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Between the academy and the community: The trickster who dances at the party and shows her tongue

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Abstract
Explored here are the complexities and challenges that arise from my experience as an Indigenous researcher. As a linguist and anthropologist, I move between both academic and community spaces. During the last two decades, a good part of my research has focused on the documentation and revitalization of Indigenous languages, in particular the Chatino languages. This article addresses my experience as an Indigenous researcher navigating these two spaces with the aim of sharing the reality of my position with academia and Chatino communities.

Key words: Chatino, collaboration, language documentation, academia, insider-outsider

Introduction[1,2]

For over two decades, there has been much discussion of the experience of Indigenous anthropologists carrying out research in their own communities. Some argue that Indigenous anthropologists come to belong to two communities—academia[3] and their own community—thereby becoming *halfies/natives* (Abu-Lughod 1991; Behar 1996; Jacobs-Huey 2002; Narayan 1993; Ohnuki-Tierney 1984; Ryangse 2005). *Halfie* identities vary among researchers according to their experiences, such as migration, level of education, and the social group to which they belong (Abu-Lughod 1991: 137; Narayan 1993). In the context of this conversation about the work of Indigenous people in academia as well as in their communities, the term *halfies* is useful because we each have our own life experiences, which are often reflected in what we do and create.

The discussion of the advantages and difficulties associated with being an Indigenous researcher is of current relevance: on the one hand, there is little information available about the experiences of Indigenous researchers, and on the other, there are simply few Indigenous members of academia. Some authors have argued that native anthropologists are at a greater advantage studying their own cultures because they are able to analyze them more intimately, which would be difficult for an outsider to that culture to accomplish (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984: 584).[4] There has also been much consideration of the role that Indigenous anthropologists play in leveling the power differentials that exist in academia. According to Ohnuki-Tierney, Hernández, Hutchings, Noble, and others, power dynamics are more equitable when the research is carried out by native/Indigenous scholars than they are when the researcher is not a member of the community of study (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984; Cruz and Woodbury 2014; Hernández, Hutchings, Noble 2019). Some have further suggested that such projects yield better results. Similarly, Kirin Narayan questions our very understanding of the role of native people in academia, asking how *native* a "*native*" anthropologist truly is (1993). According to Narayan, familiarity with the colonial origins of anthropology is necessary to understand the polarization of "native" and "real" anthropologists or the dichotomy between "observer" and "observed"

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1 I would like to thank Gladys Tzul Tzul, Isaura de los Santos, Aida Hernández Castillo, and Anthony C. Woodbury for their support in realizing this project. I also extend gratitude to Jonathan Rosa for motivating me to write this article and, in particular, for having saved the comments in his email that I had received from the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology,* which I reference in this article. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Javier Flores Gómez for reviewing and editing this text.

2 Translator's note: During translation, some edits have been made to the original in conversation with Cruz.

3 We use *academia and the academy* here interchangeably.

4 The word "native" tends to be used in the academy in the United States. In this article, the author will use the term "Indigenous."

(Narayan 1993). To assume that native anthropologists would be "experts" on their cultures is problematic, Narayan argues, without recognizing the complexity of their life stories (1993: 677). In this article, I join this discussion about the experience of *native* and *halfie* researchers as I present my experience as a Chatina researcher who finds myself divided between two worlds, academia and my community (Smith 2016).

In this contribution to the conversation about the role of Indigenous people as researchers in the academy and in their communities of origin, the methodology I have chosen to use is autoethnography (Kacperczyk 2014; Adams 2014). 20 years ago, Roberston criticized what I refer to here as autoethnography, arguing that "egocentrism is one of the pitfalls to avoid in exercising reflexivity," which suggests that writing about oneself is somehow easy (Robertson 2002: 786). However, I have found my use of autoethnography in this article to be an emotionally challenging exercise, as I have discovered that I have tolerated many injustices and have come to perceive the contrasts between "prestige zones" and "low-prestige zones" (Appadurai 1986: 357) in the academic sphere. Furthermore, autoethnographic work, like a personal journal, runs the risk of being considered an account lacking in objectivity (Robertson 2002) or being considered non-academic because it is "missing" a theoretical framework or hypothesis. This is particularly true from the perspective of anthropology, which has traditionally upheld rigorous standards for academic writing and has tended to be accessible to a limited audience (Hernández 2019). I recognize these critiques of autoethnography, but I have decided to write about myself because I find that it is a way to illustrate aspects of academia that would otherwise be more impersonal. Here I will describe my relationship with academia, a space largely comprising *transparent cultures* (Ryang 2005), which, in many cases, conspire to reinforce the power relations (Appadurai 1986) that exist in the academy. I also demonstrate how I am perceived in my place of origin. My intention is not to fall into romanticizing my experience, rather I am interested in demonstrating that the work of a researcher is full of challenges and that we need to continue this conversation to foster just and collaborative research (Perry and Rappaport 2013; Hernández, Hutchings, Noble 2019).

In the pages that follow, I will address four central points: 1) My life story; 2) My experience in the academy; 3) How I am perceived in my community; and 4) My collaborative projects within and outside of my community. My discussion is motivated by the following questions: How different is the experience of foreign researchers from the experience of those who carry out research within their own communities? In what respect do the experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics differ? What is expected of each of these researchers, according to their positionality? What does the Chatino community expect of me, and how do they perceive my research? What are the possibilities for and challenges to fostering collaboration in my own community?
According to Narayan, anthropology, in the general sense, is the study of "others," whereby anthropologists are trained to carry out the meticulous study of other cultures (Narayan 1993). Given Narayan's position, we "native," "Indigenous," or "insider" an-

thropologists who carry out research about our own cultures in which we are integrated and active participants might ask ourselves whether our form of research is, in fact, more intimate at all. We will see. Documentary linguistics is methodologically similar to anthropology, but it is centered on the study of language. Foreign academics study the local language, and academics who are native speakers of Indigenous languages study their own languages. It is clear that each position in this dichotomy presents its own challenges; for example, the experience of a foreigner studying a language and a culture that are not his or her own is very complex (Macaulay 2011). However, studying in one's own community as an Indigenous researcher also has its own advantages and disadvantages, which are apparent in the experiences described in this volume.

