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VOICING THE MAYA: MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES AND POLITICS OF ETHNOLINGUISTIC IDENTITY IN YUCATÁN

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Abstract:

This dissertation examines a tension underlying Maya advocacy in the Mexican Yucatán: Though advocates strive to preserve (Yucatec) Maya language and culture, they also pursue transformative improvements in both domains. Ongoing programs of language standardization and 'indigenous development' managed by governmental institutions exemplify the tension. Language standardizers craft and prescribe a purified register of Maya, punctuated with archaic lexemes, in order to counteract language shift and bring the language into new fields of usage. And for agents and advocates of 'indigenous development,' who concurrently pursue socioeconomic advancement and cultural fortification, the customary roles and practices of Mayas sometimes interfere with developmental objectives. These issues are complicated by the fact that many of the Maya advocates employed by governmental institutions are themselves Maya.

My dissertation investigates these issues ethnographically by way of Maya speakers' media practices and engagements. I focus on a popular state-run radio station in southern Yucatán that broadcasts daily in Maya language to a wide listening public. I show that the station's announcers are caught between rival norms of language and conflicting notions of Maya identity. In broadcasts, the radio announcers must negotiate their competing commitments to a purified Maya standard and the so-called *xa'ak'a'an* 'mixed' Maya that is spoken by their listeners. And relatedly, they must resolve or manage incongruities between official ethnolinguistic designations and enduring local conceptions of Maya and 'Indian' personhood. Such negotiations of these linked relations in popular mediatized discourse, I argue, consequentially affect the enregisterment of a Maya standard.

Based on my field research among radio announcers and listeners, I show that the ongoing standardization of Maya language pursues a structural-semiotic transformation of the customary model of Maya language and personhood, which locates ‘pure’ language in the ancient past. Maya radio announcers are agents of the transformation, but their alignments with purist standardization are moderated by reason of their roles as public communicators and their habituation to local speech norms. I show that while the announcers broadcast standardized Maya and its attendant ideologies, they also circulate countervailing local values.

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Glossing Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	1st, 2nd, 3rd person
A	Set A pronominal marker
B	Set B pronominal marker
AP	antipassive
ASSUR	assurative future aspect
CAUS	causative
D1/2/3	proximal/distal/anaphoric deictic
DET	determiner
DM	discourse marker
EVID	hearsay evidential
FEM	feminine
FUT	future
GLD	glide
HON	honorific
IMPF	imperfective/habitual
INCH	inchoative
INH	inherency marker
IPR	independent pronoun
MASC	masculine
NC	noun classifier
NEG	negation
PART	participle marker
PASS	passive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
POS	positional
POSS	possessive
PREP	preposition
PROG	progressive
REL	relational nominal suffix
REV	reverential suffix
TERM	terminative
TOP	topicalizer
TR	transitive suffix

Voicing the Maya: An Introduction

Yucatec Maya-language media projects are intertwined with ethnolinguistic advocacy. In the Yucatán Peninsula, language has been an enduring basis of social differentiation between the Indigenous population and politically dominant Spanish-speaking cultures, whether colonial, regional, or national. Today, the power asymmetry is reflected in the very different presences of Spanish and Yucatec Maya in mass-mediatized discourse. Yucatec Maya language is underrepresented in all forms of mass media that its speakers use: print, television, radio, and (less commonly) the internet. In recent decades, however, the language has become increasingly mediatized, largely through governmental programs in the Mexican states of Yucatán, Quintana Roo, and Campeche. The media outlets are celebrated as platforms for cultural expression and participation in public spheres. A recent edition of the newspaper *La Jornada Maya*, for example, featured an article about Radio XEPET, a Yucatec Maya-language radio station located in the Peto municipality of southern Yucatán.[1] 'The radio station has made visible the life of the Maya community since 1982,' the author reported (my translation from the original Spanish of Abreu 2022). The brief news piece portrays Radio XEPET as a treasured resource for the 'free development' (*libre desarrollo*) of Indigenous peoples and the social dissemination of 'Maya values' (*valores mayas*).

Although advocates value mass media as channels for the public voice of 'the Mayas' (*los mayas*) of the Mexican Yucatán, conceived as a solidary ethnolinguistic population within the nation, the projects are actually ventures in the *making* of group and language. Producers view media technologies as infrastructure for stimulating collective awareness and action among

[1] *La Jornada Maya* is a Yucatecan franchise of *La Jornada*, a leading newspaper based in Mexico City.

Indigenous Yucatecans. Indigenous language advocates regard media as crucial to maintaining the language and instrumental to the establishment of a modern Yucatec Maya standard. Though Yucatec Maya remains quite widely spoken on the peninsula, with nearly 800,000 speakers according to recent estimates (INEGI 2020), the language has long been undergoing a shift to Spanish (Pfeiler 1999; Pfeiler and Zámišová 2006).

The sociolinguistic ambitions of Yucatec Maya media producers are impeded by limits of Maya identity among 'the Mayas.' Like their colleagues in the Guatemalan highlands, anthropologists working on the Yucatán Peninsula have found 'Maya' to be an elusive category of identity. But whereas the problem in the highlands has tended to revolve around tensions between local ethnolinguistic identities (e.g., K'iche', Kaqchikel) and an overarching Maya imaginary,[2] the main issue in the Yucatán has been the seeming lack of common ethnic consciousness among those of Maya ethnocultural heritage. While Yucatec Maya speakers refer to their language as *maaya* 'Maya' and refer to themselves *mayeros* 'Maya speakers,' many Yucatecans of Maya ethnocultural heritage are hesitant to refer to themselves as 'Maya.' And many express misgivings about the authenticity of their language compared to the supposed *jach maaya* 'real Maya' variety spoken by their ancestors (Berkley 1998; Pfeiler 1998; Rhodes 2020). These perceptions present challenges for media creators, who engage their audiences along ethnocultural as well as linguistic lines.

Yucatec Maya-language media creators face additional constraints. Most speakers of Yucatec Maya are not able to read the language, and the commercial market for Yucatec Maya-

[2] For highland Maya examples, see Fischer and Brown 1996; England 2003; Barrett 2008; French 2010.

language media of any format is very limited.[3] Yucatec Maya-language media productions are largely funded and managed by governmental institutions. Governmental support enables the productions to materialize and even thrive, but it also shapes their content and social objectives. The most influential media projects operate as part of the service of the national administration of Indigenous affairs, whose broad mission encompasses 'Indigenous development' (*desarrollo de los pueblos indígenas*) and the 'standardization' (*normalización*) of Indigenous languages within Mexico.

Additionally, advocates of Yucatec Maya language negotiate competing orientations to modernity and the past. As the terms 'development' (*desarrollo*) and 'standardization' (*normalización*) indicate, state-mediated Indigenous advocacy in the Mexican Yucatán also aims to transform Maya culture, language, and people in important ways. At the same time, advocates strive to preserve Maya language and culture, and to recuperate certain practices that Mayas conventionally regard as traditional and even ancient. These dual, and seemingly conflicting, commitments are evident in the productions of media creators and in the linguistic prescriptions of educators. Yucatec Maya advocates value and invoke the connection between living Mayas and their renowned ancestors, but they also struggle against that association insofar as they attempt to craft a Maya modernity.

This introductory chapter contextualizes these problems, which the dissertation investigates from a linguistic-anthropological perspective. The first section provides background on the topics of Maya ethnolinguistic identity and advocacy. I delineate problems of recognition that mediate contemporary politics of Maya identity in the Mexican Yucatán. The second section

[3] See Brody (2004), Cru (2014), and Salinas (2018) on limits of Yucatec Maya-language literacy among Mayas in Yucatán.

outlines the theoretical concerns and motivations that guide this study. I organize scholarly literature on three basic problems that this dissertation investigates: (1) the role of media and mediatized discourse in the formation of collective subjectivities; (2) intertextuality and voice; and (3) language standardization. The third section of the chapter outlines the questions that guided my research, my field sites, and the methods I employed. At the end of the chapter, I provide summary descriptions of the ensuing chapters.

Ethnohistoric and Linguistic Background: Problems and Politics of Recognition

In the Mexican Yucatán today, numerous governmental organizations endorse and administer Maya language and culture. The work is organized around three federal agencies: the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI), and National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). State and municipal institutions augment these agencies. The scope of this governmental mediation is vast because Indigenous language and culture represent not only objects of governmental management, but also means for other goals, such as education, economic development, and public health. For example, the ongoing *normalización* 'standardization' of Yucatec Maya, overseen by the INALI in conjunction with Mexico's Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), is intended to improve (1) the vitality and communicative capacities of the language, and (2) the educational achievements of Maya students in programs of 'Indigenous education' (*educación indígena*). Similarly, Yucatán state's 'Institute for the Development of Maya Culture' (INDEMAYA) aims to 'strengthen' Maya culture, 'so that the community lives in equitable socioeconomic conditions and in full exercise of its rights."[4]

[4] My translation from Spanish. INDEMAYA. "Misión." Accessed May 23, 2022. https://indemaya.yucatan.gob.mx/ public/secciones/ver/?alias=mision.

Maya advocacy in its current form took shape in the 1990s, when Mexico's assimilationist approach gave way to multiculturalist valorizations of Indigenous language and culture (Castells-Talens 2004). Previously, assimilationist ideologies of *mestizaje* and *indigenismo* had guided governmental policy toward Indigenous citizens. In the modern era, particularly in the aftermath of Mexico's revolution (1910-20), national policies aimed at turning largely rural populations of 'Indians' (*indios, macehuales*) into patriotic Mexicans (Gutiérrez 1999; Boyer 2003; Chorba 2007). The *mestizaje* project promoted racial 'mixing' in an attempt to absorb 'Indians' into mainstream Mexican society for purposes of the nation's social and economic development. *Indigenismo*, as it developed in Mexico, valorized and mythologized the nation's ancient Indigenous heritage even as it actively sought the assimilation of living Indigenous people into the dominant national culture and the Spanish language.

In an examination of Indigenous education in Yucatecan pueblos and haciendas in the early part of the twentieth century, Eiss (2004) shows how education formed part of a strategy for governing Indigenous populations. Under the prevailing view that 'Indians' were primitive, backward, and holding back the nation's progress, educational projects in both the liberal and revolutionary periods sought to transform Indigenous children into disciplined workers and loyal citizens. Along with training children to be laborers, he observes, rural educators suppressed children's use of Yucatec Maya, which government officials and reformers in the revolutionary period saw as "an impediment to education and nation-making" (Eiss 2004, 130-1). These efforts to "Castilianize the Indian" were accompanied and aided by the popular notion that Yucatec Maya was not actually a language, but rather merely a "poor dialect" (Eiss 2004, 131).

Indigenist policy became somewhat more progressive during the Cárdenas administration (1934–1940). Lessons on Indigenous cultural heritage were included in school curricula in order

to boost Indigenous children's self-esteem, and teachers permitted the use of Indigenous languages in the classroom, though for the purpose of facilitating the transition to Spanish (Doremus 2001). One important aspect of *indigenismo* under Cárdenas was the attempt to downplay ethnic differences between Indigenous citizens so as to subsume them under a single category of "Indian" (Fallaw 1997, 564). Fallaw explains, "The creation of a strong Mexican national identity based on pan-Mexican Indianness was especially important in Yucatán, an area with marked secessionist tendencies" (1997, 564).

Another crucial part of the Mexican state's assimilationist project was the development of *campesino* 'peasant farmer' as a sociopolitical identity. Christopher Boyer (2003) argues that, despite the seeming inherency of *campesinos* in rural Mexico, the popular and class-based solidarity that characterizes *campesino* identity in Mexico arose relatively recently, in the period following the Mexican Revolution, through interactions between rural folk and local 'village revolutionaries' that promoted ideologies of the post-revolutionary Mexican state. Boyer focuses on the Mexican state of Michoacán in the 1920s and 1930s, but his basic claim about the recency of *campesino* identity and politics applies to the Mexican states of the Yucatán Peninsula, as well.

And indeed, historians of the region have shown that political actors cultivated *campesino* identity as a nationalist trope in the service of assimilationist goals. Felipe Carrillo Puerto, revolutionary and Governor of Yucatán from 1922 to 1924, viewed the mobilization of *campesinos* 'peasant farmers' as instrumental to the realization of his socialist vision for Yucatán. Historian Gilbert Joseph explains: "Carrillo Puerto astutely realized that, given the Indian *campesino's* economically impoverished and culturally despised position, the development of ethnic pride would also work simultaneously to promote class consciousness"

(1997, 224). In the decade that followed, Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas sought to mobilize Yucatecan peasants through valorizations of indigeneity and the pursuit of land reforms. Specifically, he wanted to dissolve Yucatán's henequen *haciendas* and redistribute the land to *ejidos* 'collective farms'—a project that he pursued by way of a tour branded 'The Crusade of the Mayab' (*Cruzada del Mayab*), that is, 'The Crusade of the land of the Maya' (Fallaw 1997, 561-562). In the 1940s and 1950s, state-sponsored assimilation efforts—including the promotion of *mestizaje* (racial 'mixing')—proceeded in earnest (Doremus 2001). The National Indigenist Institute (INI), founded in 1948, became the primary institution mediating relations between the Mexican government and its Indigenous populations. Though the INI would later promote rights and cultural renewal among Indigenous people, in its earlier years it pursued an integrationist program consistent with the *indigenismo* of previous decades (Friedlander 1986).

As mentioned above, a program of multiculturalism began to supersede Mexico's assimilationist approach to Indigenous populations in the 1990s. In 1992, Constitutional reforms were enacted in order to officially recognize Mexico as a multicultural nation. In 2003, the Commission on the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI) replaced the INI. This same year also saw the founding of the National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI) with the passage of the "General Law of Indigenous Peoples' Linguistic Rights." On a platform of Indigenous rights, multiculturalist values, and language preservation, CDI underwrote a number of Indigenous projects, including Yucatec Maya radio and print. In 2018, the incoming Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador reformulated the Commission (CDI) as The National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI). At the time of this writing, INPI continues to fund and oversee projects that had been carried out by INI and CDI.

So, in the space of a few decades, the Mexican government changed its policy on Indigenous language from active assimilation to preservation and promotion. The shift in federal policy reflected global trends, encouraged by intergovernmental agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). But Mexico's embrace of multiculturalism, and subsequent acknowledgments of Indigenous people's rights, had an additional (and critical) motivator: the 1994 Zapatista uprising and sociopolitical movement in the state of Chiapas. The reforms, politicians and policymakers hoped, would neutralize the Indigenous rebels in Chiapas, and help to prevent more such uprisings elsewhere in Mexico (Castells-Talens 2004; Speed 2005; Chorba 2007).

Despite the marked shift in policy, the government's concern with Indigenous speech, speakers, and culture have remained quite constant—as have ongoing and increasingly complexified processes of marginalization. Notwithstanding its contemporary multicultural focus, language policy in Mexico remains a field in which the state and its Indigenous citizens manage linguistic diversity and ethnic identity.

These developments should be seen in the context of broader political-economic changes that have, in the last several decades, increased Yucatec Maya speakers' interactions across various dimensions of linguistic and cultural difference. Regional economic development and integration into the global economy have had considerable effects on the lives of Indigenous Yucatecans (see Thompson 1974; Re Cruz 1996; Forand 2002; Kray 2007; Loewe 2010). Small-scale subsistence agriculture, the traditional mode of production in the Yucatan since pre-Columbian times, has declined as national policy has directed the regional economy toward export-oriented production and tourism. Since the development of Cancún as a center for international tourism in the 1970s, the tourist industry has become a mainstay of the regional

economy and a source of work for Indigenous Yucatecans, many of whom alternate regularly between village and resort.

Participation in the tourist and export industries, and in international labor migration to the United States, has affected Maya people and communities in two respects that are critical to my research problem. First, it has facilitated their further integration into a cash economy and global consumer culture. Second, it has promoted increased interaction with non-Indigenous Spanish-speaking Mexicans and international tourists. These cross-cultural and cross-linguistic encounters are sensitizing Maya speakers' ethnolinguistic consciousnesses. Kray (2005) observes among villagers of Dzitnup that increased contact with outsiders, particularly tourists, has brought them to heightened awareness of differences among themselves and with respect to others. The interconnectedness of these economic and sociolinguistic processes is especially evident in Yucatec speakers' use of radio, television, and computers—commodities that, by and large, bring the Spanish language and Western genres into the village or town.

Recent ethnographic research shows that these broader developments have also promoted tensions and rifts within Maya communities. Christine Kray, for example, finds that men and women have fared quite differently in the globalized Yucatecan economy. "In many Yucatecan villages," she observes, "the number of income-generating activities for men has declined while those for women have increased, leading to the present situation, in which most households depend in part on female income" (2007, 17). In the late 1980s, during her fieldwork in Chan Kom (a community made well-known by Redfield), Alicia Re Cruz found political life to be structured by two opposing factions, *los de Cancún* and *los Antiguos*. The former faction is wealthy in cash from working in Cancún, while the latter's wealth resides in private village land and cattle. In their struggle for political control over the community, *los de Cancún* put their

material wealth on display by financing important civic and ritual events, while *los Antiguos* represent themselves as the true keepers of an ancestral way of life under threat (Re Cruz 1996, 54–78). Thus, not only have traditional modes of economic and domestic production been in flux in Maya communities; these modes have been subject to refashioning *as* traditional in local politics.

Yucatec Maya advocates classify their ethnolinguistic group just as academics classify it: the Mayas are an Indigenous people of the Yucatán whose cohesion is based on shared ancestry, language, and cultural institutions. The classification—Maya as a token of the *Indigenous* type—is widely recognized among Mayas, but two factors complicate or inhibit self-recognition *as* genealogically Maya: the limited sociohistorical basis of Maya ethnic identity and negative social meanings associated with the *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous' label. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, Yucatec Maya speakers refer to their language as *maaya*, and they call themselves *mayeros* 'Maya speakers,' but many hesitate to identify themselves as Maya precisely because of the historical equation of Maya with stigmatized identities linked to indigeneity (in particular, as *indio*). They have long utilized other terms of identity, such as *mestizo* ('mixed'), *óotsil* ('poor'), *ts'uul* ('foreigner, lord'), and *catrín* ('dandy').[5] Three of the categories, which I discuss at present, overlap significantly with *maaya* as a group designation: *mestizo*, *máasewal* (*macehual*, a Spanish loan from Nahuatl), and *indio*.

The terms *mestizo* and *máasewal* have strong folk-cultural connotations in the Yucatán. Both may be glossed as 'Indian,' but *mestizo* tends to indicate someone that wears traditional regional clothing more than it serves as an ethnic designation. This is peculiar to the Yucatán

[5] Discussions of these and other identities are provided by Fallaw (1997), Hervik (2003), Gabbert (2001, 2004), Armstrong-Fumero (2009), and Loewe (2010).

peninsula; elsewhere in Mexico and Latin America, *mestizo* designates 'mixed' Spanish and Indigenous descent. *Máasewal* is used in place of the Spanish loan *indígena* 'Indigenous' in standardized Yucatec Maya, but the negative ethnic and social connotations of *máasewal* are more comparable to those of 'Indian' in American English (and *indio* 'Indian' in Spanish). The category is strongly associated with low social class, and many deem it pejorative for that reason.[6] Yucatec Maya speakers consider the term *indio* 'Indian' to be especially derogatory, and therefore do not voluntarily self-identify as such.[7] Gabbert writes, "The terms *masewal* and *indio* are associated with ignorance, rudeness, bad manners, etc. and used—behind their back—to belittle someone. If somebody is poor and ignorant it is said that 'he is very Indian' (*es muy masewal* or *es hach indio*). To talk vulgarly is called 'to talk very Indian' (*hablar muy masewal*, *hach masewal ku t'an*)" (2001, 482).

Historical evidence of Maya group identity is limited. As Fallaw observes, "Extant documents from the 1930s written by Maya-speaking peasant authors exhibit little evidence of a Maya identity or consciousness. In dealings with non-peasants, individuals and communities identified themselves as poor campesinos (peasants), ejidatarios, or members of political parties (Socialist), but only rarely did peasants represent themselves as Maya" (1997, 574). Eiss, in a study of late nineteenth century Hunucmá, claims that the terms Yucatec Maya speakers used to refer to themselves carried strong ethnic connotations, but foregrounded class, poverty, or place of residence (2008, 530).

[6] The term appears variably as *macehual*, *máasewal*, *máasewáal*, and *masewal* in scholarly literatures.
[7] Loewe notes that one use of *mestizo* is as a euphemism for the "forbidden" term *indio* (2010, 8).

The Caste War of Yucatan, likewise, was not waged neatly along ethnic lines. In this "Indian uprising," which erupted in the middle of the nineteenth century, local loyalties—regional, political, religious—often superseded bonds of perceived ethnicity, or perhaps even operated in their absence (Gabbert 2004; see also Reed 1964). Looking even further back and finding scant evidence in colonial texts for an overarching Maya ethnicity, Restall (1997, 2004) argues that identity among Indigenous Yucatecans before and into the colonial period was ordered primarily on principles of town residence, lineage, and class.

