[22])) As **@mapudungun** appears to be nothing more

than the Twitter account of a physical language school, I will focus the remainder of my

analysis on **@mapuzugun**[23].

As previously stated, Twitter is not an obvious choice for meaningful language

instruction. Nonetheless, **@mapuzugun** provides a surprising amount of content given

its limitations, as well as the fact that they update the account no more than twice a

month. This account takes a "direct translation" approach, producing Tweets like:

> mari mari kom pu wenüy: Hello to all our friends. rume küme txipape
> tüfchi antü: May your day be great[24].

While this type of content is certainly not going to make anyone fluent, **@mapuzugun** is

making a clear effort, however small, to overtly preserve the language.

It is on Twitter, more than YouTube and Facebook, that we see the direct

connection to the capitalist system that Goldberg discusses. It would appear that Twitter

is used largely for indirect advertising, generally for "for-pay" language-learning options.

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[21] From this point forward I will refer to Twitter accounts by their handles, beginning with @, rather than by name. This is to avoid confusion between identically named Twitter accounts.

[22] Translation mine, from Spanish, Twitter account of @cursomapudungun on June 15, 2011

[23] @mapuzugun also has a physical school, but maintains its Twitter account semi-independently. Many tweets are also followed by links to the webpage of the school

[24] Translation mine, from Spanish. From the @mapuzugun Twitter account on October 27, 2012

While I am certainly not against paying people for their work, it does present obstacles in terms of the idea of Twitter as a free and democratic tool. While Twitter is not the best tool for language instruction, I argue that it can be very useful for incidental linguistic preservation.

Social Media Use for Incidental Linguistic Preservation

As previously discussed, one of the most important factors in successful language preservation is the attitude of the speakers. Simply put, if speakers feel good about their language, that it is important and useful, language death can be avoided. In this portion of the paper, I will argue that although some forms of social media can be used very effectively for overt language preservation, they have an equally important role to play in shaping attitudes toward language, a process I deem "incidental linguistic preservation." This kind of preservation can take many forms, including code switching and bilingual tweeting, but may also take less obvious forms, which contribute in an indirect yet significant way to the idea that the language is important.

Crystal makes the case that simply generating linguistic content is not enough to prevent language death, but rather that these efforts must capture the hearts and minds of the public:

> Within a country, people do not change their minds, or develop positive
> attitudes about endangered languages, just by being given information; the
> arguments need to capture their emotions. In particular, art forms need to
> be brought to bear on the issue. There are still far too few poems, plays,
> novels, and other genres in which the notion of language is a theme.
> (Crystal 99)

Until recently, it has been challenging for this kind of emotionally charged content to reach great numbers of people. Visual arts, especially, have always faced this challenge; how many people would know (or care) about the *Mona Lisa* were it not for the invention

of photography? I argue that social media can function in much the same way as a postcard of the *Mona Lisa*. Due to their global penetration and relatively democratic accessibility, social media allow artistic production to travel the world in an instant. Moreover, the process of dissemination through social media can be seen as a performative action, intrinsically demonstrating the value of the content being shared.

Take for example the *Cantanta Mapudungún*. Heavily promoted on Facebook, *Cantata Mapudungún* is a revolutionary artistic endeavor. Based on the work of Spanish-speaking Chilean poets of the 20th century and translated into Mapudungún, the piece draws on community orchestras and choirs to produce a piece that is, in their words, "a proposal, a path for Chilean society; a step forward in the urgency for dialogue; an emotional call for the recognition of the beauty of *morenidad* (quality of having dark skin).[25] While this work is clearly not intended as a language course in Mapudungún, it is important to recognize its existence as a space where Mapudungún is relevant in the public sphere, and in fact gives its speakers a distinct advantage in interpreting the music. Furthermore, the very creation of its lyrical content, translated from Spanish, represents a bold step in reconciling the cultural traditions of the Chilean and Mapuche cultures. This great undertaking would likely have attracted a small niche public to its album launch had it not been for Facebook; through the use of Facebook, the creators were able to notify no fewer than 10,000 people.

YouTube also presents us with a fascinating array of Mapuche produced artistic products. One interesting example is the rise of Mapuche hip-hop. All one needs to do is type "Mapuche rap" into YouTube and hundreds of results appear. Given the popularity

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[25] Translation mine, from Spanish. Facebook page of Cantata Mapudungún

of hip-hop in Chile, it's not surprising that one video, "Palín Aukatuaiñ" by Wechekeche Ñi Trawün has over 67,000 hits as of November 30, 2012. What's interesting about the example of Mapuche rap is that, in general, no translation from Mapudungún to Spanish is given. Nonetheless, judging from the comments left on the video, the vast majority of people who have seen this video do not speak Mapudungún. In fact, many comments explicitly request a translation. According to a study funded by the European commission, one of the main incentives behind the use of new technologies for language learning is the desire to understand popular music.