1. My life story

I belong to an Indigenous group that calls itself *neq*^{A} *Jnya*^{E} 'Chatino people.' As a child, when my family had migrated out of our village, I learned from them that I should uphold my connection with the territory of San Juan Quiahije (hereafter Quiahije). They brought me up to believe that Quiahije was my "home," "my land." My family and I lived in Oaxaca City, but we always went to the village over vacation. To my family, Quiahije was my village because I was born there and because all of our family was there. Nevertheless, I had left at a very early age. I remember that I always felt like I was split in two, and I missed my village very much, especially the landscape: a place full of mountains that become enveloped by mist every evening, the land that accompanied me in my travels, the land that was in my dreams. I always wanted to return. I am very lucky that my mother never stopped speaking to me in Chatino. That is why I never forgot it; that I owe to my mother. We were the first family who emigrated to the city of Oaxaca, and then to the United States of America. I was also the first Chatina woman to receive a doctorate.

1.1 My academic training

My situation is an unusual one among Indigenous academics. I had access to education, albeit through a process that was anything but easy, given that I grew up in a family that had limited resources and was at one time the victim of violence: my father was murdered when I was young. This I mention in order to offer a broad perspective on the obstacles to gaining access to education, which I achieved as a result of my own hard work, as well as the support of my family and others I met along the way. Like many Indigenous people from Mexico, I immigrated to the United States to seek better opportunities. I had imagined that I would go for a few years to work and that with the

money I saved I would return to Mexico for my undergraduate studies. When I arrived in the United States, I was undocumented and did not speak English. I worked in the morning and studied English in the afternoon. I managed to learn the language, and I was accepted to Evergreen State College in Washington, where I studied anthropology. From a very early age, I had wanted to study my language, Chatino, but I had never had the opportunity because the entirety of my educational training in Mexico was in Spanish. It was not until graduate school that I had the opportunity to study Chatino. In 2002 I started my masters and doctoral program at the University of Texas at Austin (UT). The program at UT was an excellent fit for my academic interests, since I had long been looking for a program where I could study Chatino. My goal in entering this program was to acquire linguistic and anthropological tools to share with Chatino people.[5]

2. My experience in the academy

When I began my graduate study, I was not familiar with the academic "business," but as soon as I arrived, I had to compete with my peers for scholarships. Very quickly, divisions arose between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Not until later, when I had become an academic professional, did it come into focus that there is little space in academia for Indigenous people.

Furthermore, I had no idea what challenges awaited me in anthropology and linguistics. As I did fieldwork in my village, I came to produce an ethnography in which I was at once the participant and the "other." The first time I met a researcher was when I was a girl. Some linguists from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (Wycliffe Bible Translators) arrived in my village. One of them gifted us with plastic toys; I took one, and when my hand touched the hand of that tall, bearded man, I began to cry.[6]

5 A graduate program based on the inclusion of Indigenous students from Latin America was revolutionary, particularly considering how well-equipped the anthropology and linguistics program at UT was to carry out research devoted to serving Indigenous communities. Many valuable resources have come out of this program, such as the Archive of Indigenous Languages of Latin America (AILLA; www.ailla.utexas.org) and the Center for Indigenous Languages of Latin America (CILLA).

6 The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)/Wycliffe Bible Translators is an organization of evangelical Christians who study Indigenous languages to translate the bible and proselytize. These two faces of the organization have been the source of much controversy in academia as well as in Indigenous communities. For further reading on the activities of the SIL in Mexico, see the report published in 1979 by the Colegio de Etnólogos y Antropólogos (CEAS). This year the meeting of the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) and the Summer Institute of Linguistics has been canceled. (https://archive.org/details/CEASDominacionIdeologica1979/mode/2up)

Manuela Jiménez and the author. Photograph courtesy of Gibrán Morales Carranza

Fieldwork was a necessary part of my research, evidently to familiarize myself with the unfamiliar. In other words, I was supposed to gather data to collect information, with which I would produce an analysis of uncharted territory, but in my case, I would be studying what was already familiar. I should clarify that I did not know, nor do I know, everything. There is always more to learn. For example, elders in Quiahije have extensive knowledge of the ecosystem of their land: they know how to survive, they can grow their food, they know which plants are edible, medicinal, and poisonous.

2.1 *neq*^{A} *ktyi*^{H} *neq*^{A} *kta*^{E} 'Outsiders and insiders'

I have been very conscious of my position as an Indigenous academic in my community. I understand the limitations to what I can offer. As Beatrice Medicine (2001) writes, Indigenous researchers can be dangerous in their dual roles as insider and outsider. As Indigenous people, we have access to intimate information about our cultures. For that reason, although we are "one of them," the communities we come from distrust us as researchers, since we can expose things that people do not want to share with the outside world or do not want other people to know (Medicine 2001: 5).

I agree with Medicine that we Indigenous researchers are in a precasrious position, considering our close relationship with the subject matter. This is particularly

true when we study aspects of the culture that may be private for the community, such as ceremonies. Foreign researchers, nevertheless, are subject to less questioning for this kind of investigation and often do it with minimal knowledge of the language of study. They become experts in a wide range of subjects that Indigenous researchers often have reservations about studying. The work of Vine Deloria Jr.[7] and the Colectivo Mixe[8] is very useful for understanding some of the power dynamics that prevail in Indigenous studies. Deloria (1997) argues that in academia, there are "experts" on Indigenous peoples who become authorities due to the information that is offered to them by the people they work with. Deloria's argument about the power wielded in academia is of utmost importance, particularly because it reveals the tendency to ignore the academic contributions of Indigenous researchers, which are contradicted and corrected by non-Indigenous "experts" (Deloria, Biolsi, and Zimmerman 1997). Current efforts by some Indigenous researchers to transform academia have been going to great lengths to foster collaborative relationships with their communities (Hernández and Hutchings 2017; and Brian Noble 2019; Thieberger 2016; England in press; Woodbury and England 2004).