In light of these historical observations, the fact that notions of a distinctly Maya identity have taken hold among many Yucatec Maya speakers suggests that a contemporary ethnogenesis is underway. Restall claims that "modern Maya ethnogenesis had to invent Maya ethnic identity because there was no Maya ethnic self-consciousness in pre-modern times to which Mayas could awake" (2004, 65). Similarly, Gabbert views Maya ethnic identity in the Yucatán as "ethnic consciousness in the making" (2004b, 161). Claims to Maya identity appear to be on the rise, especially among upwardly mobile Maya-Spanish bilinguals and even Spanish monolinguals (Guerrettaz 2019; Rhodes 2016). "Maya" is commonly used as an ethnocultural label in the Yucatecan press, governmental publications, and academic works. One regularly encounters references to *pueblos mayas* 'Maya peoples/towns,' *comunidades mayas* 'Maya communities,' and even *etnia maya* 'Maya ethnicity' (e.g., Ruiz Canduriz and Boffil 2019; Xiu Chan 2021).

Advocacy of Maya identity in the Yucatán is therefore not what it appears to be on its face, that is, the public expression of "the Maya" as a solidary, if marginalized, ethnolinguistic group. Rather, advocates labor to persuade modern Mayas of their authenticity as Mayas, and to disentangle Maya identity from certain stereotypes of 'Indian' (*indio*, *máasewal*) identity. As this dissertation will make clear, official designations of Maya language and identity are not simple

formalizations of folk categories. They are ideologically mediated translations in the service of social projects administered, for the most part, by the Mexican government. But crucially, the translations are informed, achieved, and espoused by Mayas in the employ of governmental organizations.

Language is a focal domain for Maya advocacy on the peninsula. Yucatec Maya is undergoing displacement by Spanish, as mentioned at the outset of the chapter. Speakers very often profess to speak only a 'mixed' (*xa'ak'a'an*) variety of Yucatec Maya that includes Spanish forms. The 'real' Maya language (*jach maaya*), they explain, was spoken by ancestors and is today only spoken by other people elsewhere on the peninsula (Berkley 1998; Pfeiler 1998; Rhodes 2020). Educational programs and media projects aim to counteract language shift and raise the social status of Yucatec Maya language and speakers.

These language maintenance efforts proceed by way of standardization on the European model. Maya *normalización* 'standardization' is led by "government linguists" (Guerrettaz 2019) at the National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI), a federal agency that works in collaborates with Mexico's Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) on matters of Indigenous education. At present, standardized Maya is mostly limited to academic and mediatized contexts. Recently, Guerrettaz has studied the implementation of Maya linguistic norms among Indigenous education teachers. She found "vast variation" in the written Maya used in classrooms. Furthermore, she reports, "Groups of key stakeholders in language planning–Maya language learners, teachers, linguists, administrators, and activists–upheld different models of Maya" (2019, 62).

Today's standardization of Yucatec Maya language is laminated onto the standardizing legacies of Spanish colonization and the later development of the modern Mexican nation. Hanks

(2010) shows that the spatial and political reordering of colonial Yucatecan society crucially involved a reordering of language. The Spanish method of conquest was *reducción* 'reduction,' a term whose meanings included convincing, conversion, ordering, and pacification.[8] Hanks argues that the linguistic dimension of *reducción*, which regimented Maya language for missionary and governmental purposes, produced a neologistic register of Maya (*Maya reducido*) that would eventually become appropriated by Maya people. The rise of the Mexican nation-state decentered the project and introduced new managers of the language, namely, governmental appointees tasked with managing *asuntos indígenas* 'Indigenous affairs.' Consequently, linguistic diversity became a national-administrative problem, in addition to being an obstacle to religious conversion.

A key point in the modern standardization of Yucatec Maya occurred in the early 1980s, when institutions of education convened to settle on a unified alphabet for the language. The *alfabetización* 'literacy' process represents a pivotal forerunner to today's *normalización* 'standardization' project. Brody (2004) finds, remarkably, that the process was not initially organized on grounds of Maya identity:

> Although some of the representatives of those institutions were Mayas, their status as members of the Yucatec Maya community does not appear to have played any role in the initiation process. Neither in the published minutes nor in any conversation or interview about the meetings is there any evidence that identity as a Maya was an active factor in any part of the process. (Brody 2004, 161)

This compares interestingly with the Guatemalan case, where Brody notes that Maya language was viewed, at the outset of their alphabet adoption process, "not only as a cultural element to be defended and protected, but also as a strong tool in the Maya Movement as a whole" (2004, 161).

[8] For a concise explanation of the scope of *reducción*, see Hanks 2012, 450–6.

Since the 1990s, and increasingly, Maya language advocacy and standardization in the Mexican Yucatán have been justified in terms of identity, multiculturalism, and universal rights. Advocates and standardizers routinely deploy "expert rhetorics" of the sort that Jane Hill (2002) identifies in contexts of language "endangerment": enumeration, hyperbolic valorization, and universal ownership. The establishment of a Yucatec Maya standard is deemed necessary to avoid losing the language, interpreted as a vessel for Maya culture and an irreplaceable heirloom of modern Mayas and humanity in general. Maya ethnolinguistic identity is held to warrant the establishment of a standard language for the group. At the same, the establishment of said standard legitimates Yucatec Maya speakers' ethnolinguistic identities before national and global publics.

The authors of 'Writing norms for the Maya Language' (*U nu'ukbesajil u ts'íibta'al maayat'aan/Normas de escritura para la lengua maya*, Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014), a landmark publication for the Maya *normalización* 'standardization' project, justify their work in terms of the cultural value that Maya language holds for Maya speakers as well as 'outsiders' (Sp., *ajenos*):

> Maya is one of the Indigenous languages with the most speakers and the most use in daily life. It is spoken in Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatán. It is also one of the most studied by locals and outsiders, who have admired the conception of the world presented by Maya thought and culture. However, little writing has been developed. The standardization of the writing system will therefore promote the development and dissemination of contemporary Maya language and, consequently, culture, because it will contribute to the production of all types of texts and their use in all areas of life for Maya speakers. (my translation; Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014, back cover)

Managers of Maya *normalización* 'standardization' aspire to more than linguistic and cultural maintenance, as the foregoing quotation indicates. They see, in a Maya standard, an ideal mode of *desarrollo* 'development' and medium of self-representation for Indigenous

Yucatecans. Yet, most Maya speakers do not have command of standardized Maya. The register is largely confined, at present, to a narrow range of classrooms and media outlets.

The popular accessibility of standardized Maya is limited not only by the institutional boundaries of *normalización* 'standardization,' but also by the language-ideological commitments of the register's designers and users. A principal method of standardizers is lexical de-Castilianization, that is, the attempted removal of Spanish loanwords and replacement with Maya lexemes (Berkley 1998 and 2001; Guerrettaz 2019; Rhodes 2020).[9] The meanings of many of the lexical replacements, typically uncommon neologisms and archaisms, are opaque to most speakers.

Indigenous Yucatecans are foci or intended recipients of the projects I have described. But they are also involved in the conception, execution, and management of this work. Mayas employed by agencies such as the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI) or National Institute of Indigenous Languages (INALI) act as Indigenous "brokers" in Wolf's (1956) sense of the term. They produce translations between Maya and Spanish; and also between the cultural conceptualizations of Maya communities and national society. These social actors also function as representatives of their ethnolinguistic constituency, 'the Mayas,' within Mexico. It is a politics of recognition in the service of a program of 'Indigenous development' (*desarrollo de los pueblos indígenas*). The undertaking is complicated by limited ethnic self-recognition among Mayas.

Given the problems of identity and recognition that I have presented, I use ethnonyms advisedly in the present work. In my research and travels on the Yucatán Peninsula, I have found

[9] Cf., Cru 2016, who observes movement away from Maya linguistic purism among some bilingual professionals.

that Mayas are often hesitant about asserting the authenticity of their Maya-ness, but never deny the identity. And for decades now, many have actively inhabited their Maya identities through their work as INI/CDI/INPI employees, Indigenous education teachers, or cultural advocates. Recently, anthropologists have documented increasing self-avowals of Maya identity among bilingual college students and teachers in Yucatán (Rhodes 2016; Guerrettaz 2020). An important question, which this dissertation will answer, is *Why do Maya speakers generally not take up their Maya identities more eagerly, especially given the outreach efforts of advocates*?

Because "Yucatec Maya" typically specifies the language, I often omit "Yucatec" in order to avoid limiting referential scope. Advocates of Yucatec Maya language are virtually always advocates of Maya ethnocultural identity, for example, so "Maya advocate" is a more apt phrase than "Yucatec Maya advocate." Though Burns (1998) describes pan-Maya ideology among bilingual schoolteachers in Yucatán, Maya advocacy in the Yucatán is not substantially articulated with the pan-Maya movement of Guatemala, to my knowledge. Rather, it operates largely within institutions of the Mexican state.[10]

The ethnonym *máasewal* is problematic because its two conventional senses, 'Indian' and 'Indigenous,' have discordant social meanings. To negotiate the issue, I typically include both English glosses, but in some instances provide only one, in order to better capture the local meaning. For example, in translational work, Maya linguists at the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) and radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas use *máasewal* to replace the Spanish *indígena* 'Indigenous.' When analyzing such texts, I gloss tokens of *máasewal* simply as 'Indigenous.'

[10] As chapter two explains, governmental mediation holds important consequences for the vision and politics of Maya advocacy in Yucatán.

I sometimes refer to Mayas as "Indigenous Yucatecans," especially when describing the work of federal agencies aimed at Indigenous populations of Mexico. Mayas are the only ethnolinguistic group that is Indigenous to Yucatán. While there are other Indigenous populations in the region, such as Tzotzil Maya migrants in the capital city of Mérida, there are no such groups in the Peto area. So, all of my references to "Indigenous Yucatecans" mean Mayas of Yucatán in particular.

This is a linguistic-anthropological study, so I often refer to Mayas as "Maya speakers," particularly when examining or emphasizing linguistic practices. The *mayero* 'Maya speaker' category is not an ethnolinguistic designation. Nonetheless, virtually all Maya speakers at my primary field sites in the Peto municipality were ethnoculturally Maya. But not all Mayas are Maya speakers; the distinction is increasingly important amid language shift to Spanish.

Theoretical Concerns and Motivations

This study is very much about media, but its primary analytical objects are social-semiotic processes: identity and group formation and linguistic differentiation. I am interested in how media technologies are used to facilitate, organize, and constrain these processes. Basic aims of this project were to document how this mediatization works in one ethnographic context of generalizable significance; and to discover what mediatization in this context reveals about these social and semiotic phenomena themselves. In this section, I lay the groundwork for this undertaking by bringing linguistic, anthropological, and social-theoretical concepts to bear on three problems: (1) the role of media and mediatized discourse in the formation of collective subjectivities; (2) intertextuality and voice; and (3) language standardization.

Publics and Politics, Modernity and Mediatization

As the appearance of a number of media-related *Annual Review of Anthropology* articles in recent decades indicates, media practices have provided a rich domain for anthropological inquiry (e.g., Spitulnik [Vidali] 1993; Wilson and Peterson 2002; Mazzarella 2004; Eisenlohr 2004, Gershon 2017). Anthropologists' engagements with media constitute a varied and burgeoning literature, but they tend to share a common commitment to locating media technologies and practices in their sociocultural, linguistic, or historical contexts.

One salient contextual problematic for many anthropologists of media has been a global-local dialectic (e.g., Mazzarella 2004; Nakassis 2016). Ethnographic studies of "Indigenous media" and media practices in the Global South exemplify this trend. Working against a cultural imperialist paradigm, numerous scholars have argued that Indigenous or otherwise subaltern populations' adoptions of media technologies from Western industrial societies do not necessarily entail assimilation or the loss of culture. Rather, these technologies are appropriated in highly local ways, according to local cultural schema and communicative orientations (Ginsburg 1991; Turner 2002; Kulick 2002; McIntosh 2010).

This predisposition to demonstrate the agentive, local sensibilities underlying apparently homogenizing and hegemonic processes aligns with a widespread resistance to technological determinism in certain (typically technology-focused) accounts of media (see Gershon 2017 for discussion). In the anthropological literature, the more a media technology's functions are understood to depend on local sociocultural context, the less they are thought to result from qualities or capacities inherent in the technological object itself. Several influential theorists, however, have attributed considerable causal power to media and media artifacts themselves (e.g., McLuhan 1964; Horkheimer and Adorno [1972]2002). An unresolved tension between

relativism and determinism lurks in the background of many contemporary social-constructionist accounts of media. This study negotiates the tension by taking seriously the conceptual and practical affordances of media developments, while remaining attentive to the capacious mediating role of established cultural conceptualizations in human practice.

Popular or mass media seem to make possible a key social feature of modernity: the integration of people into large, indeterminate groupings that transcend the limits of face-to-face interaction. Nations, television audiences, "the public"—participants in these sorts of associations do not know most of their fellow group members, let alone interact directly with them. In some respects, these groups appear to not be groups at all, and yet the "sociality among strangers" that characterizes them has, under certain circumstances, undeniable subjective content and political consequences. In anthropology and related disciplines, these sorts of communities have come to be called "publics" (e.g., Gal and Woolard 2001; Warner 2002; Hirschkind 2006; Cody 2011; Graan 2022).

Media publics have been implicated in momentous sociohistorical transformations, as Anderson's *Imagined Communities* ([1983]2006) and Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* ([1962]1989) illustrate. Both theorists offer analyses in which media function as infrastructure for collective political agency. Anderson credits "print capitalism" with enabling the emergence and spread of nationalism. In Habermas's account, the emancipatory bourgeois public sphere develops in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Western Europe through rational-critical discourse in coffee houses and salons; the face-to-face interactions in these locales inform and are informed by print-mediated exchanges in newspapers, journals, and books.

The accounts of Anderson ([1983]2006) and Habermas ([1962]1989) suggest that the mass circulation of messages can, given the right institutional conditions, promote a sense of political unity. For Anderson, the circulation of realist representational texts such as newspapers and novels allows readers to imagine their anonymous fellow citizen-readers, and, importantly, to imagine them as contemporary co-participants in a bounded linguistic-cultural-political community. Habermas sees democratic potential in a certain kind of mediated communicative intersubjectivity – rational-critical argumentation, emergent in public face-to-face interactions – and its erosion, in the commodification of civil society through media massification. In both models, the social-organizational functions of mass-mediated communication depend to some degree on participants' reflexive attunement to circulation itself.

Both influential works are studies of liberal Western modernity. Others have examined the role of textual circulation in the formation of publics in contrasting sociocultural contexts. Francis Cody, for example, has analyzed the role mass media play in populist mobilization in India, in order to rethink classical theories of the public sphere. Cody writes, "By turning to the politics of Tamil media, I seek to come to theoretical terms with a world of democratic politics in which physical force and a very embodied publicity are deeply intertwined with the printed word" (2015, 52). Contrary to Habermas, Cody describes a "nonbourgeois public" wherein participants "display an awareness of the power of representation and mass mediation; not as a universalization of disembodied voice, but more as a mass-mediated and deeply embodied battle ground organized along community sensibilities that may be at cross purposes" (2015, 62).

The notions of imagined communities and publics productively draw our attention to the links between communication, subjectivity, and political action that seem to underlie mass-mediated forms of sociality. Linguistic anthropology is uniquely suited to investigate and

illuminate these links. Examining Anderson's and Habermas's accounts through the analytical optic of *language ideology*, linguistic anthropologists have offered critiques that improve both models and pave the way for future research. Silverstein (2000) argues that Anderson, by envisioning language through a popular Whorfian imagination, unwittingly takes the ideology of (standard) national language at face value. This prevents Anderson from seeing the contested, heteroglossic reality of cultures of standardization, and causes him to overlook the social-semiotic and institutional processes whereby "discursive regimes come into being and by which they effloresce and take hold of the subjectivities of populaces" (Silverstein 2000, 123). In a reconsideration of the notion of "public sphere," Gal argues that, while circulations of face-to-face and mass-mediated messages do allow for "mutual awareness and transnational engagement across languages," they do not create Habermasian rational-critical discourse or political unity (2006, 166). Her critique detects unexamined ideologies of standard language in the Habermasian model: the assumption of neutral, anonymous public messages, devoid of any orientation to status among participants. Contra this image of language, Gal argues that speakers always make assumptions about the social identities of their intended addressees, no matter how open or hypothetical the audience might be, and that these calculations inevitably affect the composition of the message in socially consequential ways (2006, 173–4).

A more recent contribution linguistic anthropologists have made to the study of media is the notion of *mediatization* as a narrow, special case of semiotic *mediation*. Mediatization reflexively links social-communicative processes to processes of commoditization (Agha 2011, 163). The distinction between mediation and mediatization draws our attention away from particular communicative technologies and toward social-semiotic processes that have "moments" in which they are linked to mediatized objects and moments in which they are not.

As Agha observes, “Mediatized practices occur inside the media but also outside them. And most mediatized objects are not associated with ‘the media’ at all” (2011, 164). He contends that the notion of “the media” conflates mediation and mediatization by extracting “focal objects of media talk from the semiotic activities that precede and follow them” (Agha 2011, 165).

The mediatization concept thus invites us to leave behind familiar analytical constructs like “production/reception” in order to attend to interdiscursivity between events. Constantine Nakassis does precisely this in *Doing Style* (2016), his book on youth and mass mediation in Tamil Nadu. Nakassis problematizes the “textualist ideology” of the *reception* notion (2016, 184) and argues, instead, that we should view mediatized text (film text, in the cited case) as one part, or phase, in a larger semiotic process…” (2016, 219).

The notion of *media ideologies*, too, is useful for analyzing the mediatization of Yucatec Maya language. Speakers’ ideas about the role, function, and capacities of media technologies consequentially shape the way that the technologies are employed for prescriptive sociolinguistic ends. As Gershon notes:

> …discussing media ideologies in conjunction with language ideologies can raise productive questions about how media ideologies and language ideologies intertwine. While media ideologies and language ideologies may mutually constitute each other, they do not always easily align with one another—this depends on the ethnographic context. (2010, 284)

The relationship between media ideologies and language ideologies bears crucially on two interrelated social processes that are key in this ethnographic context: on the one hand, current (attempted) mobilizations of ‘the Maya’ as a self-conscious group and, on the other hand, the ongoing enregisterment of a purportedly de-Castilianized Maya standard. Ensuing chapters document important alignments and disagreements between ideologies of language and media.

Chapter three, for example, examines radio announcers' competing commitments to linguistic purism and referentially effective mass communication.

Intertextuality and Voice

Media are popularly celebrated as metaphorical platforms for public expression, individual and collective, but the voicing phenomena of mediatized publics are more complicated than the metaphor suggests. Some of the complexity of mediatized voices owes to the fact that media projects transpire in specific institutional locales and are mediated, to varying degrees, by nation and market.

Consequently, institutional motivations and interests shape mediatized voices in myriad ways. The influences are apparent in the authorship (who gets voiced), topical content (what gets voiced), and ostensive purposes (e.g., entertainment) of media products. As Herman and Chomsky ([1988]2002) show in *Manufacturing Consent*, the ideological effects of political and economic influences on mass media can be pervasive and consequential, even in the absence of overt coercion by governmental or corporate agencies.

These dynamics complicate the roles and voices of media figures, who often advertise commercial products or advance governmental objectives even as they inform or entertain their audiences. Media figures regularly appear as hybrid unions of biographical selves and broadcasting personae. And mass-mediatized discourse often simulates everyday talk, though it typically has markedly different *production formats* (Goffman 1981, 144–6). For example, an actor who animates a script typically also attempts to persuasively appear as the text's author and principal.

The role of the Mexican state in voicing the Mayas presents a pressing social issue, especially in light of the historical program of nationalist assimilation outlined above. Yucatec

Maya media production is mostly a government-mediated undertaking, as is Maya language and ethnocultural advocacy generally. The issue is complicated by the fact that many employees at state-funded institutions of Maya advocacy are themselves Maya. Such actors inform, carry out, and even direct various projects aimed at Maya culture, language, and people.

Media publics exhibit complex spatial and temporal dynamics, as well. At the heart of Anderson's claims about the nationalist imagination are the subjective spatiotemporal affordances of print media circulation, including the sense that one is part of something like a "sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time" on a historical trajectory ([1983]2006, 26). And well before talk of "space-time compression" (Harvey 1990; see also Castells 2000), Marshall McLuhan made the claim that electric light and power, radio, telegraph, telephone, and television "eliminate time and space factors in human association" (1964, 9).

The related concepts of *intertextuality* and *interdiscursivity* help us analyze how media publics integrate social collectivities of (mostly) strangers across spatial and temporal distances. The term intertextuality, which derives from Mikhail Bakhtin by way of Julia Kristeva's ([1966]1986) formulation (Briggs and Bauman 1992; Martínez Alfaro 1996), offers a dialogic perspective on textual meaning, that is to say, it facilitates the analysis of semiotic processes through which speakers create and construe relationships between texts. Intertextuality specifies a type of interdiscursivity that constructs structural relationships of likeness between events of discourse (Silverstein 2005).