> Almost all the informants stated that they use the Internet and search engines to find the meaning of unknown words that appear in song lyrics, and music-related communications, and use information tools to find out more about issues of interest to them; this appears to be a usage they consider particularly motivating for learning languages: "When I'm very interested in a certain subject for example an interview with a band member from a band I like and I don't understand a sentence or a word I will look it up and find out what it's about. Languages are important to learn about anything you're interested in (NE_010). (Antoniadou et al. 33-34)"

It is not, then, outrageous to hypothesize that as Mapuche popular music becomes more "mainstream", it will create a desire in its consumers to learn Mapudungún. This phenomenon is undeniably linked to the popularity and accessibility of YouTube, as well as the promotion and sharing of this production on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. This especially important, given the propensities both for hip-hop and social media use of today's adolescents, the most crucial demographic in language preservation.

While Crystal addresses artistic production specifically, it is also important to mention other ways in which emotions might be captured. I would argue that perhaps the single greatest impetus for the study of Mapudungún comes from the very real perception that the Mapuche themselves are in danger, to say nothing of their language or way or

life. In the past few years, *allanamientos* (raids) of Mapuche villages by the armed forces have become increasingly common. These allanamientos are all too reminiscent of the attacks perpetrated on the Mapuche during colonization and again during the Pinochet years; while the government claims to be invading these villages looking for fugitive criminals, the targets of these raids are almost never the only people injured, and they serve to create a very real climate of constant fear.

Once again, I argue that social media have fundamentally changed the character of these raids, in multiple ways. First and perhaps most obviously, social media like Twitter provide a written record of these events, previously only officially recorded by the government. This record is not only useful for documentation purposes, but in fact serves as a counter-narrative to the stories of violent, drunken Mapuche regularly dispersed in the traditional media. Social media have, I argue, served to increase accountability in the mainstream media by providing another perspective and (often) by being the first source to report on stories of importance to the Mapuche community. Take for example, a sample of the Tweets from a recent raid on Temucuicui, a Mapuche village, on October 16, 2012. Temucuicui has been the site of the some of the bloodiest and most infamous allanamientos in the past few years.

> **Natividad Llanquileo**@NATIVIDADLLANQU URGENT: at this time helicopters and police are harassing the Mapuche communities of Temucuicui and Coñoemil Epuleo…be vigilant…
>
> **paola villanueva** @pao_la_descalza @NATIVIDADLLANQU My God!!!! Who will be responsible if a Mapuche child is killed? Women and children live there when will this end!!!!!!
>
> **Illapu** @illapu @NATIVIDADLLANQU: Urgent: at this time the Mapuche communities of Temucuicui are being violently raided…much gunfire. According to Werken.cl

> **Juan Pablo Espinoza** @jpesp @NATIVIDADLLANQU All the strength!!! Resistence.
>
> **Jorge Las Heras** @LasherasJorge @NATIVIDADLLANQU I can't understand, if it's real the violence being describe coincides with P[i]ñera's trip. Are they crazy in the government?
>
> **Política Indígena** @Proyectindigena The Police raided the communities of Temucuicui and there are still stand-offs in Ercilla. http://j.mp/TZgsPW
>
> **Natividad Llanquileo** @NATIVIDADLLANQU A child of seven years from the Traditional Community of Temucuicui injured by police and 15 community members held in Ercilla
>
> **Francisco Llao** @LEOPARD1232008 Our children are crying, some are alone, other powerless, they don't know what's happening. Helicopters fly over the region and shoot, please…[26]

Several things are remarkable about these Tweets, but what is most relevant to this paper

is the idea that this information creates a sense of community, albeit a community under

siege. This is in stark contrast from even a few years ago. Often, these allanamientos

were not even covered in the mainstream media, and if they were, the coverage was

usually staunchly in favor of the actions of the state. With the advent of social media,

Mapuche activists are forcing the hand of the mainstream media. Allanamientos *must* be

covered in the mainstream media, and in a balanced way.

While this may not immediately seem directly related to the idea of linguistic

preservation, I argue that for many years, official Chilean politics succeeded in

demoralizing and often physically separating large segments of the Mapuche population.