As Suzi Hutchings (2019) says, "Indigenous anthropologists are stuck in the middle," and we are under constant scrutiny in our own communities as well as in academia; furthermore, we are on double duty, participating in both contexts. Being split down the middle is not ideal; it is a tiring position to be in. The ideal scenario would be that the academy understood the importance of the collaborative projects that Indigenous researchers are engaged in, but this is not the reality. In academic evaluations, these research projects are often questioned and at times are deemed to be merely "service."

Much of the research produced by Indigenous scholars is not cited if it lacks support from the academy. Academics cite each other, or as Deloria says, the "experts" are those who have studied Indigenous people and who don't bother to consider the work done by Indigenous researchers. The experts are those who have positions in academia and are recognized for those positions by other academics. Meanwhile, Indigenous researchers have to cite them to give their own research validity. Although many of the key critical thinkers of Indigenous communities conduct valuable academic research, they are not cited, for it is only the important

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7 Vine Deloria Jr. (1933-2005) was a Native American academic who theorized about the power dynamics in academia with regard to Indigenous subject matter.

8 For a recent initiative to interrogate the role of non-Indigenous scholars of Indigenous studies, see "Entrevista al entrevistador," a recent series of interviews by the Colectivo Mixe with akäts (non-Mixe) researchers who have carried out their research in the Mixe region: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhWIN-HkaVs

"experts" who are supposed to appear in articles. To illustrate Deloria's argument about experts, when Indigenous people write, we receive racist and classist reviews, as in the following text.

Comments to the Author:

> This is neither a scholarly paper nor a Native narrative. It is written by a Mexican Chatino women [sic] (she clearly identifies herself in the text) who was invited to a programme for Indians at the University of Texas to work as informants and be trained as linguists. She then stayed in Texas as an academic and works back in Mexico.
>
> The text includes too many unsustained personal opinions about researchers in Mexico (INALI) and elsewhere and makes simplistic judgements about Mexican Indigenous education without a single reference to the rich and differentiated literature existing on the topic. I found the paper much too biased against most Mexican institutions and too uncritically admiring of US institutions and programmes for Latin American Indians. This is not suitable for a scholarly article in this journal. The article is also not a scholarly one that is grounded in the literature about any of the topics that are addressed.
>
> I also found the ethnographic, contextual and linguistic information lacking. For example, the author mentions several workshops on different topics that she organised over time, but does not provide critical information. She mentions a three-year-project to produce a pedagogical grammar of her language, but does not explain what the difference is between such a grammar and a descriptive grammar, provide an outline/structure of that grammar or a single example. There are also no language samples, figures, tables or any other scientific information in the text.
>
> In sum, this text is neither an academic nor an Indigenous narrative and in my view, does a lot of damage to the cause of Native empowerment, academic development of human capital, and the fight for minority rights.
>
> I cannot recommend publication.

This is the evaluation of an "expert" who refused to approve my text for publication in a specialized journal because it did not conform to academic standards. There is much to be said about the language used in this review, particularly with respect to the way the article is evaluated. For example, the review neglects to recognize the contributions of my research, such as the data and unpublished analysis of an academically understudied language, while calling particular attention to the lack of bibliographic references and "scientific" frameworks. Moreover, the way in which this "academic expert" discredits my academic training is astonishing, as the reviewer criticizes the anthropology and linguistics program at UT, from which I graduated. As if that weren't enough, the reviewer places me in the category of the "informant." With the above example, I wish to demonstrate the power that these "experts" have:

they are not interested in supporting and constructively criticizing the work of those who wish to publish; rather they appear to be more interested in eliminating players from the academic game, leaving room in this world only for the "experts."

I will now turn to the physical spaces of academia, as they are experienced by people of color in the United States and their equivalents in the Mexican context, which is marked by a *mestizophilic* nationalism that does not recognize and even rejects its Indigenous origins. Despite many calls to diversify the academy, the number of professor-researchers of color nonetheless remains low (Colon-Aguirre 2019; Stigliani 2020). Non-white academics have produced countless descriptions of their experiences navigating these spaces, concerning matters of race, social class, ethnicity, and gender. In this section, I intend to add to the many voices who have described their lived experiences. The primary goal of describing my experience is to consider the importance of instigating change in favor of a more diverse space in academia.

I will begin by addressing labor. My first position was in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. I was hired because I fit the profile of their job announcement, which called for someone who was involved in collaborative research, what they referred to as *engaged anthropology*. It was my first time in this region of the United States. I did not know where to live or where to buy food. I arrived with hopes of meeting a cohort of people with whom I could work, collaborate, and begin to make new friends. I remember that a friend gave me various pieces of advice when I left for my new job: "when you arrive there, you will gain weight, the tradition is that all of your colleagues will take you out to eat." I arrived, and for one month, I had to live in a hotel. I taught classes and returned to the hotel; none of my friends knew this, and moreover, nobody invited me over to eat, everyone kept their doors closed. Later, when I began the tenure process, all of my colleagues were busy with their academic lives, continuing to be well-known experts, including those professors who considered themselves people of color. Nobody asked me how I was doing or concerned themselves with what I was going through. The department selected one person who would direct my tenure process, a person who also struggled to understand the nature of my research. In the end, I decided to abandon the process because I was offered a position at CIESAS-CDMX (Center for Research and Advanced Studies in Social Anthropology, Mexico City).

I always intended to return to Mexico. Since graduate school, my dream had been to return for personal as well as academic reasons, but in Mexico there are few positions open to researchers. When I was notified that I had been offered the position, I could not believe it. I presented my resignation to UMass and packed my belongings, and within two weeks I was in Mexico. My arrival to CIESAS was traumatic. I had applied for a position in Education, which is a focus of my research, but for some reason the members of the Department of Education at CIESAS considered my project to fall outside of the realm of education, which led them

to reject me from the beginning. Shortly after my arrival, I received a copy of the following letter (in part):[9]

> To all concerned
> In this communication, the members of Area X "History, politics, and culture, 16th-20th century" wish to bring to the attention of the Technical Advisory Council that after having reviewed, discussed, and carefully considered the academic profile of Dr. Cruz, we have unanimously resolved to deny her inclusion into our Area, considering that there is no correspondence between her areas of specialization and academic work and those established in the profile we called for in our search for applicants in 2017 to strengthen our research in Education. Dr. Cruz applied for and was awarded this position in 2017.
>
> Consequently, we hereby declare our objection to the assignment made by the Academic Search Committee to the position we sought to fill. We observed the established internal search process and requirements of CIESAS and furthermore anticipated the consent of the Plenary of Researchers of CIESAS Mexico City. The solicitation in question, to fill a position of Full Professor-Researcher, was framed as a thematic search: Education, food sovereignty, and ethno-political reclamation in Indigenous contexts (Anthropology of Education).