Mass media are technologies of intertextuality and interdiscursivity more broadly. They facilitate and amplify processes whereby discourse is *entextualized* and, subsequently, *decontextualized* and *recontextualized* in new usages (on these concepts, see Bauman & Briggs

1990; Silverstein & Urban 1996). In her study of radio discourse in Zambia, for example, Spitulnik [Vidali] shows how chunks of discourse from broadcasts circulate among communities and become "common linguistic reference points" (1997, 163). Her ethnographic examples of decontextualization and recontextualization illustrate how interdiscursive processes create new meanings even as they depend on presupposable similarities in interactional structure between events. Such ethnographies of media "reception" also reveal limits of Herman and Chomsky's ([1988]2002) propaganda model of mass media.

Briggs and Bauman (1992) productively link generic intertextuality to questions of identity and social power. Because there is never a perfect fit between a text and its generic model, they argue, the use of genre always produces an "intertextual gap" that speakers can strategically manipulate in their genred entextualizations. By minimizing intertextual gaps speakers can utilize "conservative, traditionalizing modes of creating textual authority"; by maximizing and drawing attention to intertextual gaps, they can pursue authority on grounds of individual creativity (Briggs and Bauman 1992, 149).

Yucatec Maya language advocates are working to gain control over authoritative textual genres, such as schoolbooks, news reports, and governmental declarations. That is to say, advocates aim to have the genres available 'in Maya' (*ich maaya*) language, just as they are available in Spanish language. The endeavor is understood to advance Indigenous-developmental goals by providing essential information to Maya citizens, many of whom have limited Spanish proficiency, in 'their own language.' Additionally, the rendering of Yucatec Maya language in authoritative genres advances the language and its speakers in a politics of recognition within Mexico.

This expansion of Yucatec Maya language into new genres is mediated by the standardization project that I described above. Increasingly, one of the key effects of Yucatec Maya language advocacy is the circulation of images of standard language and standard speakers. The following section conceptualizes the problem of language standardization from a linguistic-anthropological perspective.

Language Standardization

A basic component of this project is the investigation of Maya ethnolinguistic identity under an emerging culture of language standardization. Though ideologies of standard language center on linguistic form and usage, standardization is not a narrowly linguistic process. Rather, language standardization fundamentally involves social identities and differentiations, which are perennial theoretical concerns in the social sciences.

Linguistic anthropologists have in recent years developed a framework that improves our ability to analyze this problem space. Even in light of critiques of the concept's analytical primacy (Cameron and Kulick 2003), identity remains vital to our understanding of how macro-sociological orders are made immanent in, and remade by, speakers' interactions (Kroskrity 2000; Silverstein 2003; Joseph 2004). By distinguishing between social groups and categories, we are better able to attend to the ideological mediations and social realities of ethnoliguistic groups, nations, and other social configurations (see Brubaker 2002 and 2009).

Anthropologists attentive to language use have shown identity—and alterity (Hastings and Manning 2004)—to be social-semiotic achievements; speakers perform them by indirectly signaling variable alignment to categories of social group in and by engaging in other (lower-order) indexical acts (Ochs 1992; Silverstein 2003). The concepts *register* and *enregisterment* contribute to our understanding of the relationship between identity and linguistic differentiation.

Registers develop and change through processes of enregisterment, wherein particular linguistic and non-linguistic signs become recognized as indexes of certain types of speakers and qualities stereotypically associated with them (Agha 2005, 2007). The enregisterment process referred to as language standardization, a process with which this project is concerned, constitutes a rich domain for linguistic-anthropological research and theory.

Under a regime of language standardization, institutions gain hegemony over a language community's *functionally differentiated denotational norm of usage*, and speakers recognize and defer to the institutional authorities concerning the "correct" linguistic practices (Silverstein 1996). Standardization shapes speakers' identities in several important ways. In the classic instance, allegiance to the standard "national language" is emblematic of membership in the "imagined community" of the nation (see Haugen 1966; Anderson [1983]2006). As Gal observes, however, the context of standardization is always a field of contrast between varieties, in particular, between competing standards (2006). When local ethnolinguistic identities are in tension with national ones, citizens in the plurilingual nation may seek official recognition of their languages. The "fruits of Standardization" (Silverstein 1996, 300) include the institutional legitimation of identity, which confers rights and resources in modern nations. Often political sovereignty itself is at stake in debates about language and identity. One entailment of the dominant ideology of standard, Gal notes, is that "social groups are thought to deserve a state or some kind of political autonomy exactly by virtue of their supposed linguistic homogeneity and distinctness" (2006, 166).

Linguistic anthropologists have found that standardization also promotes a differentiation of social identities *within* the presumed linguistic community, that is, among people who are deemed to speak the same language. Simply put, standardized speech produces non-standard

speech and speakers. Gal (2006) identifies this as one of the characteristic contradictions of language standard ideology, especially as it pertains to minority languages: the creation of standard languages always creates stigmatized forms, deemed to be non-languages, among the very speakers whose speech it is meant to valorize. Thus, standardization produces doubly marginalized speakers and, paradoxically, heterogeneity rather than uniformity (Gal 2006, 170–171). Speakers have variable access to, and command of, standard registers, and this variability corresponds to socio-economic differences that interact with categories of identity. Speakers of non-standard varieties may have anxieties about their speech and the identities to which they are linked. In the United States, Silverstein argues, the valorized qualities indexically associated with Standard English have made it a "gradiently possessible commodity," the lack of which can be seen as a personal deficit (1996, 295). Given the reflexivity of discourse, the stereotypical indexical values that accrue to a standard register can become performable emblems of any sort of identity (e.g., Bucholtz 2001).

Standardizing ideology tends to discourage "mixing" language because it valorizes distinct denotational codes (Gal 2006). This produces boundaries that can be policed and manipulated for "identity work" – positively or negatively valorized – via code-switching or strategic use of "bivalency" (Woolard 1999). In contexts where a particular language variety is firmly linked to ethnic identity, one can performatively assert or even potentially alter one's ethnicity via language choices. In minority language contexts, Urciuoli notes, "the value of the minority language is often tied to a literacized and/or puristic version, so that hegemonic relations are reconstituted even through the minority language" (1995, 535). Regimes of standardization thus intensify ethnolinguistic identities even as they compromise them by creating internal, hierarchical divisions between "better" and "worse" speakers.

These standardizing ideologies do not represent something altogether new in the Yucatán. Indeed, European language practices and ideologies have been "local" in the Yucatán for centuries. Hanks (2010) argues that interactions between Franciscan missionaries and local populations in the colonial period produced new, regimented ways of speaking Maya that facilitated the reordering of people, space, and social relations, and that ultimately altered the language itself. The colonial encounter involved processes of translation that operated not just at the level of grammar, but also at the level of culturally mediated communicative assumptions and orientations (see also Hanks 1987). In light of this historical perspective and Hanks's ethnographic work (1990), in this study I ask, *How are standardizing ideologies and practices reshaping Maya speakers' referential practices at different levels*?[11]

As the widespread notion of 'mixed' (*xa'ak'a'an*) Maya indicates, Maya language communities are in fact plurilingual speech communities (as are most all speech communities, even those regimented by regimes of standard register). Within these communities there exists a great deal of linguistic diversity that is often neglected in the recent literature on Maya identity. The diversity is obscured when we frame the linguistic situation—as ethnolinguistic activists and most ethnographers do—solely in terms of Spanish versus Maya. Fortunately, there is a robust tradition of linguistic and language-focused ethnographic analysis of Maya speech and speakers that demonstrates the deep diversity among and within Maya communities (e.g., Berkley 1998; Hanks 1990; Lucy 1993; highland studies include Gossen 1971; Haviland 1988; Kockelman 2004; Shoaps 2009). This literature informs my understanding of heteroglossia within Maya

[11] John Lucy's research on Yucatec Maya grammatical categories is also helpful in this regard. Chapter five applies his analysis of plural marking (Lucy 1992) to an examination of standardized Maya in order to evaluate the register's adherence to Spanish grammatical norms.

speech communities and orients my attention to interactions between longstanding social differentiations of language and newer regimes of language.

This Study: Research Sites, Questions, and Methods

This project investigated two propositions that were motivated by scholarly literatures and my preliminary field research: First, that mediatized practices in the Maya language inevitably have to attempt to fashion a distinctly Maya voice; and further, that such mediatized practices constitute a relatively new and focal domain of discourse in which social and linguistic differences are recognized, created, and contested; second, that mediatized interactions in this cultural context derive much of their appeal, authority, and efficacy from longstanding local modes of performance.

I investigated these propositions by developing empirical material of three broad types. First, I conducted ethnographic observations at sites of Maya-language media production, and at sites and events that staged Maya culture or language. I contextualized these observations with my observations and experiences of everyday life at my field sites. Second, I conducted identity- and language-focused interviews across a range of participants in the bilingual speech community. Third, I conducted analyses of textual and material artifacts, with a focus on (1) texts composed in Yucatec Maya language and (2) Spanish-language Yucatecan media that focused topically on Maya language or identity. In combination, the three documentary approaches rendered accessible key insights that locals could provide about their practices, as well as non-verbalizable, often only implicitly communicated social facts of their interactions in Maya and in Spanish.

This study involved fifteen months of continuous ethnographic fieldwork, from January of 2013 through March of 2014, followed by several shorter periods of additional field research

between 2013 and 2018. I conducted most field research in and around Peto, a municipality in southern Yucatán, Mexico. The Peto municipality has a population of approximately 24,000, of which about 20,000 live in the administrative seat, that is, the town of Peto (INEGI 2010). In the region, the municipality is known for having a large number of Yucatec Maya speakers, though census data is somewhat inconsistent. Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) reported in 2005 that about half of the population of Peto speaks Yucatec Maya (INEGI 2005). By contrast, a state government report from 2004 lists Peto as a municipality with an "evident Indigenous majority," and identifies over 70% of inhabitants as Yucatec Maya speakers (Yucatán State Government 2004, 26). It is also worth noting that the report lists Peto among the municipalities in Yucatán state with "high and very high marginalization," and the highest number of "migrant Mayan populations" (Yucatán State Government 2004). These and other relevant socio-demographic characteristics, such as religious affiliation and political party membership, are discussed in the chapters that follow.

Peto was an ideal primary site for this project not only due to its large population of Yucatec Maya speakers, but also because it is home to the popular radio station, mentioned at this chapter's outset, that promotes Maya language and culture: Radio XEPET/XHPET, La Voz de los Mayas 'The Voice of the Mayas.' Radio is one of the more consequential and analytically accessible interfaces between Indigenous advocates' nationally and globally oriented talk and the everyday discourse of Yucatec Maya speech communities. Founded by the National Indigenist Institute in 1982 and now operating under the auspices of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), the radio station is widely regarded as an authoritative site for Maya language and culture. The radio announcers employed by The Voice of the Mayas are fluent Yucatec

Maya speakers, and most daily talk programming at the station is conducted in Yucatec Maya.[12] The announcers are also fluent in Spanish, formally educated, and attuned to ideologies and rhetoric of Maya advocacy.

I am not the first to conduct research at The Voice of the Mayas. For years, the station's announcers and director have welcomed visitors from academic institutions in and beyond Mexico. Antoni Castells-Talens conducted research at the station for his doctorate in Mass Communication. His dissertation investigated the radio station as a site for the "negotiation of indigenist policy" in Mexico (Castells-Talens 2004). Castells-Talens' work offers a wealth of information and insights about the role of Indigenous radio in Mexican state formation—and, conversely, about the role of the Mexican state in shaping the mission and messages of The Voice of the Mayas and government-run radio stations.

The present study differs, however, from Castells-Talens' research project in a number of ways. Due to my linguistic-anthropological perspective (in contrast to Castells-Talens' policy and communications studies approach), I develop different research problems and employ different analytical concepts that include *register* (Agha 2007), *indexical fields* (Eckert 2008), and *language ideology* (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994). And in contrast to his study's focus on radio producers, my research deals extensively with radio listeners, as well as announcers. Another key difference concerns language. Castells-Talens deftly locates the Yucatec Maya language in Mexico's political economy, but does not analyze actual forms or uses of the language. I conducted my fieldwork in Yucatec Maya and examine its use extensively in the coming chapters.

[12] This was the case, at least, during the course of my field research. As Castells-Talens (2004) notes, the proportion of broadcast time devoted to Yucatec Maya versus Spanish has changed over the years, depending on the station's directorship and on governmental language policy.

The basic empirical questions that guided my research among radio announcers and listeners were as follows: How does The Voice of the Mayas operate as an institution of ethnolinguistic advocacy amid its other functions? In what ways do the announcers represent and promote Maya identity in their broadcasts? Is there popular uptake of this "identity work" among Maya listeners in the Peto municipality? What role does the radio station play in the ongoing standardization of Maya language? How do the station's announcers negotiate between the norms of the emerging standard and the needs of their listeners? And how do listeners understand and interpret the speech of the station's Maya broadcasts?

At the radio station, I worked closely with announcers in order to understand the interactional and ideological labor that went into their day-to-day formulations of Maya voices. Throughout the course of my field research, I observed and participated in the daily routines of the station, both in the studio and in the office and archive spaces. I interviewed announcers and employees, recorded and analyzed broadcasts, attended staff meetings, and participated in day-to-day workplace interactions. I also made short visits to The Voice of the Mayas's sister stations on the peninsula: The Voice of the Great People (Radio XENKA/XHNKA) in Quintana Roo, and The Voice of the Heart of the Rain Forest (Radio XEXPUJ) in Campeche. At those stations, I observed broadcasts and interviewed announcers.

In Peto, I examined the organizational relationship between The Voice of the Mayas and its parent agency, the Commission on the Development of Indigenous Peoples (now INPI, the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples). This helped me to determine the degree to which CDI/INPI shapes the radio station's programming and objectives. It also enabled me to understand how Yucatec Maya language media fit into the Mexican government's larger set of policies concerning its Indigenous citizens. Yucatec Maya radio producers also participate in less

formal networks that include bilingual teachers, Maya glyph and literacy workshop participants, and Indigenous activists. I investigated these networks via my connections at the radio station. This facet of my research occasionally took me to other locations on the peninsula (usually the capital city of Mérida).

I also examined the relationship between the radio station and its listeners. Ostensibly, and in fact, broadcasting "the voice of the Mayas" involves making listeners' voices heard. I attended to the various ways the radio announcers did this, such as on-air interviews with listeners and via the station's public message service. As chapter two explains, listeners from the town and beyond regularly visit the station in order to deliver greetings and announcements, which are read by announcers during live broadcasts. In contrast to this rather direct voicing of listeners, the radio announcers also create fictionalized representations of local social types for entertainment programming (see chapter four). These different voicings are a vital part of the radio station's implicit representational work.

Notwithstanding Agha's (2011) and Nakassis's (2016) compelling critiques of the "production/reception" model in media studies, the dichotomy can be useful for methodological purposes, so long as we remember that acts of production and reception are moments in interdiscursive chains. Media producers are central to this study, but so are the ideologies and communicative practices of Yucatec Maya speakers who are not formally involved in the promotion of Maya language or identity, especially insofar as they are the intended recipients of language standardization and cultural advocacy projects. Most Maya speakers do not read printed Maya, a prime vehicle for the normative claims about Maya language and identity emanating from institutional centers. Through its broadcasts, the radio station is able to deliver these prescriptions to a vast number of Yucatec Maya speakers. Every day, for example, listeners

hear *maaya* used to refer not just to the Yucatec Maya language, but also as an ethnocultural label for contemporary people. And listeners hear Yucatec Maya neologisms and archaisms used in place of the Spanish loans that they use in their own speech.

To investigate these issues, I spent roughly half of my fieldwork time conducting observations and interviews among Maya speakers not directly involved in advocacy or standardization work, both in the town of Peto and in surrounding communities. I maintained a house in a nearby village in order to immerse myself in the daily routines and communicate practices of Maya speakers. The village, which I refer to with the pseudonym Yaxlol, has a population of approximately 700. The vast majority of adult residents of Yaxlol speak Yucatec Maya as their first language. Most adults also speak Spanish to varying degrees, though elderly residents tend to be monolingual Yucatec Maya speakers. Children in the village are typically Spanish-Yucatec bilinguals or Spanish speakers with passive comprehension of Yucatec Maya. Residents of Yaxlol do not speak standardized Maya, but they do engage in the mention-mode discussions about *jach maaya* 'real Maya' that Berkley (1998) and others have described. Everyone in the village hears the standardized register on the radio. (Chapter three describes locals' comprehension of the register.) Most residents of Yaxlol are poor and many are 'peasant farmers' (*campesinos*). Some Yaxlol residents work in the nearby town of Peto.

In the village Yaxlol and comparable locales nearby, I assessed local engagements with the identity work and linguistic perscriptions emanating from The Voice of the Mayas and other institutional sites. One of the more productive methods I employed was listening to the radio with friends and neighbors. I noticed which sorts of radio content elicited discussion, and which did not. When an announcer said something during a broadcast that pertained to my research

questions, I asked my interlocutors for clarification. (I did this, for example, when an announcer used a Maya neologism or deployed an identity category in a way that Maya listeners did not.)

Throughout my field research, I recorded broadcasts and collected texts published in Maya for comparative analysis. Archived publications include dictionaries, didactic texts, governmental reports, news articles, and magazines. As the following chapters show, variations between these texts illuminate the incipient status of the standardized register. Commonalities between them reflect the organizing ideological motivation of de-Castilianation, and the pressure of Spanish grammatical norms on standardized Maya. I contextualize my analyses of these texts with data from field observations and interviews.

Given the problems and questions outlined above, this dissertation is significant in part by virtue of its research sites. Studies of Yucatec Maya language standardization tend to be conducted at sites of formal education or research (e.g., Rhodes 2016; Guerrettaz 2020). Local subjects for these studies are often academics, schoolteachers, or students. Accordingly, they tend to be educated Spanish-Maya bilinguals, or Spanish monolingual students of Yucatec Maya.

By contrast, I conducted my field research amid a large population of non-standard Yucatec Maya speakers, most of whom had limited formal education, in relation to my primary institutional site for this study, a radio station in southern Yucatán, an institution that mediates discourse *between* educated bilinguals and non-standard Yucatec Maya speakers. The station's announcers thus represent a special figure in Maya advocacy because they are ambiguously positioned with respect to the ethnolinguistic ideologies discused above. The announcers are educated bilinguals, but as fluent Yucatec Maya speakers and community members they are also accustomed to the norms of non-standard speakers. And while the announcers support preservation in the domains of language and culture, they are not professional activists. (In this

sense, they stand in a mediating position *between* professional Maya activism/standardization and non-standard-speaking Mayas not involved in advocacy work.) Indeed, I found that some saw themselves more as radio producers that happened to be Maya than as guardians of Maya language and culture on a prescriptive mission.

Of course, I readily encountered the latter sentiment at the station, as well. My point here is that radio announcers are interestingly caught between rival norms of language and that to adequately appreciate this fact, and how it illuminates larger issues of significance for Maya language politics and identity, requires us to look at the *relationship* between, on the one hand, mediatized (radio) discourse and its uptake among wider Maya populations and, on the other hand, between this relationship and larger standardizing and advocacy projects. Radio announcers' negotiation of these linked relations, the following chapters explain, consequentially affects the enregisterment of a Yucatec Maya standard.

To lay the groundwork for analyzing these relations, chapter one locates Maya advocacy at the intersection of two contextual fields. The first is the governmental administration of Indigenous affairs within Mexico; the second is formed by the identities and practices of the 'the Mayas' of Yucatán. The chapter offers an introduction to projects of Maya advocacy in the Peto municipality of southern Yucatán, the primary research site for this study. I introduce the social type of *professional Maya advocate* and identify *development* and *standardization* as two principal means and ends of state-mediated Maya advocacy. Next, I provide an introduction to the prevailing local model of indigeneity in the Peto area. The chapter establishes the basis for a key finding of this study, documented in subsequent chapters: There exists wide support for Maya advocacy among Mayas of southern Yucatán, but narrow uptake of advocates' linguistic prescriptions and invitations to ethnic solidarity.

Chapter two examines how radio announcers at Radio XEPET/XHPET 'The Voice of the Mayas' cultivate their Maya listening public within a wider listenership. I survey programming content and then provide an analysis of broadcast speech that shows how radio announcers routinely organize their listeners along ethnic lines. Next, I interpret the identity work of radio announcers against the perspectives of local Maya listeners. In addition to charting limits of Maya ethnicity in southern Yucatán, the chapter illustrates how institutionalizations of Maya language reformulate categories of identity. I emphasize the role of the state as principal mediator of Maya identity advocacy in the Mexican Yucatán. And I find that governmental mediation encourages the simultaneous authorization and neutralization of Maya and Indigenous identities, largely for national-administrative ends.