With an overwhelming majority of Mapuche living in urban areas, and those that live in

rural areas constantly staving off incursions by the state, it is easy to understand how a

once united community could separate; nonetheless, social media are allowing this

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[26] Translations mine, from Spanish

community to reunite in previously impossible ways. Mapuche living in Santiago can receive up-to-the-minute coverage of allanamientos happening in Temucuicui, 600 km to the south. They allow an attack on strangers in the south to feel personal. It is precisely this type of emotional message to which Crystal is referring. Nonetheless, social media presents certain disadvantages as a tool for linguistic preservation.

Disadvantages of Social Media Usage

As per the analysis in this paper, it is evident that while social media are by no means a definitive solution to language death, they clearly have *some* role to play in language preservation. That said, this new technological avenue is not without its disadvantages. Perhaps most salient, and somewhat counterintuitive, is the lack of *linguistically significant* communication. Although social media are, by definition, tools for communication, it remains to be seen how effective this virtual communication is for meaningful language learning. I would argue that this communication, however basic, is vital to the ultimate preservation of the language, as it rescues the language from the realm of folklorized communication. Current studies on this issue appear to be under way, but due to the recent nature of the social media phenomenon, only time will tell.

Another drawback of the use of social media for linguistic preservation is its availability. Access to social media platforms, and the technologies that permit their use, is inherently linked to the socioeconomic status of learners. While this is far from a minute point, I argue that this monetary roadblock is much more easily surmounted than in the case of traditional, for-pay classes. Roughly 10% of cellular phones in Chile are "smartphones" (1.83 million out of an estimated 18.3 million total phones.) Dropping

prices for smartphones (currently averaging $177 USD[27]) combined with a recently improved Chilean economy mean that smartphones are becoming more affordable to the average Chilean all the time. Mobile technology also has an advantage that physical classes do not: it can be shared. For the cost of one smartphone, an entire family and their friends can access the social media accounts analyzed in this paper. This one-time cost as opposed to the price for years of classes is clearly much more economical. Also, as discussed above, the spending habits of economically depressed people are often counter-intuitive. They may in fact be *more* likely to purchase a smartphone than something else. Unfortunately, specific data on the Mapuche are not available at this time.

Nonetheless, it is important that we view social media not as the definitive tool for language learning but as a means to an end. No amount of social media content can ever replace real human contact for the purposes of language learning. Through my work I hope to present social media as a jumping off point for preventing language death, one more arrow in a quiver of simultaneously applicable possibilities. It is for this reason that I have placed emphasis both on overt and incidental linguistic preservation. While every effort for overt preservation is valuable to some extent, and should be applauded, my preliminary data suggest that the benefits of social media use are perhaps equally evident for incidental preservation.

Conclusion

A certain portion of the Mapuche population is using social media for the creation of new and innovative language preservation strategies. While there are inherent

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[27] Startup Chile. <http://startupchile.org/chile/latam-hub/>

drawbacks to this approach, such as the monetization of this technology and its lack of face-to-face interaction, social media are undeniably becoming a powerful tool for language preservation, both in the context of the Mapuche and in general. I have analyzed three different media platforms, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. While bearing in mind the specific strengths and weaknesses of each platform, I have made the case that each platform can be effectively used, to various extents, for successful linguistic preservation. It is my view, however, that a more varied approach is necessary for *meaningful* preservation, that is, preservation which results in significant competence or fluency in the target language. A combination of content from all three platforms combined with real-world opportunities for use would appear to be the ideal solution.

Nonetheless, the roles that these technologies play on their own are not to be ignored. As demonstrated by the examples in this paper, a key element of language preservation is *attitude.* Theoretically, we could create every conceivable language-learning tool for Mapudungún, and if no one wants to use them, their only use is in the hands of linguistic anthropologists. I argue that the mere *existence* of resources for learning Mapudungún is both an inherently political act and a tool for the generation of community and interest in language preservation. Producers of social media content are, by and large, actively working to create a space for Mapudungún in modern Chilean society.

Through the creation of virtual dialogue as well as the promotion of artistic production, protests, and summits, they are succeeding in creating a relevant space for the use of Mapudungún, thus combatting its folklorization; through constant coverage of allanamientos, they are contributing to a renewed sense of urgency for all things

Mapuche. Thanks also to social media, independent citizens have created a wealth of language-learning materials for a language that previously had almost none. Social media have allowed the Mapuche to accelerate a process that might have taken generations, or not occurred at all. By simultaneously generating interest, creating new societal spaces, and providing affordable (and largely free) options for language education, social media have surely secured their role as a tool in the fight against the folklorization and death of Mapudungún.

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