What does one do in that situation? For a new hire without tenure, it is a vulnerable position to be in. I had left another position to come to CIESAS, my decision to return to Mexico had already been made, I had no way to change it. What I did was persevere and continue with my plan, but it was not easy to work in a space where you know that an entire group of your colleagues had signed on to demonstrate their disapproval of you. This was a community of academic researchers who marginalize and

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9 Original communication: "Presentes
Por este conducto, los integrantes del Área X "Procesos históricos, políticos y culturales, siglos XVI-XX" nos dirigimos al Consejo Técnico Consultivo para hacer de su conocimiento que luego de haber revisado, discutido y ponderado cuidadosamente el perfil académico de la Dra. XXX, resolvimos de manera unánime denegar su incorporación a nuestra Área por considerar que no existe afinidad entre sus líneas de especialización y trabajo académicos y los establecidos en el perfil de ingreso que solicitamos en 2017 para reforzar nuestra línea de Educación, y con el cual fue concursada la plaza de ingreso por evaluación curricular que fue otorgada en octubre del mismo año a la Dra. XXX.
En consecuencia, manifestamos nuestra inconformidad con la asignación de la Comisión Académica Dictaminadora (CAD) de la plaza que solicitamos y para la cual cumplimos con el procedimiento y los requisitos establecidos en la convocatoria interna del CIESAS, y que además contó con el consentimiento del Pleno de Investigadores del CIESAS Ciudad de México. La convocatoria respectiva, para ocupar la plaza de Profesor-Investigador Titular A, establecía como línea temática de adscripción: Educación, soberanía alimentaria y reivindicaciones étnico-políticas en contextos indígenas (Antropología de la Educación).

exclude, in this case using the argument that my research is not about education. So I have to wonder, what have I been doing these past years? I have given workshops for speakers of Otomanguean languages since 2012; is my work with local schools of the municipality of Quiahije not education? If it is not, what is education? Academics reproduce the society we live in, where there is classism and racism. I decided to answer the rejection letter; I felt that I owed it to myself (in part):[10]

> In this communication, I would like to express my profound disappointment upon hearing of the resolution issued by the members of Area X "History, politics, and culture, 16th-20th century" with regard to my inclusion in said area of specialization.
>
> In their letter from the May 25 of this year, the members of Area X openly expressed their refusal to work with me, despite my genuine desire to work with them, which has been documented in various e-mails. My primary academic interest at this time is to continue my research on local knowledge of territory and the land, as well as local education systems and the transmission of knowledge through language, with a focus on San Juan Quiahije and the Chatino region. I should confess that I was very much looking forward to collaborating and sharing experiences and perspectives with a team of people focused on the anthropology of education. However, I sadly have perceived the rejection of my work from early on, as well as the lack of a spirit of collaboration and interdisciplinary work, which I consider necessary for the scientific production of knowledge.

I decided instead to join area A,[11] where I was accepted. My academic assignment is now in Cultural Diversity, Power, and Justice, where I have been able to find support and collaboration.

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10 Original communication: "Por este conducto, quisiera expresar mi profunda desilusión al enterarme de la resolución emitida por los integrantes del Área X "Procesos históricos, políticos y culturales, siglos XVI-XX" respecto a mi incorporación a dicho grupo de trabajo.
A través de su carta del 25 de mayo del presente, los integrantes del Área X expresaron abiertamente su rechazo a colaborar conmigo, a pesar de mi genuino deseo de trabajar con ellos, el cual ha quedado documentado en varios correos electrónicos. Mi principal interés académico en este momento es continuar mi investigación sobre conocimiento local del territorio y el paisaje y sobre procesos locales de educación y transmisión de conocimiento a través de la lengua, centrándome en San Juan Quiahije y la región chatina. Debo confesar que tenía gran ilusión de colaborar y compartir experiencias y perspectivas con un equipo de trabajo enfocado en la antropología de la educación. Sin embargo, con tristeza he notado desde un inicio rechazo hacia mi trabajo y la falta de un espíritu de colaboración e interdisciplina que yo considero necesarios para la producción científica de conocimiento."

11 The Mexico City branch of CIESAS is home to the largest number of researchers, who are grouped into five areas, four of which are thematic: A) Medical, legal, and gender anthropology; B) Ethnohistory, ethnic and social relations; C) History, politics, and culture, 16th-20th century; D) Sociocultural change; while the fifth groups researchers without a specific theme.

The way in which the academy views collaborative work is often contradictory when protecting academic territory is concerned. This has an impact on the dialogue that we Indigenous academics should have with non-Indigenous academics. The model of academia that excludes Indigenous people stems from the colonial history in which the discipline of anthropology was formed (Narayan 1993). Academia is an exclusionary society, and there are many factors that contribute to how it operates against Indigenous people. In my case, I am an Indigenous, brown woman who speaks Spanish with an "accent;" that is how I am, and there is nothing that I can do to change that.

A colleague told me that I had only gotten a position as a professor at a United States university because I had had a hard life, or because I am Indigenous, but not for my competency as a researcher and academic. As a joke, another colleague said, "now even wetbacks are getting doctorates." It goes to show how fractured academia and academics are: they outwardly claim to support diversity, yet in their actions they are more loyal to the rules and to their institutions and are not prepared to support something that is different from what they know. Here I will provide an example of linguistic discrimination that occurred at UMass but is by no means unique to this university. The person who questioned me most about my work and the type of students I took on was a faculty member with a role in the university's upper administration, a linguist who presumably values diverse ways of speaking. The biggest problem he had with me was that he believed I accepted students who "did not speak good English," so much so that he would send messages saying that those students would not progress in their research because they were not fluent in English. In Mexico, the equivalent would be that students "do not speak good Spanish."