Chapter three investigates how Maya radio announcers negotiate their competing commitments to a purified Maya standard and the so-called *xa'ak'a'an* 'mixed' Maya that is spoken by their listeners. While the radio announcers employ a markedly purified register of Maya, I find that they also restrain their purism in ways that reflect their institutional objectives. The chapter clarifies the relation between Radio XEPET/XHPET 'The Voice of the Mayas' and the Maya *normalización* 'standardization' project that is currently underway, as well as the relation between *jach maaya* 'real Maya' purism and standardized Maya. My comparison of purist conventions of Maya radio with those of printed Maya provide insight into the current state of Maya language standardization. I find that Maya purism is common, but purified Maya is not uniform. Additionally, I show that Maya *normalización* reconfigures the semiotic values that structure *jach maaya* as a field of conceptualization and communicative practice. My analysis of these structured differentiations helps me account for the limited popular adoption of standardized Maya that I report in the chapter.

Chapter four shows that enduring local conceptions of authentic Maya-ness and indigeneity complicate the ethnolinguistic advocacy work of institutions such as The Voice of the Mayas. Maya language advocates interpret a purified Maya standard as an emblem of social 'development' (*desarrollo*) and modernity. While everyday Maya speakers recognize authenticity in linguistic purity, their vision of Maya authenticity conflicts with that of standardizers. The radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas are aligned, institutionally and ideologically, to the ongoing *normalization* 'standardization' of Maya language. Their alignment is moderated, however, by their roles as public communicators and habituation to local speech norms. I show that while the announcers broadcast standardized Maya and its attendant ideologies, they also circulate countervailing local values. Though the radio station calls itself the "voice" of the Mayas, the announcers utilize radio programming genres in order to channel and construct multiple, different Maya voices.

Chapter five reveals that the emerging Maya standard, despite its marked lexical purism, applies various conventions of Spanish language. I first show that Maya language advocates directly assume Spanish registers and genres as models for the development of Maya language. I then demonstrate that adherence to certain Spanish syntactic patterns in standardized Maya represents an important basis for divergence between the register and (conventionally) spoken Maya. In contrast to lexical borrowing, which inspires discourses on 'mixed' language and culture, these Spanish influences do not typically feature in the metapragmatic discourse of Maya speakers. My analysis sheds light on limits of Maya purism, a dominant ideological force in Maya language advocacy and standardization.

Chapter One

Mayas of Peto, Yucatán: Official Designations and Local Interpretations

This chapter situates Maya advocacy, this dissertation's focus, in its two key contextual fields. The first is the governmental administration of Indigenous affairs within Mexico, primarily through federal and state institutions. The enterprise includes the maintenance of Indigenous languages and cultural practices. It confers official recognition of languages and ethnolinguistic groups. The second contextual field is formed by the identities and practices of the recipients of this advocacy, "the Maya" of Yucatán. Professional Maya advocates, that is, advocates who are themselves Maya, work at the intersection of the two fields. As government employees, they act as functionaries and representatives of the state. Yet, from the perspective of said institutions, the advocates also serve as representatives of their ethnolinguistic group. They inform and guide fellow Maya advocates who are not themselves Maya. Official designations of Maya language and identity would therefore appear as formalizations of categories that we might characterize as folk, vernacular, or local. But as this study reveals, Maya advocates transform the very categories that they assume. The ideological work integrates the categories and their members, ostensibly, into a nationalized vision of ethnolinguistic diversity. Mass media play a vital role in the semiotic undertaking by reason of their circulating capacities and institutional authorizations.

The first two sections of the chapter provide an introduction to projects of Maya advocacy in the Peto municipality of southern Yucatán, the primary research locale for this study. I describe the institutional organization and objectives of major organizations, including Radio XEPET/XHPET "The Voice of the Mayas" and its parent organization, the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI). I introduce the social role of *professional Maya advocate*

and identify two principal means and ends of state-mediated Maya advocacy, namely, *development* and *standardization*. I also justify my use of certain linguistic registers as analytical categories.

The third section of the chapter offers an introduction to the prevailing local model of indigeneity in the Peto area, which I develop over the course of the dissertation. I first show that local perceptions of indigeneity are shaped significantly by entrenched class connotations of 'Indian' identities. These indexical meanings inspire and complicate the work of Maya advocates. Next, I locate the longstanding purism of *jach maaya* 'real Maya' discourse within a larger folk model of language and personhood. Maya people in Peto construe different dimensions of their indigeneity in terms of purity, temporality, spatiality, and civility. Finally, I describe a practice-oriented notion of Maya identity that I found to be common among Maya people in Peto, who view themselves as possessing varying degrees of Maya authenticity. This "folk constructivism" contrasts with the essentialism that is usually associated with Maya identity politics and promotion (e.g., Fischer 1999; Castañeda 2004).

A key finding of this study is that there exists wide support for Maya advocacy among Mayas in southern Yucatán, but narrow uptake of advocates' linguistic prescriptions and invitations to ethnic solidarity. This chapter formulates a semiotic account for the limited uptake by delineating the sociocultural meanings that inform, but also impede, authoritative categories of language and group. Ensuing chapters will examine different dimensions of this basic problem in linguistic and ethnographic detail.

Maya Advocacy, 'Indigenous Development,' and Mass Media

In the Mexican states of Yucatán, Quintana Roo, and Campeche, one encounters a diverse field of labor that has indigeneity as its object or rationale. A thriving tourist industry is

built on the cultural legacy of the ancient Maya. Chichen Itza, Uxmal, and other archaeological sites are popular travel destinations. Various items crafted and used by modern Mayas—such as hammocks, embroidered cloth, and gourd drinking vessels—are sold on the tourist market as cultural commodities. Many restaurants offer Maya cuisine and adorn their menus with Maya iconography. Some even employ Maya women, dressed in traditional clothing, to make tortillas by hand before patrons. Clearly, emblems of Maya culture have a desirable market value.

Maya culture, language, and identity are also concerns of the Mexican government. The National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), a decentralized federal agency, oversees matters regarding Indigenous and Afro-Mexican citizens. The INPI defines its purpose as follows. (My translation from Spanish:)

> …to define, regulate, design, establish, execute, guide, coordinate, promote, monitor and evaluate policies, programs, projects, strategies and public actions, in order to guarantee the exercise and implementation of the rights of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples, as well as their comprehensive and sustainable development and the strengthening of their cultures and identities, in accordance with the provisions of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States and in the international legal instruments to which the country is a party.[1]

Several organizations work in conjunction with the INPI. The Mexican Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) coordinates *educación indígena* 'Indigenous education' programs. The National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI), linked institutionally to the SEP, aims to preserve and promote Indigenous languages in Mexico. And the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) administers Mexico's Indigenous cultural heritage through academic and conservational work. State organizations and civil associations augment the work of these federal agencies. In Yucatán, examples include municipal offices of 'Integral Family Development' (DIF) and the civil association Mayaón 'We are Mayas.'

[1] INPI. "¿Qué hacemos?" Accessed April 15, 2022. https://www.gob.mx/inpi/que-hacemos.

Yucatán is an active site for these federal agencies and related organizations because of the region's large Indigenous population and renowned archaeological sites. Formal projects seek to administer not only the socioeconomic advancement of Maya people, but also Maya culture and language themselves. Proponents of *desarrollo de los pueblos indígenas* 'Indigenous development' view the two goals as linked. At the state level, for example, Yucatán's 'Institute for the Development of Maya Culture' (INDEMAYA) intends to be "an institution that strengthens Maya culture, so that the community lives in equitable socioeconomic conditions and in full exercise of its rights."[2] Paradoxically, the program of 'Indigenous development' aims to simultaneously conserve and transform Indigenous culture. It is the communities most in need of socioeconomic development that are imagined as repositories of traditional Maya language and lifeways. But the persistence of certain Maya traditions impedes the pursuit of developmental objectives. In some families, for example, children quit their formal schooling in order to take on customary responsibilities in the *kool* 'corn plot' and household. From a developmentalist perspective, the upholding of subsistence-agricultural production and distinct gender roles limits the socioeconomic prospects of women and men.

Employees of these various institutions all serve as Maya advocates by reason of the social objectives and material resources of the institutions. Their work involves formulating and pursuing the interests of Mayas as an 'Indigenous people' of Mexico. In this dissertation, I use the term *professional Maya advocate* to refer to the social role that such actors inhabit. Individuals inhabit the role on the basis of their occupational status and responsibilities. A principal means of inhabitance is the use of standardized Maya language (discussed below).

[2] My translation from Spanish. INDEMAYA. "Misión." Accessed April 15, 2022. https://indemaya.yucatan.gob.mx/ public/secciones/ver/?alias=mision.

Though individuals act as professional Maya advocates primarily in the course of their official work, they may also inhabit the role in their personal lives. The professional Maya advocate is a highly recognizable persona in the Mexican Yucatán, owing in great measure to governmental institutionalizations of Indigenous language and culture. The *professional* component of the role reflects this institutionalization, as well as the related commoditization (viz. professionalization) of indigeneity in Mexico. It also reflects a critical and seemingly ironic social distance between professional Maya advocates and Mayas at large, whom advocates represent in both the portrait and proxy senses that Spivak (1988) distinguishes. The phrase "professional Maya (advocates)," with its ambiguous interpretation as Maya who are professionals (by class habitus, status), Maya whose profession is to advocate for Mayas (by vocation), and Maya whose profession is to be and act as Maya (i.e., as a reified public image of indigeneity), aims to capture this irony.

Professional advocates constitute an esteemed class of Mayas that acquires social and economic advantages. But not all Maya advocates are paid professionals. It is therefore suitable to refer, as well, to a more encompassing social role of *Maya advocate* that includes nonprofessionals. A wide range of Yucatecans may occupy this role in assorted ways and to varying degrees—by organizing public events that celebrate Maya culture, for example, or by speaking to the press on behalf of a Maya community. Yucatecan press outlets sometimes refer to such individuals as *promotores de la cultura maya* 'promoters of the Maya culture' or simply *promotores mayas* 'Maya promoters' (e.g., Toledo 2016).[3] The 'promoter' label is applied to professional Maya advocates, as well, though press outlets usually identify those advocates based on their profession, for example, *lingüista maya* 'Maya linguist' or *locutor(a) maya* 'Maya

[3] Because of the slightly pejorative connotations of the English "promoter," I use the more neutral term "advocate" to describe such actors.

announcer.' At the aforementioned institutional sites, nonprofessional Maya advocates sometimes assist professional advocates as advisors or volunteers. The cultivation of these relationships is an important dimension of state-mediated Maya advocacy.

Depending on their objectives, Maya advocates address their messages to varied groups, such as Maya women, Maya children, Maya language speakers, government officials, organizational affiliates, or the Yucatecan press. Individual Mayas belong to multiple such groups, many of which constitute recognized social categories in the Yucatán. Subsequent chapters investigate the ideological work that advocates bring to bear collectively on Maya language speakers, especially. Here, I want to identify another social role that Maya advocates routinely inhabit and target: *descendiente maya* 'Maya descendant.'

Modern Mayas are the descendants of ancient Mayas. Though it is an obvious point, many do *not* identify directly with their famous ancestors. They acknowledge the ancestry, but commonly view the ancient Mayas as sociocultural others. Maya advocates counter this tendency by emphasizing cultural and linguistic continuities between living Mayas and their ancestors. The continuities are variably expressed among individuals of Maya descent, however. For advocates, cultural and linguistic maintenance are a responsibility of modern Mayas as heirs to the legacy of the ancient Maya. Descent would appear to offer capacious grounds for the promotion of ethnic unity because Maya heritage is widespread on the Yucatán Peninsula. However, as chapter four explains, Mayas' ambivalent perceptions of their ancestors complicate the ideological work of advocates.

Maya advocates regard media technologies as vital resources for "strengthening" Maya culture and language. Maya media production is largely a state-mediated enterprise, funded especially through the aforementioned federal organizations, the INPI, SEP, INALI, and INAH.

Print represents the most active field of Maya media production, but Maya reading publics remain very narrow. Though many Mayas have some degree of Spanish literacy, most cannot or do not read Maya.[4] At present, Maya print is mostly used in formal academic settings or circulated via the internet. The development of internet-mediated Maya language publics is constrained by limited Maya literacy and internet access among Maya speakers. Televised Maya language represents an even more limited field. At the time of this study, there was scant Maya television programming available in Yucatán, and no Maya television programming available in the Peto municipality. Maya radio, by contrast, is highly accessible and garners popular audiences. The INPI operates Maya radio stations in each Mexican state on the peninsula: (1) In Peto, Yucatán, Radio XEPET/XHPET "The Voice of the Mayas"; (2) In Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo, Radio XENKA/XHNKA "The Voice of the Great People"; and (3) In Xpujil, Campeche, Radio XEXPUJ "The Voice of the Heart of the Rain Forest."

The Voice of the Mayas, widely known in Yucatán, is a cherished institution of the Peto municipality. Founded in 1982 by the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* 'National Indigenist Institute' (INI), the station is part of a state-owned network of Indigenous radio stations called the *Sistema de Radiodifusoras Culturales Indígenas* 'Indigenous Cultural Radio Broadcasting System' (SRCI). In 2003 the INI was replaced by the *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* 'National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples' (CDI), and in 2018 the CDI was reformulated as the *Instituto Nacional de los Pueblos Indígenas* 'National Institute of Indigenous Peoples' (INPI). At present, the INPI continues to oversee The Voice of the Mayas and other radio stations of the SRCI.

[4] Brody's (2004) doctoral dissertation on Yucatec Maya writing norms offers a close examination of Yucatec Maya literacy. See also Bengochea, et al. (2017) on bilingual print knowledge among Yucatec Maya-Spanish bilingual children.

The Voice of the Mayas has always broadcast on AM, but gained FM capabilities in 2017 (730-AM, 105.5-FM). Today, its broadcasts reach thirty-three municipalities in the States of Yucatán, Campeche and Quintana Roo. The signal range includes 677 locations on the Yucatán Peninsula: 504 in Yucatán state; 162 in Quintana Roo; and 11 in Campeche.[5] The Voice of the Mayas employs permanent staff announcers for the majority of its programming. Additionally, the station utilizes part-time volunteers that deliver a limited number of programs at the station. During the primary field research period of this study, from January 2013 through March 2014, there were nine permanent staff announcers and several part-time volunteers.

Antoni Castells-Talens studied The Voice of the Mayas for his doctoral dissertation (2004) in Journalism and Communications. He investigated the radio station as a site for the negotiation of indigenist policy in Mexico. Castells-Talens' work provides illuminating historical and political context for The Voice of the Mayas and other Indigenous radio stations in Mexico. He locates the stations within a history and ideology of *indigenismo* 'indigenism,' which provided "one of the key policies and theoretical justifications of state formation" in Mexico (Castells-Talens 2004, 3). Since its emergence in the 1920s, Castells-Talens explains, Mexican *indigenismo* sought to Castilianize ("Spanishize") Indigenous populations via education, mass media, and other means (2004, 3).

Despite the Castilianizing objectives of Mexican *indigenismo*, radio stations established by the National Indigenist Institute have broadcast in Indigenous languages since their founding. One of the earliest policy documents that Castells-Talens discovered at The Voice of the Mayas was an "organization manual of indigenist radio stations" dated 1985, just three years after the

[5] Ecos Indígenas. XEPET / XHPET. La Voz de los Mayas. Accessed April 15, 2022. https://ecos.inpi.gob.mx/xepet.

radio station's founding (Castells-Talens 2004, 126). The document lists three general objectives, reproduced below, that prefigure the goals of today's INPI and affiliated organizations, described above. We might caption the first objective "Maya advocacy." The second and third objectives fit under the heading of "Indigenous development." Both objectives remain integral to the work of The Voice of the Mayas, the INPI, and related organizations today. Indigenous advocacy is not only an objective in itself, but also a means to the goal of development. (The passage from the mission statement of INDEMAYA, quoted above, illustrates this point.)

General objectives of indigenist radio stations in 1985 (Castells-Talens 2004, 126–7)

(1) To contribute to the rescue, promotion, revalorization, and diffusion of Indigenous cultures and Indigenous groups.
(2) To support and strengthen the work of the different divisions of the Institute by broadcasting division-related educational content to promote the improvement of the living standards of the population.
(3) To provide a communication service to the inhabitants of the communities, one that fills the shortcomings of local systems of information and overcomes the barriers of [Indigenous-language] monolingualism and illiteracy. (INI, 1985 in Castells-Talens 2004).

Mexico's state-owned Indigenous radio stations are operated by Indigenous staff members, but managed by directors appointed from Mexico City, who are often not Indigenous (Castells-Talens 2004, 38). The longtime director of The Voice of the Mayas is an enthusiastic advocate of Maya language and culture, but he is not Maya and he speaks only Spanish.[6] His Maya employees are indispensable to the radio station and its parent organization as representative members of the target population. This is not merely because they can effectively communicate public messages to said population. Additionally, in the eyes of the INPI, whose offices in Peto are located alongside the radio station, the linguistic and cultural competencies of

[6] Víctor Canto Ramírez was appointed as director of the radio station when it was still an outlet of Mexico's 'National Indigenist Institute' (INI). His support of Maya language has been documented by Castells-Talens (2004) and, more recently, noted by Iturriaga Acevedo (2015).

Maya staff members enable them to better determine the needs of Indigenous citizens and to communicate those needs to program directors.

The Maya announcers also serve as public figures of Maya identity for the radio station's publics, which include Maya and non-Maya listeners. While the radio announcers' public personas are explicitly predicated on their Maya identities, others at the INPI inhabit comparable roles, albeit less visible ones, because Indigenous populations are the rationale for the Institute. Many INPI employees in Peto are Maya, and some engage local communities by managing development projects or carrying out the Institute's outreach efforts. The employees' Maya status and membership in the local community validates the organizations, for both the organizations themselves and for local community members.

The threat of linguistic and cultural loss drives Maya advocacy substantially. The use of Maya as a broadcast language amounts to linguistic advocacy, given the sociopolitical ascendancy of Spanish in the Mexican Yucatán. Over the years, the radio station has increased the proportion of broadcast Maya relative to Spanish. Castells and Kent (2002) reported that Maya-language programming constituted 56.6% of the radio station's total programming in 2000; the rest of the programming was Maya-Spanish bilingual (26%) or conducted Spanish (17.4%) (as cited in Castells-Talens 2004, 10). During my field research, all full-time announcers were fluent Maya speakers and consistently used Maya on the air. They only switched to Spanish in broadcasts when necessary, for example, when talking with a Spanish-speaking guest. Part-time volunteers that spoke on the air and had some competence in Maya were encouraged to gain fluency and use Maya for broadcasts.

Maya advocacy is also motivated by the material difficulties of Indigenous communities in the Yucatán. A national agenda of 'Indigenous development' (*desarrollo de los pueblos*

indígenas) is meant to remedy the problems through programs of education, employment, and health. In the Peto municipality, the INPI manages various projects designed to improve the socioeconomic position of local Maya communities. Women in the village of Yaxlol, for example, operate a bakery and electric corn grinding service that were established with funding and guidance from the institute's predecessor, the CDI. The radio station augments these efforts by publicizing resources and projects of the INPI. Moreover, as I explain in chapter two, developmentalist discourse inflects routine programming at the station in important ways.

The radio station and its parent organization also pursue more overt Maya advocacy. They host staged (off-air) performances of cultural traditions, including the *jarana* dance and *janal pixan* 'food for souls' rituals. Performances of such practices are common in the Yucatán and viewed as celebrations of regional folk culture. In the institutional context of the INPI and The Voice of the Mayas, the performances are conducted as official expressions of Maya identity. The radio station also convenes events of marked linguistic advocacy, as well, such as conferences on the status of Maya language and celebrations of International Mother Language Day (February 21). These events exemplify Maya advocacy in its most recognizable format.

Maya Language Standardization and *Jach Maaya* 'Real Maya'

In the governmental administration of Mayas as an Indigenous population within Mexico, language *normalización* 'standardization' represents the linguistic counterpart to socioeconomic *desarrollo* 'development.' Maya language standardization is directed by linguists at the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) in the capital city of Mérida, Yucatán. The prescriptions and recommendations of these "government linguists" (Guerrettaz 2019) guide the General

Directorate of Intercultural and Bilingual Indigenous Education (DGEIIB), which oversees Mexico's *educación indígena* 'Indigenous education' system.[7]

The current Maya language standardization process has been underway since the 1980s, but remains in an incipient state (Brody 2004; Guerrettaz 2019). At present, standardized Maya is mostly used in educational and mediatized contexts. Knowledge of the register is a professional credential, and usage of the register is a primary mode of enacting the *professional Maya advocate* persona. Maya language standardization is not merely analogous to other modes of Indigenous *desarrollo* 'development,' but rather constitutes an integral part of the developmental undertaking. *Agentes normalizadores* 'agents of standardization' aim to expand the pragmatic capacities of Maya language and enhance its social standing. The expansion is a forward-oriented intervention in the language. As the ensuing chapters demonstrate, standardization is changing the language on multiple planes (e.g., syntactic, pragmatic). Yet, architects and users of standardized Maya also strive for preservation and advocate the recovery of archaic Maya lexemes.

But linguistic purism changes the language, too. Standardized Maya differs markedly from everyday Maya, due in large part to its archaic and neologistic lexemes. This noticeable difference, among other factors, warrants our making a register distinction between standardized and everyday registers of the (Yucatec) Maya language. The other factors include the aforementioned institutionalization of standardized Maya via the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI), the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), and other governmental organizations. The INALI has published norms for writing the language (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014) and distributed them among 'Indigenous education' teachers in the Mexican Yucatán,

[7] The DGEIIB is administered by Mexico's Secretary of Public Education (SEP).

who now qualify themselves by taking a Maya language exam administered by the *educación indígena* 'Indigenous education' system (Hollingworth, et al. 2013; Guerrettaz 2019).

Standardizing ideology does not only authorize and rationalize the establishment of standard registers. It also simultaneously diminishes other registers. In the Yucatecan case, the gradual establishment and spread of a Maya standard is marginalizing the speech of most Maya speakers. The process is aided, ideologically, by the fact that Maya speakers have long regarded their language as *xa'ak'a'an* 'mixed' due to the incorporation of Spanish lexemes. Under an expanding regime of purist standardization, 'mixed' Maya is increasingly viewed as 'incorrect' Maya.

Modern Mayas measure their 'mixed' speech against *jach maaya* 'real Maya,' a supposed pure variety of the language spoken by ancestors and unspecified Maya contemporaries living elsewhere on the peninsula. Analyses of *jach maaya* have been published by Pfeiler (1998), Berkley (1998), Briceño Chel (2002), and Rhodes (2020). More often, ethnographers of the Yucatán have described the phenomenon in the course of their writings on other topics (e.g., Redfield 1941, discussed below). Castañeda, in a 2004 paper, characterized scholarly understanding of *jach maaya* as wide, but shallow: "All *Yucatecologos* know about it and on occasion make little references to it, but no one of us has produced a significant study of it and of its relationship to other historical, political, cultural, social and economic dynamics and processes" (62, endnote 8 [*Yucatecologos* 'Yucatecanists']).

In fact, Anthony Berkley had produced such a study for his (1998) doctoral dissertation, but he has not published the research in book form. Recently, researchers of education and language planning in the Yucatán have examined the *jach maaya* topic (Cru 2014, 2016; Rhodes 2020; Guerrettaz 2019, 2020). At present, Rhodes' (2020) journal article is the most recent

linguistic-anthropological publication on the subject. Her analysis illuminates current institutionalizations of *jach maaya* in Yucatán, which have developed significantly in the past two decades.

Scholarly depictions of *jach maaya* and attendant cultural practices resonate considerably with each other, though, as we would expect, the authors make varied analytical interventions. Armstrong-Fumero introduces a distinction between "Deep Maya" and "Imaginary Maya" (2009). Guerrettaz posits the concurrent existence of three "standard Mayas" in the Yucatán: (1) a "folkloric prestige variety" called *jach maaya*; (2) an "official standard" prescribed in *las normas* 'the norms'; and (3) an "elusive popular standard" emergent among activists and "autonomous linguists" (2019, 68). Rhodes contrasts "jach maaya of the past" with "contemporary, institutionalized jach maaya," which appear to her as distinct registers of jach maaya" (2020, 335-6).[8] She avoids endorsing the distinction because of political concerns, however: "I suggest that jach maaya remains undifferentiated as a linguistic register because differentiating it holds implications for contemporary politics of Maya language fortification efforts and ideas about 'Maya-ness,' both of which rely upon modern ideological frameworks" (Rhodes 2020, 338).

Scholars typically treat *jach maaya* and *xe'ek'/xa'ak'a'an* 'mixed' Maya as two varieties or registers of Yucatec Maya (e.g., Pfeiler 1998; Briceño Chel 2002; Cru 2016; Rhodes 2020). But some view *jach maaya* more as an ideological formation than a spoken variety of language. Berkley designates it a "constructed register" because "its unity depends upon the ideological dimension and its forms are characteristically mentioned as examples rather than used in direct

[8] She states the claim more strongly in her dissertation: "I argue that *jach maaya* is not one but two, unique, previously unidentified linguistic registers of Maya: ancient *jach maaya* and purist *jach maaya*. (Rhodes 2016, 6).

speech" (1998, 6). All registers are "constructed" ideologically, of course, but I find Berkley's designation compelling because Maya speakers have typically attributed *jach maaya* speech to imagined *others* at a temporal or spatial remove. Castañeda explains:

> Ethnographers of Yucatan quickly learn to overcome and then forget their shock when they first hear a monolingual Maya speaker tell them that he or she is not a Maya, that all the Maya are long gone (they are the ones who built the pyramids), and, in the same breath, that the real Maya live in a town "just over there" where "they" speak the *bil hach*—or authentically true, "really real"—Maya. Yet if one goes "there," "they" will tell you the same story about some others who live elsewhere, and who are indeed the real Maya. (Castañeda 2004, 41)

Similar claims have been reported from a variety of locales on the Yucatán Peninsula. Maya speakers often cite Valladolid, Peto, and Quintana Roo as locations where *jach maaya* speakers still reside, but the answer usually varies depending on where the question is posed (see Lucy 1989; Pfeiler 1998, 131; Briceño Chel 2002, 373). The wide distribution of recurring *jach maaya* claims suggests a model of language with a long history. The suggestion is confirmed by ethnographic and historical records. In a 1930 letter, Manuel J. Andrade reported from Yucatán to Franz Boas: "The Yucatecans distinguish between 'maya legítimo' and 'maya mestizo'. The latter is the more prevalent, the former is said to exist in distant places where the informants have never been" (Andrade 1930, 1).[9] Robert Redfield's interlocutors told him that the *jmeen* 'shaman' prayed in a form of Maya that they did not understand. "That's because he talks the true Maya," they explained, "and the Maya we talk isn't real Maya" (Redfield 1941, 236).

One might be inclined to regard *jach maaya* and standardized Maya as one and the same on the basis of their shared linguistic purism and forms. Standardized Maya utilizes many of the

[9] Special thanks to Perry Wong, who came across this letter while doing archival research and sent it to me: American Philosophical Society Library. "Andrade, M.J.: To Boas. 1930 Apr. 12." Accessed June 15, 2022. https://diglib.amphilsoc.org/islandora/object/text:6368#page/1/mode/2up.

same focal lexemes of *jach maaya* discourse. And like *jach maaya*, standardized Maya does not yet appear as an unmarked voice in ordinary *tsikbal* 'conversation' (so far as I know). In the contexts where standardized Maya *does* primarily appear, academic and educational settings, speakers engage in metapragmatic discourse focused on linguistic form and meaning. Though the speech events are more linguistically elaborated and institutionally mediated, utilizations of language in them bear resemblance to the "mention mode" discussions of *jach maaya* lexemes described by Berkley (1998).[10]

But it would be a mistake to equate standardized Maya and *jach maaya*, the latter of which is certainly older. (Andrade's informants told him about *jach maaya* some fifty years before contemporary Maya standardization took shape.) Moreover, the two registers contrast strikingly on basic repertoire characteristics as defined by Agha (2005, 47): (1) *repertoire size*, the number of forms; (2) *grammatical range*, the number of form-classes in which the forms occur; and (3) *semiotic range*, the types of appropriately co-occurring signs in use. A basic feature of *jach maaya*, noted by Berkley, is that its appearance in *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' is conventionally limited to mention mode under citational, disavowing bracketing (1998). He found that senior men did not claim to speak *jach maaya* (thus, disavowing competency); they merely claimed to 'remember' some of its forms, which they would mention (Berkley 1998; 2001, 351).

As a linguistic repertoire, *jach maaya* is primarily a collection of rare lexemes that users cite, typically in rather impromptu didactic performances. It is a register of others, be it other places or sociological others. Maya speakers also imagine the Maya used in ritual events and

[10] This is partly what makes radio so important as a resource for the development and dissemination of standardized Maya. The station's announcers employ the register in speech that approximates and models *tsikbal* 'conversation' before a wide Maya audience.

printed texts to be *jach maaya*. The perceptions reflect the social distance between those linguistic practices and everyday Maya speech. Ritual is a relatively confined domain of discourse, topically and interactionally, and *jmeeno'ob* 'shamans' and other ritual specialists constitute a narrow base of users. Printed Maya texts remain relatively rare in the Peto area, and this rarity undoubtedly contributes to the common perception that the language of the texts is *jach maaya*. (Of course, other pertinent factors include the lack of formal instruction in Maya-language literacy and the use of neologisms and archaisms in printed Maya.) Outside of formal pedagogical settings, which I did not observe as part of this study, the texts circulate informally as archives of *jach maaya* lexical items, as Berkley observed two decades ago in the Chemax municipality (1998).

In contrast to *jach maaya* discourse, standardized Maya has a large and expanding repertoire size, grammatical range, and semiotic range. Indeed, the work of *normalización* 'standardization' involves the pointed expansion of repertoire characteristics. A basic goal of Maya *normalización* is expanding the pragmatic scope and capacity of the language (see chapter five). Stated objectives of *agentes normalizadores* 'standardizing agents' include: 'To expand the uses of the Maya language as an effective means of communication' and 'To strengthen the written culture of Maya language through the increase and development of written genres' (my translation; Briceño Chel & Can Tec 2014, 20-1 [YM], 177 [Sp.]). In the chapters that follow, I document the proliferation of standardized Maya in multiple genres that are currently occupied by Spanish (e.g., news broadcasts, radionovelas).

What, then, is the relation between *jach maaya* and standardized Maya? I believe that Berkley accurately captured the basic relationship between the two registers in his doctoral dissertation (1998), which depicts *jach maaya* 'real Maya' as an enduring cultural category

through which speakers at his field site interpreted the schooled purism of "revitalization educators." Berkley explains, "Standard Maya is entering into communal life through its association with the Ministry of Public Education, local uptake in the category of hač màayah 'real Maya' and shaping presence within classroom interactions" (1998, 232). Modern standardizing agents and institutions utilize—we might even say appropriate—*jach maaya* lexical items and cultural renown. Consequently, standardized Maya is often "heard" through the category of *jach maaya*.

Rhodes sees in Maya language standardization a contemporary institutionalization of *jach maaya* 'real Maya' at academic and educational institutions. The project has not only given the register new users, she argues, but also new social meanings, some of which run contrary to the *jach maaya* of earlier ethnographic descriptions (Rhodes 2016, 2020). My dissertation will elucidate the semiotics of this transformative institutionalization by showing how Maya language standardizers assume and reconfigure *jach maaya* at the level of repertoire and metapragmatic stereotype. Ensuing chapters will reveal that the *jach maaya* register encumbers Maya language standardization even as it facilitates it. Though standardizers appropriate particular lexemes of *jach maaya* with relative ease, they struggle against the register's stereotypic linkages with the ancient past. Standardizers prescribe *jach maaya* lexemes for the expression of modern Maya selves, but Maya speakers customarily cite *jach maaya* as a voice of alterity (Hastings and Manning 2004).

In addition to their participation in Indigenous language standardization, the INPI and affiliated organizations can also be said to have a standardizing effect on indigeneity itself. The Institute manages developmental projects for numerous Indigenous populations across the country. And the Institute currently operates twenty-two Indigenous radio stations as part of its

mission. The stations constitute the System of Indigenous Cultural Radio Broadcasters. Broadcasts are now streamed on the internet through a project called 'Indigenous Echoes: The Voice of Diversity' (Ecos Indígenas: La Voz de la Diversidad).[11] Likewise, the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) and National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) administer educational and academic programs for other Indigenous languages as they do for Yucatec Maya. Just as in the Maya case, Indigenous workers at these agencies function as representatives of their ethnolinguistic constituencies within Mexico. As part of its language *normalización* 'standardization' efforts, the INALI establishes writing norms for Nahuatl and other Indigenous languages of Mexico, just as it does for Yucatec Maya. And the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) archives ethnographic data and cultural artifacts of Indigenous populations across Mexico. The various undertakings standardize indigeneity by organizing people, languages, and cultural practices as tokens of the *indígena* 'Indigenous' type.

Principal Identities and Differentiations

Entrenched indexical meanings of the 'Maya' and 'Indigenous' categories hinder "grassroots" organization around the two identities in the Peto region, at least, and complicate popular interpretations of their relationship. Simply put, *maaya* identity has strong temporal connotations and *máasewal* 'Indian' identity has strong class connotations. This is evidenced by the properties that Maya speakers most commonly attribute to the two identities: 'ancient Maya' *úuchben maaya* versus *óotsil máasewal* 'poor Indian.' Though, as I explain below, temporal associations are entangled with interpretations of social position in the local model of indigeneity.

[11] INPI. Ecos Indígenas. Plataforma de Radio Indígena INPI. Accessed April 15, 2022. https://ecos.inpi.gob.mx/.

I found that many in the Peto region displayed the same reservations about their Maya identities as reported by ethnographers working elsewhere on the peninsula (e.g., Berkley 1998; Castañeda 2004). During my field research, I encountered all the typical explanations and qualifications: 'I'm Maya, but I'm not a real Maya, because my language is mixed with Spanish; I don't wear Maya clothing; I don't really work in the milpa [corn plot].' Outside of the radio station and other sites of Maya advocacy, I found, token instances of 'the Mayas' in discourse referred to the ancient Mayas by default (*le maayaso'obo'* 'those Mayas' [note the distal deictic *le…o'*]).

But many Mayas readily identified as such when I asked them directly during formal interviews or circuitously in routine conversations. When I asked a man in Yaxlol, whom I will call don Francisco, he answered in the affirmative without adding qualifiers:

CB: *Teche' maayaech?*
tech- e' maaya-ech
IPR2 TOP Maya B2
'As for you, are you Maya?'

DF: *Tene' pues maayaen.*
ten- e' pues maaya-en
IPR1 TOP well Maya B1
'As for me, well, I am Maya.'

I then asked him if he were máasewal 'Indian, Indigenous' also. His answer to this question was more complicated. Whereas he had inflected *maaya* with the first person pronoun, he kept *máasewal* in the third person for most of the interactional turn. After he explained the identity in terms of poverty, rather than ancestry or culture, don Francisco claimed *máasewal* status for 'we' the small town of Yaxlol. He hedged his explanation repeatedly with *bey* 'like, so,' and never explicitly said, 'I am máasewal':

CB: *Máasewalech xan?*
máasewal-ech xan
Indian B2 also
'Are you a macehual, also?'

DF: *Máasewal xan. Máasewal tumen o sea le máasewalo' bey…*
máasewal xan máasewal tumen o-sea le máasewal-o' bey
Indian also Indian because DM DET Indian D2 thus
'Macehual also. Macehual because, I mean, macehual, like…

leti'e' tumen por ejemplo je'ex teche'
leti- e' tumen por ejemplo je'ex tech- e'
IPR3-TOP because for example like IPR2- TOP
It's because, for example, like, as for you,

kawa'alike' teche' óotsilech beyo'
k- a- w- a'al-ik- e' tech- e' óotsil-ech bey- o'
IMPF A2 GLD say TR TOP IPR2 TOP poor B2 thus D2
if you say, you, you're poor like that,

yaan túun le ayik'alo'ob beyo' yaan taak'in ti'o'ob beyo'
yaan túun le ayik'al-o'ob bey- o' yaan taak'in ti'- o'ob bey- o'
exist then DET rich B3PL thus D2 exist money PREP B3PL thus D2
[but] then there are wealthy people, like, they have money, so,

pues to'one' mina'an to'on le taak'ino'.
pues to'on- e' mina'an to'on le taak'in-o'
DM IPR1PL TOP none IPR1PL DET money D2
well, as for us, we don't have money.

To'one' óotsilo'on máasewalo'on beyo'
to'on- e' óotsil-o'on máasewal-o'on bey- o'
IPR1PL-TOP poor B1PL Indian B1PL thus D2
As for us, we are poor, we are macehuales like that.

Tumen un p'éel chan kaaj yaano'on.
tumen un p'éel chan kaaj yaan-o'on
because one NC little town exist B1PL
Because we are a small town.

Ma' de nojoch kaaj je'ex por ejemplo je'ex Peto wá Tecoh.
ma' de nojoch kaaj je'ex por ejemplo je'ex Peto wá Tecoh
NEG of big town like for example like Peto or Tecoh
Not of a big town like, for example, like Peto or Tecoh.'

For Indigenous advocates and professionals, as for academics within and beyond Yucatán, 'Maya' and 'Indigenous' represent a straightforward taxonomic classification. But this is clearly not the case for don Francisco in Yaxlol, who likens *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous' identities to *óotsil* 'poor' identities. When I pressed him for clarification on the relation between Maya, poor, and Indigenous identities, he offered a revealing explanation: not all Mayas are Indigenous. Inhabitants of the town of Tecoh are still Mayas, because they are of Yucatán, but they are not *indígena* 'Indigenous' because they are not *óotsil* 'poor' like the people of Yaxlol.

CB: *Ka wa'alike' máasewal bey óotsil.*
k- a w a'al-ik- e' máasewal bey óotsil
IMPF A2 GLD say TR TOP Indian like poor
'You're saying that 'máasewal' is like 'poor.''

DF: *Jaaj. Bey óotsile'.*
jaaj bey óotsil-e'
yes like poor TOP
'Yes, like 'poor.''

CB: *Pero tene' tin tuklaje' máasewal bey indígena.*
pero ten- e' t- in tuk[u]l- aj- e' máasewal bey indígena
but IPR1 TOP PFV A1 think TR TOP Indian like Indigenous
'But I thought that 'máasewal' was like 'Indigenous.''

DF: *Indígena. Leti' le kin wa'alik teecho'*
indigena leti' le k- in w a'al- ik teech- o'
Indigenous IPR3 DET IMPF A1 GLD say TR IPR2 D2
'Indigenous. That's what I'm telling you.

leti'e' iindio. Indígena.
leti'- e' iindio indigena
IPR3 TOP Indian Indigenous
That's Indian. Indigenous.'

CB: *Maaya xan? Indígena xan?*
Maaya xan indígena xan
Maya also Indigenous also
'And Maya also? Indigenous, too?'

DF: *Indígena xan. Cada—pero, le maaya pues tak le ma' indígenai'.*
indígena xan cada pero le maaya pues tak le ma' indígena- i'
Indigenous also every but DET maaya DM until DET NEG Indigenous D3
'Indigenous also. Every—but, the Maya, well, includes those not Indigenous.'

Laili' maaya xan ku debere'
laili' maaya xan k- u deber- e'
still Maya also IMPF A3 should D3
'They are still also Maya it should be [said]

por ejemploe' je'exe' Tecoh. Laili' maayao'obe'
por ejemplo- e' je'ex- e' Tecoh laili' maaya- o'ob- e'
for example TOP like TOP Tecoh still Maya B3PL D3
for example, like Tecoh. They're still Mayas.'

CB: *Kex ma' indígenai'.*
kex ma' indígena- i'
although NEG Indigenous D3
'But not Indigenous'

DF: *Kex ma' indígenai' laili' M—tumen way kajakbale'*
kex ma' indígena- i' laili' m tumen way kajak-bal- e'
although NEG Indigenous D3 still [Maya] because here live POS D3
'But not Indigenous. They're still [Maya]—because they live here,

way Yucatane'
way Yucatán-e'
here Yucatán TOP
here in Yucatan.'

Don Francisco clarified that it was not residence, exactly, that determined Maya identity. He added, "*Cada to'one' jach maayao'on tumen way siijilo'one*"' 'We are all really Maya because we are born here.' Though he equated *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous' identity with being an *óotsil* 'poor' Yucatan, the former category has stigmatizing ethnic connotations that the latter does not. Maya speakers readily identified themselves to me as *óotsil* 'poor' and consistently associated the *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous' category with poverty, but were visibly reluctant to identify themselves as *máasewal*. The tendency partly reflects the moral valence of poverty within moral economies of Christianity and capitalism in Mexico. In Maya as

in Spanish and English, 'poor' is used to characterize those deserving of sympathy, assistance, and salvation. Conversely, the quality of being *ayik'al* 'rich, wealthy' is stereotypically associated with greed and social injustice, as well as material advantage.

I found that Spanish speakers of Maya heritage resisted the *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous' category even more forcefully. One young woman in Peto cringed when her father told me, "*Somos macehuales*" 'We are Indians.' She told me that she hated the word and described it as "*fea*" 'ugly.' Her father, a bilingual schoolteacher, had meant for his use of *macehual*/*máasewal* to be ironic and humorous; he smirked as he said it and laughed when his daughter complained. His social status, Spanish fluency, and economic security afforded him distance from 'ugly' stereotypes associated with 'Indians.'