The academy, with its liberal projects of "inclusion," with its projects that purportedly work in favor of diversity, has much to lose in a case like UMass, which is dotted with flags proclaiming that "*diversity matters*," yet which takes a step back when it comes to including researchers of color and which will continue on as a homogeneously white institution. In the case of CIESAS, there is no affirmative action policy in the hiring process like the system in place to support cultural diversity among the student body. I do not yet consider it safe to speak up about racism and exclusion, although the institution claims to work in support of Indigenous peoples; nevertheless, the number of Indigenous academics is extremely low. We Indigenous people have a lot of knowledge that we can contribute to the enrichment of research, but we so often find ourselves opposite closed doors. For this reason, I have asked myself with no clear answer, is it even worth trying to change the academy? Furthermore, is it the responsibility of those who have been excluded to change the academy? Yes, we should bring this conversation about exclusion to the table, but it is not solely our responsibility. Everyone must reflect on his or her role in this capitalist world of academia.

3. How I am perceived in my community

While I was writing this article, I came across the work of Zuni artist Phil Hughte, who drew anthropologist Frank Hamilton Cushing, a researcher who studied the Zuni community (Hughte 1994).[12] It was very striking to see his drawings mingled with Cushing's words. In the present text, at times I have felt like Cushing and others like Hughte, which I attribute to the complexity of my position as a researcher in my own community.

I will begin by explaining the predicaments of our research. The perennial quandary of our research lies in the differences between a researcher from outside of the community and one who has ties to the community. When those who are not from the community finish their research, they may not know whether they will return, particularly because people have personal lives apart from their academic projects. On the other hand, those who are from the community must return because that is where their family is. Many Indigenous researchers are preoccupied with doing their research properly and engage with the decolonial methodologies proposed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012). According to Tuhiwai Smith, an Indigenous educator from New Zealand, research that stems exclusively from epistemically Eurocentric premises and positivist methodologies reproduces a colonialist strategy that silences local expertise and imposes hierarchies of knowledge. She further suggests that if we do not take into consideration our position as researchers, we may in some cases rekindle painful memories of colonialism with our work (Smith 2012). This is true of course, but how conscious am I really of my position of privilege as an anthropological researcher?

My identity as a Chatina woman affords me certain epistemological and methodological advantages, yet at once has certain disadvantages that are important to recognize. Working at home, I do not encounter problems like those that Macaulay discusses in her article 'Training Linguistics Students for the Realities of Fieldwork' (Macaulay 2004). She points to the difficulties of doing fieldwork as an outsider to the community, from food to relationships with locals (Macaulay 2004). My problems, compared to Macaulay's, are different. For example, I can work with anyone, but if people do not want to collaborate, I can record audio or video of my family members, given that half of the village is my family. And if for some reason I cannot record anyone from the village, I can record myself.

12 Zuni people are Native Americans who live in the Central-Eastern region of New Mexico, on the border with Arizona.

Perfecta Cristóbal Lorenzo and the author. Photograph courtesy of Gibrán Morales Carranza

Furthermore, being a speaker of Chatino allows me not only to communicate fluently with no need for interpretation, it also affords me the opportunity to foster intimate connections with people and local knowledge in a way that an outsider anthropologist could not do. Similarly, the networks of family and friends that my family and I have forged in the community generate (dis)trust or (dis)interest in participating in my research projects. In my dual position as a researcher and a Chatina person, I can ensure that the collaborative project I propose considers community interests and develops research strategies in permanent dialogue with the community.

On the other hand, working in my community calls for constant prudence: if I make a mistake, I can be held accountable as any other person from the village would be, even in such a way that might affect my family. It is important to reflect on what members of the community think of researchers: of their reality, as well as what they expect of them. On the one hand, community members offer up their homes, their knowledge, and their friendship. In my case, I have to return home to visit my family, and if I do anything unethical, it will affect my relationship with the community. Even having relatives that protect me as a researcher does not preclude the possibility that the assembly or the local authorities could tell me that I cannot carry out research. Because people consider me an "expert" in what I do, they expect me to support local projects, but if I make a mistake in my research, I cannot simply leave and not return, as outsider researchers do; I have to confront the community for my actions. For ex-

ample, on one occasion I published the photo of a cousin's funeral flowers on my Facebook page, which the authority of my village did not consider appropriate to do, particularly out of respect to the family. The community police went to my house to find me so they could put me in jail, but luckily I was not there because I had gone to the city early that morning. I could not go to my village for three months; I had to wait until that administration's term had ended. I returned when the new village authority had begun his term and went to seek the forgiveness of the family.

Gossip is also a daily phenomenon in many Mexican villages that likewise affects my fieldwork. Given that everyone in the village knows what I do, people talk about me. Gossip is a political action that affects private and public life when people try to influence the distribution of power (Besnier 2009). During my fieldwork, people have said many fascinating things about me and the work I do.

Here I offer two short stories about people who gossip about me to demonstrate how local politics and research become intertwined in the field, along with the complexities and challenges of being a (re)source (of data) and a researcher. One time when I was recording in Cieneguilla (my village), I asked my cousin Juana if she would come to my house to help me with some sentences in Chatino. She came at night and we worked until very late. I asked if she would say some sentences in Chatino so I could listen for tone changes in the language. Some of the sentences were absurd, such as *yku*^{A} *qya*^{A} *yja*^{A} *jla*^{A}[13] 'the eagle ate an old tortilla,' among others. When we finished, Juana told me that she had been afraid to come record because someone had told another woman, señora Petra, that Juana had told me the story of when Petra had confronted someone from the village. In this account, she told me that Petra had gone to confront someone who had stolen her turkey. Rumor had it in the village that Juana had told me the story in Chatino and that I had recorded it to later put on Facebook so that everyone in the municipality could hear the story. Juana was not sure if I was guilty or not, arguing that "maybe someone else told you the story and you put it on Facebook." I realized then that Juana had come to my house at night because she did not want people from the village to see her come over; that is, she did not want to be perceived as someone who gossiped about people from the community.

On another occasion, I went to record two women, a mother and daughter. I asked them to tell me how to prepare food for the Day of the Dead. We were having a nice time chatting, when the electricity went out. It had not surprised us because losing electricity is a common occurrence in the village, and the daughter went to see what had happened and fixed it. A few moments later, a woman arrived, the daughter of one of the women I was speaking with. The woman came up to us and said to me,

13 The original text read *yky*^{A} *qya*^{A} *yja*^{A} *jla*^{A}. This has been edited for the present version following direct communication with the author.

"I'll bet you're making a lot of money with that information." For a moment I thought that she was kidding, but I later realized that she was serious. The two women I was talking to and recording grew very uncomfortable. It was then that I realized that the light hadn't gone out because we had lost electricity, but because this woman had turned off the outlet so that I would stop recording. I decided to leave. When I got home, I told my mother the story of what had happened, and she said, "She's upset because she thinks that you make a lot of money recording people." I told her that if that were the case, anybody from the village could sell Chatino, not just me.

I am also treated like someone from outside the community, and I have opened doors to outsiders who come to do research in Chatino villages. Because I have a doctorate from a US university and because I have come to the village with foreign linguists, people perceive me as a wealthy person. Moreover, I have a visa to go to the United States of America, and most people from this municipality immigrate to the United States without documentation. There is a lot of conversation about my immigration status; it interests people to know how much money I earn, and they think that I do it by selling Chatino. I am aware that I have an economic and legal situation in the United States that they do not have, inequalities that can cause tension and complicate the process of carrying out research in my own community. They are right to think that it is unjust for foreign people to come to these villages while Chatino people do not have visas to go to the United States. This structural discrimination hampers a more just exchange. Sure, I am a privileged person, but what Chatino people do not know is that I also have to fight to secure my place in the academic world. I think that I have not been able to communicate that to them, and I suppose that this is the case because it is not easy to talk about the reality of my experience in academia. They do not know that I often feel I have to demonstrate my competence in ways that should not be necessary for academics to take me seriously. For many academics, my success as an Indigenous woman echoes the stereotypical story of a person who has overcome challenges and in so doing has won over people's hearts; my intellect often does not factor into the picture.

Finally, it would be very interesting to know how people from Quiahije perceive me as a researcher. It would be very interesting to do the exercise that Hughte did when he observed Cushing. I imagine their illustrations would be somewhere between amusing and serious, but it will be up to other people from the community to judge and describe me, in my yellow sweatshirt and sneakers with a recorder in my hand (see photo on page 114).

4. On my collaborative projects inside and outside of my community

I have had many great opportunities to carry out projects to document and promote the use of Chatino languages from the southeast of Oaxaca (Cruz and Woodbury 2014; 2017). This has been possible for various reasons, one of which is my own linguistic capacity: I speak Chatino. I also belong to a community in the region, and I am the daughter of Tomás Cruz Lorenzo, who was a Chatino leader. The discipline of linguistics has its problems of power and exclusion, yet there are few reflections on linguistic documentation practices in communities where linguistic research takes place. For example, Leonard argues that current practices of linguistic documentation are informed by a deeply colonial history and often do not take into consideration what the needs and cultural values of the speech communities (Leonard 2018). In the following section, I demonstrate how I led a project for the documentation of Chatino languages in such a way that follows Leonard's practices. I sought to structure the project in a way I thought would be less colonialist, trying to ensure that the research could support the needs of Chatino communities and, as Leonard says, give scientific value to linguistic documentation realized in collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Leonard 2018).

4.1 The Chatino Language Documentation Project (CLDP)

I founded the Chatino Language Documentation Project (CLDP) with Professor Anthony Woodbury and Hilaria Cruz. The CLDP involved many people, including Woodbury and various graduate students, as well as two academics who were not from UT. Over the course of 13 years, our group of 11 researchers initiated the study of many Chatino languages. Each student chose a different Chatino village variety to study; Hilaria Cruz and I studied all of the Chatino languages, but we focused on the Eastern San Juan Quiahije variety, which is the language that we speak.[14]

Each person concentrated on his or her subjects of interest: Hilaria Cruz studied verbal art of Quiahije; Stephanie Villard investigated the San Marcos Zacatepec variety of Eastern Chatino; Eric Campbell worked on Zenzontepec Chatino; Justin McIntosh worked on the Santa María Teotepec variety of Eastern Chatino; Ryan Sullivant stud-

14 The members of the CLDP have published a series of academic articles as well as pedagogical materials. For more information about the publications of the CLDP, see: https://sites.google.com/site/lenguachatino/.

ied Tataltepec Chatino; Jeffrey Rasch wrote a dissertation on the Santiago Yaitepec variety of Eastern Chatino; and I continued to work on Quahije. As the project began to involve investigation of the linguistic relationship between Zapotec and Chatino, Thomas Smith Stark joined the CLDP. Smith Stark was familiar with Zapotec languages, relatives of the Chatino language family. The final two graduate students to join the project were Katherine Mesh and Lynn Hou, who studied Quiahije Sign Language.

Before the CLDP, collaboration between linguists and speakers of Chatino languages was limited. Linguists Leslie† and Kitty Pride†, who worked for the Summer Institute of Linguistics, lived in the communities of Tataltepec de Valdés, Santiago Yaitepec, and San Miguel Panixtlahuaca for many years beginning in 1975. They authored various books, among them "Solid Food is for Adults: a pioneering venture with Wycliffe in mountainous South-West Mexico" (Pride and Pride 2007); "*Vocabulario chatino de Tataltepec: castellano-chatino, chatino-castellano*" (Pride and Pride 1970); and "*Diccionario chatino de la zona alta: Panixtlahuaca, Oaxaca y otros pueblos*" (Pride and Pride 2004). They also published various articles about Chatino grammar. Additionally, the Prides trained youth to write in Chatino, including youth from San Miguel Panixtlahuaca and Tataltepec. Many adults from those villages still remember them and say that they spoke Chatino very well.