The stereotypes hamper the efforts of Maya advocates. In standardized Maya, *máasewal* is used in place of the Spanish *indígena* 'Indigenous,' an official demographic designation. But Maya speakers usually equate *máasewal* with the Spanish *indio* 'Indian' instead, a term that is considered highly derogatory in the Yucatán.[12] I found that even the radio announcers at Voice of the Mayas, who used *máasewal* constantly, usually paired the lexeme with *kaaj* 'town' on the model of the Spanish *pueblos indígenas* 'Indigenous peoples.' I believe that the calqued phrase ameliorates *máasewal* somewhat for Maya speakers because *pueblos indígenas* is a well-known and relatively neutral official designation. Interestingly, Maya rap artists embrace *máasewal* identity enthusiastically (e.g., Pat Boy's song entitled "*Soy un máasewáal*" 'I am an Indian'). In doing so, they employ the same indexical associations that make many speakers uncomfortable

[12] It is therefore significant that Don Francisco, above, offers *indio* and *indígena* as equivalents: 'That's what I'm telling you. That's Indian. Indigenous.' *Indio* is an ethnic slur in Yucatán, while *indígena* is an institutionally authorized ethnic label.

with the identity. For Maya rappers, who take inspiration from Black rappers in the United States, poverty and social coarseness are desirable indexes of their "street cred."[13]

Indigeneity is widely shared precisely because, as we have seen, terms like *maaya* and *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous' invoke ideological diagrams that scale up beyond the local contexts of the township (viz. the state). Mayas hold other identities that are just as socially consequential. Religious affiliation, township, and political party membership are arguably more important than ethnolinguistic identity in the daily lives of most Mayas at my field sites, at least. Religious and political differences are grounds for social discord among Mayas.

Another significant social identity is *campesino* 'peasant farmer' identity. It is closely aligned with *óotsil* 'poor' social identity, but the two are not coterminous. All *campesinos* are *óotsil máako'ob* 'poor people,' but not all 'poor people' are *campesinos.* As I explained in this dissertation's introductory chapter, Mexican political actors have historically fostered *campesino* identity in the service of assimilationist goals. The social meaning of the identity in the Yucatán today reflects this valorization, as well as the valorizations of poverty within moral economies of Christianity and capitalism mentioned above. *Campesino* 'peasant farmer' identity engenders solidarity between Mayas and non-Mayas, and between Yucatecans and those from elsewhere in Mexico, on the basis of shared vocation, lifeways, and material circumstances. (Hence, the sociopolitical value of the *campesino* category to the Mexican state.) For Maya farmers,

[13] Cf., Rhodes: "…amongst students at the university where I conducted much of my fieldwork, it was popular to refer to one's self not as *maaya*, but instead as *máasewáal*…it is seen as a more *Indian* or *indigenous* (i.e. not- Spanish) way of referring to one's self. It is often used by YXU students and other members of the new Maya Intellectual elite as a way of re-authenticating themselves as both Indian and peasant—tying themselves to the land and to the disenfranchised, the non-elites, thus making them more authentic" (2016, 107–8).

embracing *campesino* identity neutralizes the ethnic stigma of *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous' identity.

I observed these dynamics during my field research in Yaxlol, for example, where all village residents were Maya except for three, two of whom were from other states in Mexico: a man that had married a woman from Yaxlol years before; a young woman completing her medical degree and serving as the village's doctor as part of her training; and me. As later chapters document, I found that Yaxlol residents were receptive to Maya advocacy, but organized themselves instead on grounds of *campesino* 'peasant farmer' identity and religious affiliation. Their engagements with party politics were tempered by cynicism about party politics.

Two additional grounds of identity, in particular, illuminate local construals of indigeneity in the Peto area. The first is a linguistic identity and the second is residential affiliation within an urban-rural dynamic. Both correlate with socioeconomic class, as well as indigeneity. And both are important bases of social difference between Mayas. Consequently, the two identities present obstacles for Maya advocates, though in distinct ways from the stereotypes of Maya and 'Indian' identities discussed above. I will discuss both identities in turn.

Capable speakers of Maya language are called *mayeros* in the Yucatán. This is not an ethnolinguistic designation, though most *mayeros* are Indigenous Mayas. But one need not be Maya in order to be deemed a *mayero*. Rather, the category is applied based on linguistic knowledge and capability. A *mayero* is someone that can 'defend' himself or herself with the

language, that is to say, converse competently in Maya.[14] Not all Mayas are able to do this. Many young Mayas, especially and increasingly, are not *mayeros*.

The shift reflects the social dominance of Spanish in Mexico. In discussions of the status of Maya language, I was invariably told that young people were typically *su'ulak* 'ashamed' to speak Maya and would only speak Spanish. To explain this shame, Maya speakers cited indexical associations between indigeneity and poverty. If one speaks Maya, they said, people will think or know that one is *óotsil* 'poor.'[15] Spanish, by contrast, represented social and economic advancement. My bilingual friends and neighbors always spoke to young children in Spanish rather than Maya. Even those who spoke limited Spanish did this. Children must learn Spanish in order to do well in school, they explained. For Indigenous Yucatecans at my field sites, *mayero* status operates as a class indicator as much as it serves as an ethnic marker. For non-Indigenous Yucatecans, *mayero* status indexes social relations and solidarity with Mayas.

Advocates generally aspire for all Mayas to be *mayeros* 'Maya speakers.' Programs of Maya language education and media, especially, have worked to strengthen the ideological association between speaking Maya language and *being* Maya (Rhodes and Bloechl 2019). But not even all Maya advocates are *mayeros*. Over the course of my field research in Peto, most young adult volunteers at The Voice of the Mayas were monolingual Spanish speakers. They were enthusiastic supporters of Maya language and culture. Some did express slight embarrassment to me over their inability to speak Maya. For the most part, however, they

[14] During my field research, both Maya speakers and Spanish speakers referred to me as a *mayero*.

[15] Associations between Maya language and poverty are enduring. A decade ago, Maya radio listeners offered the same explanation to Cornejo Portugal and Bellon Cárdenas (2009): "*Cuando alguien habla la Maya, se nota que son pobres*" ('When someone speaks Maya, it shows that they are poor.').

subscribed to a heritage model of Maya identity, wherein Maya-ness figured as an ethnic substrate. The model contrasted with the practice-oriented view of Maya identity, discussed below, that I commonly encountered among Mayas that were more markedly Indigenous, namely, corn-farming *mayeros*.

Another key identity at my field locales in the Peto region is *kaaj* 'town' residency. As the Introduction explains, town residence has long been a crucial basis for group identity among Mayas of the Yucatán (Restall 1997, 2004). Maya speakers refer to residential identities by suffixing the inherency marker *-il* and personal pronouns to the town of birth. For example, one says *Petoilo'ob* 'they are from Peto,' *Yaxlolilen* 'I am from Yaxlol,' *Tahdziúil* 'she is from Tahdziú,' etc. Multiple factors facilitate group identity among town residents. Proximity encourages social interactions and relationships. Residents of a given town share a variety of public spaces, including a town square, market, church, and school(s). And local elected officials coordinate action among town members for various ends. Sociality among residents is also encouraged by the fact that many neighbors are kin, especially in smaller towns and villages.

In addition to providing a basis for group identity among Mayas, town residency offers vital grounds for social differentiation between Mayas. Peto is marginal from the standpoint of the city of Mérida, located some 80 miles to the north, which has a large Maya demographic and an active tourist economy. Locally, however, Peto overshadows its neighboring municipalities of Chacsinkín, Tahdziú, and Tixméhuac. Peto has the largest population of the four, with approximately 25,000 inhabitants (INEGI 2020). And while many residents struggle with unemployment and poverty, the township outpaces its neighbors on socioeconomic indicators. Peto is home to a technological university, the Universidad Tecnológica del Mayab, as well as

the famous Voice of the Mayas radio station. Generally, Mayas in Peto have greater socioeconomic status and opportunities than do those living in the surrounding communities.

The communities at Peto's periphery are poorer. Many families are *campesinos* 'peasant farmers.' Rural residence and practices, like Maya speech, are stereotypically linked with *óotsil* 'poor' socioeconomic status in the Yucatán.[16] But while Maya peasant farmers are at a socioeconomic disadvantage, their subsistence agricultural practices are valued locally as regional and cultural custom. Indigenous advocates celebrate pastoral Yucatecan life as Maya tradition. Men conduct swidden farming in corn fields planted at the perimeter of the town or village. Women manage the household and work in the yard by the house. The work performed by women is varied and substantial; it includes child-rearing, gardening, tending chickens and pigs, grinding corn, and making tortillas. Thus, certain practices that are construed as emblematic of Maya culture—agricultural production, gender roles, material culture—are also prominent indexes of poverty.

In their unifying efforts, Maya advocates work across and beyond *kaaj* 'town' identities. Media producers hope to build publics that unite Mayas across not only geographical distances, but also socioeconomic differences between and within communities. Their participation in 'Indigenous development' is complicated by their valorization of peasant life, defined by its *óotsil* 'poor' socioeconomic position, as traditionally Maya. Subsequent chapters examine how the radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas cultivate their listenership (chapter two), and how they negotiate the diverging ends of development and preservation (chapter four).

Mayero 'Maya speaker' status and *kaaj* 'town' residency are important grounds for social differentiation, especially among familiar or proximate Mayas. Mayas also distinguish

[16] Chapter four describes and theorizes these linkages.

themselves from unspecified Maya others in revealing ways. One manner is the attribution of *jach maaya* 'real Maya' language to Maya others. I argue that metapragmatic discourse on 'real Maya' language reveals an *axis of differentiation* (Gal and Irvine 2019) based on four qualities: purity, temporality, spatiality, and civility. The axis gives structure to more than the notion of *jach maaya*. Mayas construe linguistic, ethnocultural, and economic dimensions of their indigeneity along the same lines. The construals shape perceptions of Maya identity as against non-Maya identity in Yucatán. Furthermore, Mayas use the same framework to differentiate themselves from other Mayas. In what follows, I elucidate the four properties at work in the *jach maaya* concept. I then explain how the interwoven properties give structure to a folk model of Maya language and identity.

Maya speakers distinguish *jach maaya* 'real Maya' from *xa'ak'a'an maaya* 'mixed Maya' on the basis of linguistic purity, imagined chronologically and spatially. Pure Maya, they explain, is the *úuchben* 'ancient' predecessor of the 'mixed' Maya that is spoken today. While speakers regard the language variety as ancient, they also attribute it to unnamed contemporaries living elsewhere on the peninsula. No one identified themselves to me as a speaker of *jach maaya* 'real Maya,' though many could cite at least one or two *jach maaya* forms when asked. Speakers locate *jach maaya* at a social distance, as well. Maya ancestors are figures of alterity. The ritual speech of the modern *jmeen* 'shaman,' another figure of social alterity, is commonly regarded as *jach maaya*. And although residents of the Peto municipality usually mentioned distant locales when I asked where *jach maaya* is still spoken, some associated *jach maaya* with the nearby municipality of Tahdziú, a place often described to me as poor and dangerous.[17] In

[17] Berkley found that elders, particularly, associated *jach maaya* with "archaic lives, social violence, and cultural isolation" (1998, 19). Chapter four explores a significant relationship

common discourse on pure Maya, some of the most frequently cited *jach maaya* examples are considered crude. Indeed, speakers often cite the examples for this reason. The folk perspective thus locates 'mixed' and 'pure' Maya, respectively, within and beyond the present social order. I use "civility" and "incivility" as captions for the qualities attributed to the complementary positions.

Attending to this axis of differentiation enables us to place the linguistic purism of *jach maaya* 'real Maya' discourse within a larger folk model of language, culture, and personhood. An avenue to the model is offered by certain uses of the Spanish *puro* 'pure.' Maya speakers gloss *jach maaya* 'real Maya' as *puuroj maaya* 'pure Maya.' But more often, I have found, they use *puuroj maaya* to refer to the language practices of a community or region. Such uses are better glossed as 'purely/only Maya.' For example, *puuroj maaya ku t'aaniko'ob te'elo'* 'they purely speak Maya there' is used to refer to a group that only speaks Maya, rather than Maya *and* Spanish. The semantics of the lexeme *puuroj* are the same in both cases. Speakers gloss *jach maaya* 'real Maya' as *puuroj maaya* 'pure Maya' because the supposed variety is only Maya, that is to say, is not 'mixed' with words from Spanish or other languages. We might therefore be inclined to say that the property in question is "only-ness" or homogeneity rather than purity. I have instead identified the ordering property as purity because it is always conceived diachronically. The object in question (e.g., language, culture) moves from an original, authentic condition to a mixed or degraded one. Depending on one's ideological commitments, the movement may be evaluated positively or negatively. Maya and non-Maya Yucatecans alike determine the authenticity of Maya language, practices, and people within this diachronic frame.

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between authenticity and incivility in local ideologies of Maya language, culture, and personhood.

The difference is also worth emphasizing: *puuroj maaya* as 'pure Maya' characterizes a linguistic register, whereas *puuroj maaya* as 'purely Maya' typifies a speech community. The former is not entailed by the latter. Often, speakers use *puuroj maaya* 'purely Maya' to exaggerate the linguistic facts of known communities. In the town of Peto, for example, locals do not associate the nearby village of Yaxlol with *jach maaya*, but they do claim that Yaxlol's residents speak *puuroj maaya* 'purely (i.e., only) Maya.' Maya is, in fact, the dominant language of Yaxlol. Maya speakers also use *puuroj maaya* 'purely Maya' to describe less familiar towns and regions, such as the neighboring state of Quintana Roo. Of course, they are aware that Spanish is spoken in those places. 'Purely Maya' is a relational evaluation set against the town of Peto, which, we might say, is linguistically 'mixed' at the community level.

The use of Maya language is a strong marker of indigeneity in the Yucatán, but there are numerous others, such as the cloth *ipil* garment worn by women (Sp., *huipil*) and the small thatched house.[18] Many stereotypical indexes of indigeneity reflect pastoral life and traditional gender roles, such as the corn farming done by men and the tortillas handmade by women. The practices and their products, which have long been emblems of regional folk culture, are increasingly cultivated as emblems of Maya identity. (Some, as I say above, are marketed to tourists as Maya cultural commodities.) Additionally, Maya surnames mark Indigenous heritage, though not all Mayas carry the names (e.g., Dzul, Poot). And certain bodily characteristics, particularly short height and a round head shape, are stereotypically linked to indigeneity in the Yucatán.[19]

[18] See also Rhodes' discussion of "diacritics of Mayaness in Yucatan" (2016, 79–86).
[19] Recent work on raciolinguistics has investigated and theorized the racialization of language and the enregisterment of race. See, for examples, the volume edited by Alim, Rickford, and Ball (2016).

Maya speakers use the Spanish lexeme *puro* 'pure' with reference to non-linguistic practices as they do with reference to linguistic practice. From the vantage point of Peto, the practices are a general feature of rural communities. Just as one finds *puuroj maaya* 'purely Maya' language in the outlying villages, townsfolk explain, one also finds *puuroj u meyjil kool* 'purely corn farming' rather than commercial enterprises; *puuroj pak'achbil waaj* 'purely handmade tortillas' rather than *de máquina* 'machine made' tortillas; and so on. Peto residents exaggerate the Indigenous characteristics of rural villages in order to emphasize them. The assertions also make implicit commentaries on town life in Peto, which features more socioeconomic diversity and advancement.

The properties of purity, temporality, spatiality, and civility are closely interwoven in the entrenched model of Maya identity. The perceived linguistic, ethnocultural, and socioeconomic homogeneity ("purity") of outlying communities aligns with their position at the civic/social periphery. The communities are also construed as having a distant temporality. Town residents view rural villages as repositories of tradition, culture, and language—and they value them as such. But they also regard outlying communities as living behind the times. The chronotopic (Bakhtin 1982) aspect of the model is manifest in negative stereotypes of indigeneity, examined in chapter four, and in the project of 'Indigenous development,' addressed here and in subsequent chapters.

The village of Yaxlol where I worked is markedly Indigenous, but its residents still envision a more intact indigeneity in the distance. Yaxlol residents usually told me that people in rural Quintana Roo were more authentically Maya. In justifying the claim, they used *puuroj* 'purely' expressions of the same sort that townsfolk in Peto used to explain the Maya authenticity of Yaxlol. The fractal recursivity (Irvine and Gal 2000; Gal and Irvine 2019)

proceeds along an urban-rural continuum, from the municipal seat of Peto toward unspecified villages in the countryside. In Yaxlol, the ideological projection is facilitated by local experiences that contradict generalizations made by people in town. Though Maya is spoken by almost every adult in Yaxlol, many also speak Spanish, and some children speak only Spanish. Furthermore, *campesinos* 'peasant farmers' comprise only a portion of the village's population. Some residents travel daily to the nearby towns of Peto, Chacsinkín, and Tixmehuac for commercial work. And though many women in the village wear the traditional *ipil* garment, numerous women do not.

Nevertheless, stereotypical markers of indigeneity permeate daily life in Yaxlol. Village residents recognize them as signs of Maya identity, I found, but they more often interpret them as signs of their identities as *campesinos* 'peasant farmers' and *óotsil* 'poor' people.[20] Two historical influences of this tendency are outlined in the introductory chapter: (1) the historical limits of Maya identity as grounds for sociopolitical organization; and (2) the Mexican state's endorsements of *campesino* identity for assimilationist ends in the postrevolutionary period. Additionally, as many Mayas have left subsistence farming for more remunerative labor in the modern era (Redfield 1964; Re Cruz 1996; Castellanos 2010), pertinent indexes of indigeneity have taken on increased salience as class markers.

But while socioeconomic class provides a highly salient basis for identity and organization among Mayas, it does not simply diminish or supplant Maya identity. On the contrary, Maya identity is positioned within a field of intersecting and, in some cases, competing formations of social organization. Ethnographic descriptions of ensuing chapters will reveal the key intersections and their complications.

[20] Bodily characteristics and Maya surnames are an exception to this generalization.

As my foregoing descriptions suggest, Mayas in the Peto area typically expressed a constructivist view of sorts concerning Maya identity. Most stereotypical indexes of Maya identity are performable practices: speaking Maya, wearing an *ipil* garment, planting corn, drinking from a gourd, carrying firewood with a tumpline, and so on. My interlocutors did not normally interpret Maya language and cultural forms as manifestations of some ethnic essence. Rather, their explanations presumed that people were authentically Maya if and because they did authentically Maya things.[21] After a neighbor in Yaxlol once explained to me why he was not a 'real' Maya, I asked him, 'If you started wearing traditional clothing and speaking pure Maya, would you be truly Maya then?' He replied that he would indeed be authentically Maya if he did those things. 'But people don't do that around here,' he added.

My observations resonate with those of other researchers of Latin America. Guerrettaz notes that "in much of Latin America, individuals may cease to identify as Indigenous if they advance their socioeconomic standing because lower-class status and Indigeneity are often viewed as one and the same, in terms of identity categories" (2020, 2). Citing an ethnographic example from Hornberger (2014, 284-7) and García (2005), she describes middle-class Indigenous education teachers in Peru that "move in and out" of the "Indigenous" social category as a result of their work as Indigenous Education teachers (Guerrettaz 2020, 2). Rhodes (2016) and Guerrettaz (2020) offer Yucatecan examples, wherein university students return to their Maya identities or, in some cases, take on Maya identities. The examples raise questions about self-identification versus social ascription, and about appropriations of identity.

[21] Perceived connections of Maya authenticity with the ancient past might offer an exception, but even those links were enunciated in terms of doings, such as building pyramids and speaking pure language.

Here, I emphasize this constructivist view precisely because of its friction with what is typically associated with identity politics in the broader Maya region (e.g., Warren 1998; Fischer 1999; Castañeda 2004) and beyond (Jackson and Warren 2005; McIntosh 2005). Indeed, it is this constructivist view which is situated within the wider field of Maya identity politics and which Maya advocates themselves often felt themselves to have to dialogically confront and transform. As various chapters show, Maya advocates of the Yucatán maintain and advance various essentialisms. As chapter two explains, the formulation of Maya ethnicity as an essential property of personhood is vital to state-mediated Maya advocacy in Mexico. Furthermore, advocates regard many of the aforementioned emblems of Maya identity as heirlooms of a distinct and enduring Maya *miatsil* 'culture.' They simultaneously endorse and folklorize some of these practices through staged performances of 'culture' (see chapter four).

At the same time, as we will see, the work of Maya advocates destabilizes these essentialisms and advances a more capacious sense of Maya identity. Owing to the missions of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples and related organizations, Maya identity is the premise for various lines of work that are not deemed traditionally Maya (e.g., education, media, project management). Moreover, these professional lines of work counter stereotypical linkages between *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous' identity and *óotsil* 'poor' identity.

Conclusion

This chapter has delineated two crucial contextual fields for Maya advocacy in Yucatán: (1) the administration of Indigenous affairs by federal and state agencies; and (2) the Indigenous identities and practices that fall under the scope of this governmental intervention. The relationship between the two fields is a central research problem of this dissertation. To lay the groundwork for subsequent chapters, I have outlined the field of Maya advocacy in the Peto

municipality of southern Yucatán, with special attention to The National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI) and XEPET/XHPET "The Voice of the Mayas." I have also provided an overview of the semiotics of Maya and Indigenous identities in the Peto region. I have emphasized the relationship between indigeneity and socioeconomic class. Certain conventional indexes of indigeneity are also markers of *óotsil* 'poor' identity. So, while 'Maya' and 'Indigenous' represent a straightforward taxonomic classification for advocates and academics alike, the relationship between the two identities is more complicated for Mayas at large. This encumbers the work of Maya advocates, who negotiate competing commitments to preservation and development.

I have described a practice-oriented notion of Maya identity that I found to be common among Mayas, who typically view themselves as possessing varying degrees of Maya authenticity. The view is at odds with the notion of Maya ethnicity that is advanced through state-mediated Maya advocacy (chapter two). I have also located *jach maaya* Maya purism within a larger folk model of language, culture, and personhood. Discourse on *jach maaya* 'real Maya' among Maya speakers, I have claimed, reveals an axis *of differentiation* (Gal and Irvine 2019) based on qualities of purity, temporality, spatiality, and civility. Subsequent chapters will show that Maya 'standardization' and 'development' proceed, ideologically, via a transformation of these semiotic values. The analytical framework (i.e., axis of differentiation) will help us account for countervailing interpretations of purified Maya language, as well as the limited popular embrace of Maya identity among Maya speakers in Yucatán.

This provides the context for the next chapter, which illuminates ongoing transformations in the social meaning of Maya identity in Yucatán by analyzing the "identity work" of radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas. I interpret this work in light of the perspectives of the

station's listeners, whose engagements with Maya advocacy are mediated by local notions of 'Maya' and 'Indian.' The chapter also clarifies the politics of Maya identity by showing how governmental mediation shapes the work of Maya advocates.

Chapter Two
Managing the Mayas: The State of (and in) Maya Identity Politics in Yucatán

While mass media are lauded as channels for the expression of Maya identity, they in fact serve as spaces for its remaking. Ethnohistorical research indicates that Maya identity has provided a relatively limited basis for group solidarity in the Yucatán (Gabbert 2001, 2004; Restall 1997, 2004).[1] For contemporary Maya media producers, however, the development of popular audiences is intertwined with the promotion of Maya identity. These media publics have not, for the most part, arisen organically. The field is largely funded and managed by governmental institutions. This chapter offers an ethnographic investigation of Radio XEPET/XHPET "The Voice of the Mayas" as an influential site for this dynamic process. The station's announcers use radio not only as a means for informing and entertaining listeners, but also as infrastructure for organizing Mayas into a group that recognizes itself along ethnocultural and linguistic lines.

The first part of the chapter examines how the radio announcers develop their Maya listening public within a wider listenership. I describe programming content that endorses or represents Maya identity. I survey other broadcast content of the station, as well, to show how the programming schedule partitions languages and identities. Next, I provide an analysis of broadcast speech that illustrates how radio announcers organize their listeners along ethnic lines, even in speech that is ostensibly neutral with respect to identity. I weigh the ideological work of the radio announcers against the perspectives of local listeners, whose responses to encouragements of Maya self-recognition are shaped by enduring conceptions of 'Maya' and

[1] See the Introduction for a discussion of this literature.

'Indian' identities. The conceptions reflect Yucatán's history of missionary colonialism and later assimilationist programs of the Mexican state.

The second part of the chapter shows how institutionalizations of Maya language and culture reformulate local categories of identity. I find that governmental mediation encourages the simultaneous authorization and neutralization of Maya and Indigenous identities, largely for national-administrative ends. The National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI) and its institutional affiliates organize Mayas as tokens of the 'Indigenous people' type by way of two interrelated processes, specified in the previous chapter: development and standardization. The identification—i.e., Maya as Indigenous—is a highly visible organizational premise at institutional and programmatic levels. However, I found that Maya identity and indigeneity drop away at the level of project implementation among poor Mayas in the village of Yaxlol. This coincides with a larger ethnographic finding of this study, namely, that social class and labor offer more fertile grounds for sociopolitical organization among Mayas in southern Yucatán than do ethnic or ethnolinguistic identity.

Nevertheless, the data presented in this chapter reveal an ongoing ethnicization and nationalization of Maya and Indigenous identities. In Mexico as beyond, ascendant discourses on indigeneity promote a diffuse kind of ethnic belonging, locatable in language and cultural forms, and based on historical relations between particular groups and the territory. The ethnicizing work of state-funded Maya advocates inherits and amends an enduring project of national integration. This chapter emphasizes the role of the state as prime mediator of Maya identity advocacy in the Yucatán.

Others have considered the sociohistorical development of Maya and 'Indian' identities in terms of governmentality (Castañeda 2004) and statecraft (Gabbert 2001). The existence of

Maya ethnicity is quite contested among scholars, however. Gabbert concludes, "There are neither important ethnic organisations within the Maya-speaking population of the Yucatán peninsula, nor is the idea of belonging to a Yucatec Maya people rooted in this group. Therefore, the speakers of Yucatec Maya and their descendants should be seen as a cultural category not as an ethnic community" (2001, 480).[2] Following Gabbert, Guerrettaz claims, "In the Yucatan, like many other places, anthropologists have demonstrated that 'ethnicity' is not culturally appropriate or analytically relevant for understanding local identity categories. This is because the Yucatec Maya language group and other social groupings (e.g., around culture and community) do not neatly overlap, as the construct 'ethnicity' denotes" (2020, 2).

I disagree with Guerrettaz's view on the analytical relevance of ethnicity, and I do not partition culture from ethnicity. Indeed, sociocultural anthropologists have generally viewed culture as the basis for ethnicity (Munasinghe 2018). I understand ethnicity to be an ideologically mediated mode of social identification, differentiation, and action. I tend to refer to *ethnicization* rather than ethnicity, in order to emphasize the semiotic processes whereby ethnicity is made. And contrary to Gabbert and Guerrettaz, I find that Maya ethnic affiliation does have increasing local relevance in Yucatecan social life, even if it is not a totalizing social fact of identity. The current chapter documents the ethnicization of Maya speech and identity at one prominent institution. At the same time, it charts the limits of Maya ethnicity in the Peto municipality, which are indeed significant. Local Mayas generally interpret their Maya identities in terms of heritage and regional culture, rather than ethnic identity. Heritage is a component of ethnicity and thus represents common ground between professional Maya advocates and Mayas at large,

[2] Gabbert nevertheless views Maya identity in the Yucatán as "ethnic consciousness in the making" (2004, 161).

but the distance between the two perspectives remains significant. Whereas heritage emphasizes relations between living individuals and distant predecessors, ethnicity emphasizes shared culture and heritage among living contemporaries.

Ethnic Programming for Popular Radio

In even its basic details, The Voice of the Mayas is obviously a significant institution for Maya advocacy. Amid the sociopolitical ascendency of Spanish language in Mexico, the radio station broadcasts daily in Maya language before a wide listening audience. Furthermore, much of the station's routine programming content focuses on Maya language, culture, and people. The morning talk program 'Women's Voices' (U T'aanilo'ob Ko'olel), for example, deals with topics of interest and concern for Indigenous women in Yucatán today, such as economic difficulties and opportunities; health and wellness; and challenges in intrafamilial relationships. For daily news programming, as well, announcers prepare their reports with their Maya listeners in mind. In addition to translating headline stories in the national and international news of the day, announcers survey newspapers and online sources for reports that might be especially relevant to their listeners, many of whom are poor farmers living in rural villages. Even fictional programming at The Voice of the Mayas is in the service of identity work. The announcers create radionovelas with pointedly Maya characters and normative messages about language and identity.

In addition to this regular programming, the radio station produces special broadcasts that center on Maya language and identity. On such occasions, announcers bring experts of different sorts to the station—Indigenous academics, artists, a local *jmeen* 'shaman'—to share their expertise with listeners. Special programs include forums on Indigenous rights and on the current status of Maya language. Announcers typically hold the forums on designated days of

observance and recognition (e.g., International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on August 9; International Mother Language Day on February 21). For the announcers, they represent not only valuable occasions for listener outreach, but also opportunities to foster professional connections with respected authorities on Maya language and culture.

Music provides another avenue for promoting Maya language and identity at The Voice of the Mayas. Announcers regularly play contemporary Maya language music on the air, and they occasionally host Maya artists at the station for interviews and live broadcast performances. Just as with the radio station's use of Maya language for broadcast talk, the production of popular music composed in the language in itself represents a significant achievement for Maya advocacy. (Both bring Maya language and speakers into socially valued and officially recognized channels of discourse.) Moreover, in their music, Maya artists often focus on their ethnolinguistic identities (see, e.g., Cru 2017). Song lyrics regularly feature emphatic declarations of Maya identity, valorizations of cultural traditions, or the recounting of experiences common to Indigenous Maya speakers (e.g., milpa farming, migration). One may gain a sense of this emphasis on identity by merely surveying the titles of contemporary Maya language songs, such as rap artist Pat Boy's "*Sangre Maya*" 'Maya blood'; reggae artist Santos Santiago's "*Máasewáal wayak'*" 'Indian dream'; and the singer-actor Principe Maya's "*In Miatsil Mixtun Kiimil*" 'My culture will never die.' Hence, the radio station does not simply bring music composed in Maya to large numbers of Maya speakers. It brings them music in Maya that is about being Maya.

The various radio programs articulate ethnic belonging as shared *maaya miatsil* 'Maya culture' and *maaya t'aan* 'Maya language.' In broadcasts, announcers routinely refer to the Yucatan peninsula as *tu lu'umil maayao'ob* 'the land of the Mayas,' even as they identify

Mexican peninsular states. Notice the ethnicizing spatiotemporal implications of referring to the peninsula this way. It associates the land with Maya people as the original proprietors, rather than with contemporary national-administrative designations: three Mexican states (Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Campeche), Belize, and the Petén department of Guatemala. Some broadcasts center on the historical dimension of Maya ethnicity. For example, a program called *Popol t'aan* 'Stories' presents folktales as repositories of ancient Maya language and culture.

These examples illustrate Maya advocacy in its most recognizable mode. But the station's programming is not all Maya all the time, in terms of either broadcast language or topical focus. Indeed, the announcers are cautious about excluding non-Maya listeners. To maintain valuable popular support, the station's website explains, the staff aims its programming content toward the region's "original inhabitants, without excluding the non-Indigenous population that shares the same space." The radio station aims to cultivate a pointedly Maya listening public within a wider listenership (n.b., my translation from Spanish):

> The staff of "The Voice of the Mayas" has always been interested in spreading messages in the Maya language and in the participation of members of the community as sources and promoters of artistic expressions, traditions, and ancestral knowledge inherited from what is considered by many to be the most dazzling civilization of pre-Columbian America…[the radio station] directs its content toward the original inhabitants, without excluding the non-Indigenous population that shares the same space.[3]

Notwithstanding this public statement, published on a government webpage for the INPI's Indigenous radio platform, I found that much of the station's programming was inaccessible to non-Mayas in Peto. Since its founding in 1982, the radio station has increased the

[3] Ecos Indígenas. "XEPET / XHPET. La Voz de los Mayas." Accessed April 15, 2022. https://ecos.inpi.gob.mx/ xepet/.

proportion and purity of its Maya language broadcasts (see chapter three).[4] And as the above descriptions of radio programming indicate, the announcers devote considerable broadcast space to the representation of Maya identity, in both the proxy and portrait senses of "represent" that Spivak differentiates (1988). Both senses are even signaled by the radio station's name: *La Voz de los Mayas* 'The Voice of the Mayas' (n.b., similar to its English counterpart, the Spanish *voz* 'voice' is used as a metaphor for political agency and representation).

Radio announcers view the maintenance of Maya language and culture as *k'abéet* 'necessary' and central to their work. One announcer told me, "*Ma' k cha' u sa'atal. K'abéet mu'uk'a'ankunsik*" 'We cannot allow [Maya culture] to be lost. It needs to be strengthened.' The sentiment, routinely expressed in radio programming with varying degrees of explicitness, represents a shared personal commitment of the announcers. (And as I explain below, the *fortalecimiento* 'strengthening' of Indigenous language, culture, and identity is an institutional directive of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples and certain state agencies.)

To illustrate this facet of radio work at The Voice of the Mayas, I present a transcript of one announcer's response to my question, 'What does Maya culture mean to you?' below. He defined Maya culture as 'life' among a group of people that has great 'understanding' (lines 3–6 and 12–13). The announcer mentioned 'things' of the 'ancient Mayas' that still have value today, such as the Maya calendar, which remains a marvel because it is 'really exact' (lines 7–10). Ancient and modern legitimacy were interdependent in his explanation of Maya culture. That is to say, the significance of Maya culture derives both from its 'ancient' legacy and modern value, as evidenced by the scientific exactness of the ancient Maya calendar.

[4] Veteran announcers described the shift as an organic development rather than a formal directive. I found the relationship between the Maya announcers and the station's director (a government appointee) to be one of mutual respect and support.

Ba'ax u k'áat u ya'al miatsil maaya.
ba'ax u k'áat u y a'al miatsil maaya
what A3 want A3 GLD say culture maaya
'What does Maya culture mean? [line 1]

U k'áat u ya'ale' in ti'a'al teene'
u k'áat u y a'al-e' in ti'a'al teen- e'
A3 want A3 GLD say TOP A1 POSS IPR1 TOP
As for what it means to me, [line 2]

miatsil maaya u k'áat u ya'ale' este, kuxtal,
miatsil maaya u k'áat u y a'al-e' este kuxtal
culture Maya A3 want A3 GLD say TOP DM life
Maya culture means, uh, life, [line 3]

kuxtal ichil jun p'éel nojoch múuch'kabil ti' máako'ob,
kuxtal ichil jun p'éel nojoch múuch'kabil ti' máak-o'ob
life within one NC big group PREP man B3PL
life among a large group of people, [line 4]

kuxtal ichil jun p'éel múuch'kabil nukuch máako'ob,
kuxtal ichil jun p'éel múuch'kabil nukuch máak-o'ob
life within one NC group great man B3PL
life among a group of great people, [line 5]

este, jach yaan u na'ato'ob leti' in ti'a'al teene'
este jach yaan u na'at- o'ob leti' in ti'a'al teen- e'
DM very exist A3 understand B3PL IPR3 A1 POSS IPR1 TOP
uh, the group really has understanding, to me, [line 6]

tumen le maayaso'obo', le úuchben maayaso'obo'
tumen le maayas-o'ob- o' le úuchben maayas-o'ob- o'
because DET Mayas B3PL D2 DET old Mayas B3PL D2
because the Mayas, the ancient Mayas [line 7]

tu beetajo'ob ya'ab, ya'ab jach ba'alo'ob jach, este,
t- u beet-aj- o'ob ya'ab ya'ab jach ba'al- o'ob jach este
PFV A3 do PFV.TR B3PL many many very thing B3PL very DM
they did a lot, very many things very, uh, [line 8]

tak bejla'e' jach u jak' u yóol máak le ken u yilej.
tak bejla'- e' jach u jak' u y óol máak le ken u y il- ej
until today TOP very A3 choke A3 GLD heart man DET FUT A3 GLD see TR
even today, that really surprise people when they see. [line 9]

Je'e bix le calendario maaya jach exacto, exacto.
je'e bix le calendario maaya jach exacto exacto
like how DET calendar Maya very exact exact
Like the Maya calendar. It's really exact. Exact. [line 10]

Le beetik je' in wa'alik teeche' u k'áat u ya'al ti' teene'
le beet- ik je' in w a'al-ik teech-e' u k'áat u y a'al ti' teen- e'
DET make/do TR ASSUR A3 GLD say TR IPR2 TOP A3 want A3 GLD say PREP IPR1 D3
Therefore, I certainly tell you, the meaning, to me, [line 11]

u k'áat u ya'ale' miatsil maaya, esten,
u k'áat u y a'al-e' miatsil maaya esten
A3 want A3 GLD say TOP culture Maya DM
the meaning of Maya culture, uh, [line 12]

kuxtal ichil máako'ob jach yaan u—yanchaj u na'ato'ob.
kuxtal ichil máak-o'ob jach yaan u yan- chaj u na'at- o'ob
life among man B3PL very exist A3 exist PFV.INCH A3 understand B3PL
is life among a people that has—that had understanding.' [line 13]

This announcer's characterization of Maya culture in terms of exactitude and understanding counters prevalent stereotypes of 'Indian' (*indio*, *máasewal*) identities as uncivilized by citing the civilizational sophistication of the ancient Maya. The ideological maneuver is often employed by radio announcers and other Maya advocates, who interpret the architectural marvels of the ancient Maya similarly. As chapter one explains, temporal and social interpretations are entangled in the local model of indigeneity. For Maya advocates, the notion of advanced ancient Mayas destabilizes the stereotype of the outmoded Indian.

Yet, the undertaking of Indigenous *desarrollo* 'development' has quite obvious social-temporal implications of its own. The material lives of modern Mayas do not cohere with the worldwide fame of the ancient Mayas. Notice, above, how the announcer reflexively edited himself to locate Maya 'understanding' in the ancient past: Maya culture is 'life among a people that has—that had understanding' (lines 12-13). Maya advocates therefore see in the prospect of 'development' the recovery of a world-historical legacy.

Notwithstanding its role in advancing identity and development among *maaya wíiniko'ob* 'Maya people,' the radio station has long been popular among Mayas and non-Mayas alike. Listeners who do not understand Maya language tune into the station for music and for the limited Spanish-language talk programming that is offered. The announcers broadcast contemporary Spanish-language music every day, especially in the afternoons. Generally, I found, the Spanish music was popular among younger adult Spanish speakers and Maya speakers alike. Older Maya speakers, however, preferred the traditional Yucatecan *jarana* music that the station aired at noon, rather than the contemporary Spanish music.

The program schedule at The Voice of the Mayas thus holds social significance beyond the informational or entertainment value of particular programs. It integrates a listening public across linguistic and ethnocultural boundaries. The schedule also allocates languages and identities within a representational economy. Different time slots are allocated for Maya-language music, Latin American music, and 'international' music. And different times slots are allocated for Maya folk stories, regional news, and discussions of social issues that contemporary Mayas face (e.g., poverty, migration). Below, I present an example of daily programming at The Voice of the Mayas, with my own English glosses added. The schedule offers a good visual representation of how the radio station cultivates, but also partitions, languages and identities before a wide listening public. The column on the left is an exact reproduction of a daily schedule, which listed some program titles in Maya, others in Spanish, and others in both languages. The Maya does not conform entirely to written norms prescribed by the INALI. The announcer that composed the text used *h* rather than the prescribed *j*, for example, and did not mark the intervocalic glottal in *ka wa'alik*. The variation yields insight into the relationship

between the radio station and the Maya *normalización* 'standardization' project led by the INALI—a topic that I examine in chapter three.

'The Voice of the Mayas' Radio Programming Schedule

	Martes	'Tuesday'
5:00AM-7:15AM	Yiik'al U Sáastal (Aire de la Mañana)	'Morning air'
7:15AM-7:30AM	K'ubent'aano'ob ti kahtalilo'ob (Avisos a la Comunidad)	'Messages to townsfolk'
7:30AM-9:00AM	U Xik'nal T'aano'ob (El Vuelo de las Voces)	'Flight of voices'
9:00AM-11:00AM	U T'aanilo'ob Ko'olel (Voces de Mujer)	'Women's voices'
11:00AM-11:30AM	Música variada	'Varied music'
11:30AM-11:45AM	Cápsulas diversas	'Various segments'
11:45AM-12:00PM	K'ubent'aano'ob ti kahtalilo'ob (Avisos a la Comunidad)	'Messages to townsfolk'
12:00PM-1:00PM	U Ki'imak Oolal In Kahal (Tradición de mi Tierra)	'Happiness of my town' 'Tradition of my land'
1:00PM-1:30PM	U T'aanilo'ob k-lu'um (Voces de mi Tierra)	'Voices of my land'
1:30PM-2:00PM	Música variada	'Varied music'
2:00PM-3:00PM	U-Nahil Kambal Maya Paalalo'ob (Albergues)	'School for Maya children'
3:00PM-4:00PM	Ko'ox Ok'ot Yeetel Xepet	'Let's dance with XEPET'
4:00PM-4:30PM	Música Indígena	'Indigenous music'
4:30PM-5:00PM	Música variada	'Varied music'
5:00PM-5:30PM	Noticiero Aqui Estamos	'News: here we are'
5:30PM-5:45PM	Música variada	'Varied music'
5:45PM-6:00PM	K'ubent'aano'ob ti kahtalilo'ob (Avisos a la Comunidad)	'Messages to townsfolk'
6:00PM-7:00PM	Ba'ax ka waalik paisano	'What do you say, countryman?'

As the programming schedule indicates, The Voice of the Mayas actually broadcasts different Maya voices amid non-Maya voices. Announcers dedicate spaces for 'women's voices' and public messages that 'townsfolk' deliver to the radio station. Other radio programs feature the voices of fictional Maya characters, such as the Mayas of the radionovela 'Maruch's Kitchen' (*U K'ooben X-Maruch*; see chapter four). The station's varied musical broadcasts locate Maya voices and listeners in a cosmopolitan perspective. The announcers play traditional

Yucatecan music alongside popular Latin-American music, pan-Indigenous music, and international music.