The CLDP has contributed to the study of Chatino languages; it is because of this research that we now have a greater understanding of these languages. It can be said that the project was very successful and a model for collaborative work between academics and speakers of Indigenous languages. In addition to the enthusiasm and strong training of the researchers who studied Chatino languages, another point to highlight is that Hilaria and I speak Chatino and are the daughters of Tomás Cruz Lorenzo, who was a Chatino leader. Tomás fought for the autonomy and linguistic rights of Chatino villages. His work was crucial in attaining unity among these villages. In a sense, being the daughters of an important figure in the region helped us to be able to carry out research in various Chatino villages. Having a father like him also helped very much because we were familiar with and knew how to travel around that mountainous region, and we understood the local politics of each community. The advantage we had was that my father was very well known throughout the region and had a very good reputation. My father's political legacy was an important factor in allowing for a research project so broad and complex, seeing as people always welcomed us in the villages.

To avoid falling into false modesty, I should mention, with much pride, that the CLDP was largely successful because my sister and I carried it out with the support of my father's reputation, but each of the researchers of the CLDP is the architect of his or her own research project. Hilaria and I made a great effort to find Chatino villages where UT students could work. We accompanied each linguist to his or her field site; we were the first to introduce ourselves; we described and explained the project to local authorities, which included conversation about the importance of linguistic preservation and documentation. After the initial introduction, they almost always

asked us, You are the daughters of Mr. Tomás Cruz Lorenzo? When we told them that we were, the authorities gained more enthusiastic interest in the project. Hilaria and I were therefore able to place linguists in Santa Lucía Teotepec, San Marcos Zacatepec, Santa Cruz Zenzontepec, Tataltepec de Valdés, and San Juan Quiahije.

The members of the CLDP made an effort to write in Spanish and English, but the majority of our theses are in English. Despite the commitment of this project to strengthening the Chatino language, we have wound up reproducing many of the colonial practices of traditional anthropology by having the majority of its results published in English and not prioritizing the accessible communication of these results to Chatino communities. We have made an effort, but there remains much to be done to make this work accessible to the public, which is why we have created a website where people can download any material produced by the members of the CLDP.[15] The CLDP is indebted to the significant support of the Hans Rausing Endangered Language Documentation Project (ELDP),[16] a research grant for graduate students from the National Science Foundation (NSF), and a Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement award from the National Science Foundation. The CLDP produced a corpus of over 90 hours of naturalistic spoken texts of various genres from different Chatino communities. The majority of these texts are kept in the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) and the Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America (AILLA).[17]

4.2 Youth training

Following the projects with CLDP, I continue to work actively in Chatino villages. I have a passion for Chatino languages, and I enjoy sharing what I know with other Chatino people. During these years, I have been interested in working in Chatino communities in addition to my own. I perceive a great necessity for transmitting the knowledge about the language family that I have acquired over the years. For example, I have managed to establish a project with Chatino youth in various communities. From 2012 to 2014, I traveled to various Chatino villages with a group of high school students. We spent 10 days in each place, studying the varieties of Eastern Chatino. Over the course of three years, we visited 10 villages, where we established a practical orthography for each one and supported Chatino youth who wanted to write their language. This project had three primary goals: 1) document and analyze

15 https:/sites.google.com/site/lenguachatino/

16 [MDP0153]

17 http://www.elar-archive.org/index.php; http://www.ailla.utexas.org/site/welcome.html

the tone systems of those varieties; 2) train Chatino youth to be able to study their own language; and 3) develop and expand on methodologies to study tone languages. Some of the questions motivating our study were:

a. Does the language have processes of tone sandhi (context-based tonal change)? If so, is it possible to design linguistic diagnostics to facilitate the categorization of the tones?
b. How does tone work in verb paradigms?
c. What tones do loanwords from Spanish take?

We learned a lot about the 15 varieties of Eastern Chatino. The data we collected on those trips demonstrated the tonal correspondences between those communities. With this new material, we were also able to improve the writing system for Eastern Chatino, as it became possible to develop a practical orthography that included tone. As a result, this endeavor has made it easier for teachers and linguists to create a writing system to make pedagogical materials for the promotion and revitalization of Chatino. Most importantly, however, the project fostered an interest among Chatino youth to continue studying, not necessarily linguistics, but enough for the majority of them to be able to write their Chatino language with tones. The results were tremendous, from my point of view.

I am drawn to documentation projects that are based on collaboration (Lima Silva and Riestenberg 2020; Cruz and Woodbury 2014) and which take a critical look at linguistic documentation (Leonard 2018). Currently, I continue to work on projects with youth in Quiahije, where they are more and more interested in studying Chatino. These students do everything they can to help with language maintenance. Returning to Mexico has allowed me to be present more consistently in Quiahije, which has been instrumental in fostering a growing interest among youth to write in and describe their language; they do it because they consider it part of their Chatino identity. The important thing is that these students are motivated and willing to work all day to learn about their language and discuss their interests as Chatino youth. We have produced videos of language in different contexts, such as hikes, and we have translated academic texts, songs, and short stories to Chatino. Furthermore, in 2019 I edited the book *evitemos que nuetsro futuro nos escape de las manos: tomás cruz lorenzo y la nueva generación chatina* (let us prevent our future from slipping through our fingers: tomás cruz lorenzo and the new Chatino generation) (Cruz 2019). This book is a compilation of twelve pieces of writing by Chatino people. The book has promoted dialogue between Chatino people from different Eastern Chatino villages and has been presented in Chatino in each of the author's villages. This project offered the authors the opportunity to share their personal narratives and to reflect on the future of their language and culture.

The projects I have described here constitute a sample of the ones that motivate me to keep working with Chatino speakers.

Conclusion

In this article I have presented my own experience, and I hope that it is not read as something universal that happens to all Indigenous academics. I have brought to the table discussion about the dearth of Indigenous people in the academy, a discussion that I find essential to make the study of Indigenous peoples more inclusive and diverse. I have also used my own narrative to illustrate how power and exclusion are exercised in these spaces. Despite the multitude of calls to diversify linguistics and anthropology programs, there is nonetheless a considerable amount of work left to be done in including the voices of Indigenous researchers, which continue to be largely absent from these disciplines.

I have also addressed my collaborative projects that have incorporated the interests of Chatino people, as I have worked with municipal authorities, different social groups, and native speakers who have been interested in learning about their language. Over the years, the successes and limitations of my collaborative projects have been shaped by local, state, and national politics, by language politics in Mexico, by the educational system that is imposed on Indigenous people in Mexico, and by the discriminatory practices of the academic world, but they have also been positively influenced by youth who are finding new ways to strengthen their Chatino identity. These youth from Quiahije offer an innovative perspective on what it means to be Chatino; they seek a sense of belonging as citizens of this territory. In this context, I illustrate the importance of fostering more dialogue between Indigenous academics to continue carrying out engaged anthropological investigation that includes Indigenous voices.

A lively debate persists about the role of Indigenous academics in the academy and in our own communities. A model of linguistic documentation that includes foreigners as well as native speakers of Indigenous languages may be very successful, but it also presents many challenges. I do not have a formula for confronting these challenges, but based on my experience with the CLDP and working in Chatino villages, I have come to understand that good collaboration yields a better product. Indigenous people want to learn about their languages, and they also want to have tools to safeguard them. Nevertheless, their access to education and support for their linguistic projects is limited. I have witnessed the possibilities for what the next generations can do for their languages when they are given the opportunity to participate in the process of documentation and revitalization. To ensure that this happens, linguists must be open to the needs of the speakers. I have great admiration for speakers who can sit for hours and days to learn about linguistics and create something useful for their communities. I also appreciate the time and energy that researchers have for the commitment to collaboration with speakers, including when those speakers may not have prior experience with linguistics or anthropology. Therefore, as they

say, we have to “get the show on the road” in this moment in particular. We should use this approach to promote the training of Indigenous linguists.

As I have mentioned in this article, my Chatino identity does not make collaborative work any easier nor any harder, but the results of this work are greater. England has argued that linguistics programs in the United States are inadequate because they do not meet the needs of speakers of Indigenous languages; anthropology programs are no better, given that there tends to be only one linguist (or none) in those programs (England 1996). I should mention that UT afforded me the opportunity of acquiring the tools I have used over the years in my workshops as I have taught and trained speakers of Indigenous languages in Oaxaca. Although those projects are small, I have had great success. We still have a long way to go. England made her observation 20 years ago, and there have since been very few educational opportunities for Indigenous people in Mexico and the United States. In this article I advocate for the importance of providing Indigenous students with tools to benefit the preservation of their languages. In my own research, I hope to make use of a framework that native speakers and their communities may shape and reshape to fit their own interests and needs.

Finally, I should mention that there are still great obstacles in academia, in cases where non-Indigenous academics continue to exercise their colonial power, and we Indigenous academics continue to challenge this dynamic from various positions in order to overcome the contradictions of this academic enterprise.

Reflection on the translation

By Sofia G. Pierson and Emiliana Cruz Cruz

Sophie: *Popular culture likes to talk about the untranslatable. The words or concepts in foreign languages that simply do not yield themselves to translation:* schadenfreude, hygge, l’esprit de l’escalier. *These words are thought somehow to capture the singular essence of a language in such a way that renders it impossible to convey the sentiment in any other manner. What we tend to say in linguistics is that anything is in fact translatable but that the genius of one language might preclude a one-to-one mapping of form to meaning in another. For me, the pleasure of translation stems from doing the impossible.*

Emiliana: *I have always admired the work of translators and how they can transform an idea from one language into another. I like reading. I have read a few books that were originally written in a different language, for instance Japanese into English (The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle —* ねじまき鳥クロニクル Nejimakidori Kuronikuru by Haruki Murakami) and Turkish into Spanish (Me Llamo Rojo — Benim Adım Kırmızı *by Orhan Pamuk). In these books I have enjoyed observing the work of the translators. In particular, I am*

fascinated by the way the translators understand the story in the original language and admire their capacity to move from one language into another. I have to say that I haven't had any formal training in translation. I have just taken a few informal workshops on translation, primarily because I create pedagogical materials for Chatino speakers.

Sophie: *What I find so special about our translation of Emiliana's work in this volume is the collaborative space out of which the final product arose. Once I had completed the first draft of my translation, we worked together every step of the way.*

Emiliana: *First, I got the first draft of the article from Sophie and compared the original Spanish version with the English one, making some comments to share with her later. The next step was to meet and decide the approach that we would take. I am an extrovert. I like to express my ideas orally. Luckily for me, Sophie was willing to listen. We decided to meet periodically to work on the translation, reading the piece out loud paragraph by paragraph so that we could both hear the rhythm of the translation and compare it to the Spanish version. With this approach it was very easy to notice when something was unclear or if I was trying to say something that Sophie had interpreted differently. She would make simple changes right then and there, but on the more elaborate ones she took notes to work on later. Once we read the whole article out loud, Sophie worked on the final version to make sure everything was in shape. I then read the final version and approved it. This approach was very useful and practical for me. The most important part of this process was that we got to know each other as we worked together.*

Sophie: *I think that there are two misconceptions about translation that this collaboration throws into question. First, I think people assume—myself included—that translation is solitary work. The translator works in her own space to interpret the original through a new lens, perhaps consulting a dictionary but certainly not the author of the original piece. However, I also think that if the audience sees any solitary architect behind a translated piece, it will paradoxically be the original author. People seem to see straight through the translation and imagine that they are reading a carbon copy of the original; there seems to be a mysterious process whereby the translator becomes invisible. I have been made particularly aware of this invisibilization since Ann Goldstein has emerged as the brilliant translator of Elena Ferrante's oeuvre—it is telling that in this case, because Ferrante carefully maintains her privacy behind a pen name, there is no other identity to latch onto. In my work with Emiliana, it was our thoroughly collaborative model that made it possible to create a product that was faithful to Emiliana's original intended message while at once making it legible to a linguistically—and culturally—different audience.*

Emiliana: *As I mentioned earlier, I admire people who can translate, and Sophie is one of those people. Her knowledge in both languages made the English version of my article more coherent.*

Sophie: *I think the linguistic acrobatics behind a translation are all the more beautiful when two minds are at work together. It is a very special process when both author and translator are proficient in both languages, like Emiliana and me, but I believe this framework is still applicable in cases where the original author is not a speaker of the language of translation. In linguistic work, in particular, I find this deeply collaborative model essential not just for translating from language to language but also for reaching the kind of mutual understanding that Emiliana mentions above.*

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