If there is an emblematic voice of the radio station, however, it is the register of Maya that the announcers use when inhabiting their personas as *locutores* 'announcers' in live broadcasts. It constitutes a subsidiary register of standardized Maya, which is marked by Maya purism and, ironically, the application of diverse Spanish norms (see chapter three and chapter five, respectively). The radio announcers' usage of this register reflects their ideological and institutional alignments with the Maya *normalización* 'standardization' project that is led by Maya linguists and educators. For announcers, the purified register indexes authority and professionalism, as well as the radio station's commitment to maintaining Maya language.

Much of the radio station's broadcast content explicitly promotes Maya identity, as illustrated by the schedule and programming descriptions above. But the radio announcers also encourage Maya identity among their listeners in radio talk that is not ostensibly about matters of identity. Examination of this more subtle identity work clarifies the reach and rhetoric of Maya advocacy discourse. One example involves a kinship trope that announcers use when addressing listeners during broadcasts.

In live broadcasts of all sorts, the announcers use the common kin term *láak'tsil* 'relative' to address and greet their unnamed listeners. Such usages are unusual because announcers use the term to address non-kin: friends, neighbors, and strangers in the listening audience. (Of course, relatives of announcers might also be listening to any given broadcast.) Maya speech is already ethnically marked in the Yucatán. The practice further ethnicizes broadcast Maya by indexing shared Maya ethnocultural identity on the trope of kin relations.

Fictive kinship is not uncommon in the Yucatán. During my field research, I occasionally observed elder speakers affectionately address younger, unrelated speakers as *hijo* 'son' or *hija* 'daughter'; and younger speakers affectionately address elder speakers as *abuelo* 'grandfather' or *abuela* 'grandmother.' Additionally, Maya Protestants use the Spanish *hermano* 'brother' and *hermana* 'sister' to address and refer to each other. Their tropic applications of the kin terms index religious solidarity among the religious minority. Vocative usages of *hermano/hermana* are so linked to Protestant group identity that the lexemes are also used as synonyms of *protestante* 'Protestant' (e.g., *leti'o'obe' hermanoso'ob* 'as for them, they are Protestants').

Yet, the radio announcers are the only Maya speakers that I have ever observed use *láak'tsil* 'relative' this way. Two examples of radio announcers' vocative usage of *láak'tsil* 'relative,' taken from morning news broadcasts, are given below. Both utterances exemplify purified, as well as ethnicized, Maya discourse. In the first example, the announcer prefaces *láak'tsil* 'relative' with the purified greeting phrase *ma'alob ja'atskab k'iin* 'good morning' (used in place of *buenos días*). In the second example, after addressing listeners as kin, the announcer poses a rhetorical question that simulates polite conversation. The question employs the neologism *péektsilo'ob* 'news' in place of the Spanish *noticias*.

ma'alob ja'atskab k'iin láak'tsile'ex
ma'alob ja'atskab k'iin láak'tsil-e'ex
good early morning day relative B2PL
'Good morning, relatives.'

láak'tsile'ex bix awile'ex le péektsilo'ob ti' le ja'atskabila'
láak'tsil-e'ex bix awil-e'ex le péektsil-o'ob ti' le ja'atskabil-a'
relative B2PL how see B2PL DET news B3PL PREP DET morning D1
'Relatives, what do you think of the news this morning?'

In addition to addressing their unnamed listeners, the announcers regularly engage individual listeners during live talk programming. When delivering *ki'imak óolalo'ob* 'greetings'

that have been submitted to the station, announcers address particular listeners on behalf of other listeners. At times, they deliver their own personal greetings to individual listeners. For example, just before the start of one morning news broadcast that I observed at the station, an announcer spent ten minutes greeting individual listeners. The greetings were fairly impromptu; while preparing the morning news report, she had remembered that there were some listeners that she wanted to greet on the air. She quickly wrote down some of their names before going into the studio room. A transcript of one of the greetings follows. The announcer tells the listening audience about the mediatized co-presence of one of their members, and then addresses that named listener directly. The greeting calls for a reply that the addressee cannot deliver (*Right, doña Manuela?*).

> *Un p'éel ki'imak óolil xan ti' doña Manuela*
> un p'éel ki'imak óol- il xan ti' doña Manuela
> one NC happy soul INH also PREP HON Manuela
> 'A greeting also to doña Manuela.'
>
> *tan u chan láak'in[ti]k-o'on ti' leti' le ja'atskab k'iina'*
> tan u chan láak'in- [ti]k-o'on ti' leti' le ja'atskab k'iin-a'
> PROG A3 small accompany TR B1PL PREP IPR3 DET morning day D1
> 'She is with us this morning.'
>
> *míin táan u yuk'ik u choko uk'ul máasa' doña Manuela*
> míin táan u y- uk'- ik u choko uk'ul máasa' doña Manuela
> maybe PROG A3 GLD drink TR A3 hot drink isn't.it.so HON Manuela
> 'Perhaps she is having her hot breakfast now. Right, doña Manuela?'

Greetings by announcers often simulate conversation between friends (e.g., 'You should put your sweater on, doña Lucia, because it's chilly this morning.'). Announcers direct these impromptu greetings to a variety of social types. A typical group of recipients might include an elderly woman sitting by the radio in her house, a senior man doing agricultural work in his *kool* 'corn plot' (Sp., *milpa*), and a group of women preparing food for sale in town. After they

personally greet named listeners, announcers usually extend a greeting to everyone else who is listening (*ti' tu láakal láak'tsilo'ob tan u láak'in[ti]ko'on xan* 'to all kin who are also with us').

Radio announcers greet individual listeners because listeners delight in being recognized on the air. Throughout the course of my field research, when I walked to the radio station, people along the way would ask me to greet them on the air. The announcers' mediatized representations of audience members are significant, in part, because they specify and typify the station's listening public for that public. Listeners in the municipality of Tahdziú hear talk of fellow listeners in Chacsinkín whose daily routines match their own. Those living and listening in Peto, a fairly large town, hear descriptions of their fellow listeners in the municipality's outlying villages. Radio announcers presume and promote a shared ethnocultural and linguistic identity among these diverse groups of listeners, and they index that shared identity each time they refer to listeners collectively as kin.

The radio announcers laminate Maya group-making efforts onto their audience-building strategies. Residents of towns and villages in the station's signal range do indeed appear to imagine themselves as partaking in a broader public of Maya radio listeners. Radio discourse is deeply embedded into face-to-face discourse in the towns and villages near The Voice of the Mayas, where most own radios and there is little competition from other radio stations. Listeners know that the station reaches a large audience because announcers describe this audience in broadcasts and address particular messages to various towns, villages, and individuals in the listenership. The radio station's popularity suggests receptiveness on the part of those who live within range of the station's signal. Announcers are liked and respected by locals. When walking in Peto and nearby towns, I always heard radios playing in many houses and shops. The station's broadcasts are an ever-present feature of the regional soundscape. When concluding short visits

to towns in the area, residents asked me when I would return. If I did not yet know the date, someone would usually say, 'When you know the date, just say it on the radio. We'll hear it.' I sometimes replied, 'What if you're not near the radio when I say it?' The answer I received was always the same: 'Someone will tell us.'

Voice of the Mayas listeners use the radio station for group-making projects of their own. In the Peto area, the radio station is popularly seen as a useful means for coordinating action within and across town limits. When organizing public events, listeners use the radio station's message service to send *k'uben t'aano'ob* 'announcements' and *ki'imak óolal* 'greetings.' Locals who submit announcement requests to the station are confident that their intended recipients will get the message, either by listening to the broadcast or by hearing the message recounted later from a family member or neighbor who had listened to the broadcast. The message service is beloved among listeners and contributes to the station's local reputation. Poor listeners, especially, value the service because it enables them to communicate with relatives in distant towns.

A major use of these messages is the public acknowledgement of kin relations. Listeners submit birthday greetings for siblings, anniversary announcements for parents, Mother's and Father's Day well-wishes, wedding announcements, and endless comparable messages—all to be read on the air by radio announcers throughout the day. Most listeners submit messages for relatives, but many submit messages for neighbors and friends, as well. While popular usage of the message service holds obvious value for listeners, it also holds value for the radio station's project of Maya advocacy. The message service implicitly produces public diagrams of ethnic solidarity by broadcasting relationships among Maya kin, neighbors, and friends.

The radio station's prohibition of politics, religion, and commercial advertisements limits the scope of the public message service, however, to the frustration of many listeners. In Yaxlol, my neighbors that were involved in the political advocacy group *Antorcha Campesina* 'Peasant Torch' complained to me that the radio station wouldn't announce an upcoming group meeting of theirs, because the group is political. At the station, the announcers check the content of every message before taking it back to the sound room, to ensure that it does not violate the policy. As a result, the message service facilitates only less political sorts of group-making among listeners (e.g., public exercise events, an organic farming club).

For listeners, then, the radio station mediates an additional politics of recognition. Broadcasts are a valued discursive arena in which local relationships may be affirmed before a wide public. In the local towns where I conducted fieldwork, radio greetings were a fairly common topic of face-to-face conversation: who submitted a greeting for whom; who did not; who might; who should. By literally voicing listeners' messages to each other, the radio announcers facilitate group-making among kin and neighbors.

As explained in the previous chapter, I found limited popular espousal of Maya identity among local radio listeners. Mayas did not normally identify themselves as Mayas without my prompting, and many claimed that they were not 'real' Mayas. They characterized *jach maaya* 'real Maya' identity as *úuchben* 'ancient.' And though *mayero* 'Maya speaker' status was highly significant and regularly mentioned in discourse, the category operated as a class indicator as much as it did an ethnic marker.

Nevertheless, while many were hesitant about the authenticity of their Maya status, no one ever denied the identity when I asked. (Note that I posed the question delicately in interviews, only after preliminary questions about the meaning of 'Maya.') Even individuals that

expressed doubts about the authenticity of their Maya status did not hesitate to describe their ancestors as Maya. And in addition to readily acknowledging their Maya heritage, my interlocutors in the Peto region celebrated folklorized notions of Maya language and culture. Routine radio programs that showcased regional folk culture, such as the *jarana* music hour and a radionovela called 'Maruch's Kitchen' (*U K'ooben X-Maruch*; see chapter four), were highly popular among Maya listeners. In Peto, public performances of Maya culture by way of music or dance, for example, were occasionally held at the town hall, radio station, and other venues. Such events were generally well attended by locals, and construed as embodiments of Maya heritage. In some cases, the performances drew visitors from nearby towns.

But while Maya heritage is a primary basis for ethnic identification, it provides a relatively limited ground for ethnic solidarity and social action in the Yucatán. For the radio announcers and other Maya advocates, public performances of heritage serve a prescriptive program of ethnolinguistic maintenance, which in turn advances a politics of recognition. For many Yucatecans, however, heritage offers a logic that keeps Maya identity at a temporal and sociocultural distance. (*Jach maaya* 'real Maya' discourse exemplifies this point.) Performative spectacles of marked practices deemed authentically Maya diagram that distance and, ironically, reauthorize it.

Though other ethnographers of the region have also reported limited Maya identity among Mayas (e.g., Berkley 1998; Castañeda 2004), the findings are especially significant in the Peto region. Mayas at other locations on the peninsula often cite Peto as a *jach maaya* 'real Maya' area, in part because it is home to The Voice of the Mayas, which has actively cultivated Maya identity in the region for decades. My findings illustrate enduring social effects of missionary colonialism and later assimilationist programs of the Mexican state.

Yet, my findings also show that Mayas *are* identifying as Maya. This dissertation centers on a radio station whose mission, programming, and even name are built around Maya identity. And I have described a class of Indigenous Yucatecans whose vocations are similarly premised on their Maya identities. These professional Maya advocates pursue a politics of recognition that is primarily articulated and enacted within institutions of the Mexican state, though under a stated program of pluriculturalism and plurilingualism rather than assimilation. In the section that follows, I show that this governmental mediation does not simply authorize Maya and Indigenous identities, but also reformulates and neutralizes them considerably.

Governmental Mediations of Indigeneity: Effects and Limits

Centuries ago, the colonial enterprise aimed to produce *indios reducidos* 'ordered Indians' that conducted themselves in accordance with *policía cristiana* 'Christian civility' (Hanks 2010, 2012). *Policía* 'civility,' Hanks explains, "was about being in order, in the right place at the right time, using language properly, and observing decorum proper to an urban setting" (2012, 451). The modern governmental administration of Maya language and speakers pursues a nationalized variety of civility, we might say, that is mediated by a modern Maya standard rather than the *maya reducido* variety that emerged from the colonial encounter (on *maya reducido*, see Hanks 2010, 2012).

Two essential means and ends of state-mediated Maya advocacy in the Mexican Yucatán, identified in the previous chapter, embody this governmental pursuit of nationalized civility: development and standardization. The project of *desarrollo de los pueblos indígenas* 'Indigenous development' pursues the socioeconomic advancement of Indigenous citizens alongside the fortification of their cultural and linguistic practices. The *normalización* 'standardization' of Indigenous languages represents a vital part of the developmental undertaking. Standardization is

intended to improve the capacity of Indigenous languages as means for civic activity, political engagement, and cultural expression. Standardized registers are thus envisioned as channels for Indigenous development.

So, while Indigenous language standardization in Mexico transpires mainly through institutions of education and media, the social aims and effects of the projects are much larger. I therefore construe standardization broadly, in order to encompass other practices that are organized and managed by way of governmental intervention. Most of this intervention falls outside the scope of language standardization as such. But as I explain in this section, governmental mediation standardizes other facets of indigeneity beside language in the service of national developmental goals. It does so through its modularity and uniform regimenting capacities.

Across the country, the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI) oversees development programs and radio stations for different Indigenous populations. Projects implemented among disparate populations share rationales and objectives, such as employment, education, public health, and infrastructural improvements. INPI radio stations' programming content archives language, music, dance, and folk practices of these populations. Similarly, the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) produces linguistic studies, literature collections, and teaching materials for several Indigenous languages of Mexico.[5] The National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) investigates Mexico's Indigenous history and curates its cultural artifacts.

[5] INALI. "Catálogo de publicaciones." Accessed April 15, 2022. https://site.inali.gob.mx/INALIDhuchlab/ publicaciones.html.

The institutes and their organizational affiliates present their activities as fostering the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic *diversidad* 'diversity' of Mexico. Yet, the work has consequential homogenizing effects in the domains of ethnicity, culture, and language. The cultivation of different archives—of language, history, material culture, etc.—renders distinct ethnolinguistic groups as tokens of the same 'Indigenous' type. The typification is systematized institutionally through state and federal agencies. Yucatan's Institute for the Development of Maya Culture (INDEMAYA), premised explicitly on Maya identity, works alongside the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), which is based on the *pueblo indígena* 'Indigenous people' category of identity. The governmental administration of other Indigenous ethnolinguistic groups' affairs proceeds on the same model. In Oaxaca, for example, the state's Secretariat of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples (SEPIA) works alongside the INPI to serve a large Indigenous demographic that includes Mazatec, Mixe, Mixtec, and Zapotec peoples.[6]

Social actors in this varied arena of governmental intervention frame their work within a contemporary idiom of identity. In language that is typical, the mission statement of the INPI affirms the institute's commitment to 'strengthening the cultures and identities' of Indigenous and Afro-Mexican peoples (n.b., the quoted phrase is my translation from Spanish).[7] This aligns with current trends, but Indigenous advocacy in Mexico carries on the ideological and political legacy of its forebears in important ways. In the 1930s, *indigenismo* ideology and policy downplayed ethnic differences between Indigenous citizens and organized them under a single category of "Indian" (Fallaw 1997, 564). The National Indigenist Institute (INI), established in 1948, had as a principal goal the cultural integration of Indigenous citizens into the Mexican

[6] SEPIA. Accessed June 2, 2022. https://www.oaxaca.gob.mx/sepia.
[7] INPI. "¿Qué hacemos?" Accessed June 2, 2022. https://www.gob.mx/inpi/que-hacemos.

nation-state (Castells-Talens 2004). The INI, recall, was reformulated as the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI, 2003-2018), which was refashioned as today's National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI). 'Indigenous development' remains central to the Institute's mission, and offers a field wherein the governmental management of Indigenous affairs is clearly bound up in projects of the Mexican state.

At The Voice of the Mayas, developmental objectives shape radio programming in several respects. One task of announcers is making listeners aware of the government programs and projects aimed at Maya people's social and economic advancement. Announcers also tell listeners about their rights as Indigenous citizens, which include the right to pursue their social and economic development. More broadly, the station's programming is in the service of developmental goals. The morning and afternoon *péektsilo'ob* 'news' announcements are meant to help Maya listeners become informed citizens. And the station's pointedly "cultural" programming, such as 'Tradition of my land' (U Ki'imak Óolal In Kajal) is meant to develop Maya culture.

Developmentalist radio talk implicitly formulates 'the Mayas' and other Indigenous populations as ethnic types along synchronic and diachronic lines. In a given broadcast, announcers might discuss a socioeconomic initiative taking place in a Zapotec community in Oaxaca. They will specify Zapotecs as a *máasewal kaaj* 'Indigenous people,' just as they do for Maya people. I found that the announcers also did this when reporting on Indigenous groups outside of Mexico, such as the Standing Rock Sioux. That the announcers relayed news reports on the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's protests speaks to their notion and politics of Indigenous

groupness. The referential practice encourages listeners to see themselves and their fellow Maya speakers as members of an expansive *máasewal kaaj* 'Indigenous people' group.

In their reportage, the announcers interpret news and government projects in terms of a development trajectory for Indigenous citizens and communities. In this framing, certain issues and events are evaluated and characterized (for listeners) in terms of *utsbe'enilo'ob* 'benefits' and *talamilo'ob* 'difficulties.' A new employment program might offer 'benefits' to the nearby municipality of Tahdziú, for example, a largely Indigenous township that struggles with 'difficulties' like poverty and hunger.

Broadcast talk of this sort often assumes a narrative structure built around the calque *u jóok'ol táanil* 'it develops' (lit., 'it goes out ahead'), used in place of the Spanish *desarrollo* 'development.' Usually, the announcers use a passivized, causative form of the calque: *u jo'osa'al táanil* 'it is developed' (lit., 'it is caused to go out ahead'). Two examples from my field research are given below.

The first example is a Maya rendering of the name of the station's parent organization at the time, the Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas:

> *Comisión nacional u ti'a'al u jo'osa'al táanil máasewal kaajo'ob*
> comisión nacional u ti'a'al u jo'o- s- a'al táan- il máasewal kaaj- o'ob
> commission national A3 POSS A3 go.out CAUS PASS front INH Indian town B3PL
> National commission for the development of Indigenous peoples

Note that, while the announcers replaced *desarrollo* 'development' with the aforementioned calque, they did not replace *comisión nacional* 'national commission' with Maya lexemes. This usage illustrates limits of Maya purism at the radio station, a topic that I investigate in chapter three.

The second example is taken from a news broadcast, in which the announcer reports on an ecotourism project that is underway in the town of Tecoh, Yucatán. The project's managers

envision success based on the town's mostly Maya population and on ecotourists' desire to experience Maya culture. So, the Maya-ness of Tecoh residents— discernable in such vehicles as speech, clothing, and cuisine—is a vital resource for their socioeconomic 'development.'

Ti' ka'a p'éel múuch'kabilo'ob te' tu kajil Tecoh…
ti' ka'a p'éel múuch'kabil- o'ob te' t- u kaj- il Tecoh
PREP two NC group B3PL PREP PREP A3 town REL Tecoh
in two groups there in the town of Tecoh

leti'e' antajilo'oba'
leti'- e' antaj-il- o'ob- a'
IPR3 TOP help INH B3PL D1
this is assistance

u ti'a'al u beytal ***u jo'osa'al táanil***
u ti'a'al u bey- tal u jo'o- s- a'al táan-il
A3 POSS A3 thus INCH A3 go.out CAUS PASS front INH
in order to bring about **its development**

leti'e meyaj ti' ecoturismo te' tu kaajalo'obo'
leti'- e' meyaj ti' ecoturismo te' t- u kaajal-o'ob- o'
IPR3 TOP work PREP ecotourism PREP PREP A3 town B3PL D2
this is work in ecotourism there in the towns

Though I encounter the 'development' calque in print media, as well, I have never observed non-professional Maya speakers use either form in everyday talk (i.e., active voice or the passive, causative construction). Instead, Maya speakers utilize *ma'alob/uts* 'good' with the inchoative suffix *-tal* 'become' to refer to improvements of all sorts (e.g., *ku ma'alobtal* 'it improves [becomes good]'). Speakers may similarly inflect these constructions with causative morphemes (e.g., *ku ma'alobkunsik* 'she makes it good').

I found that Maya listeners in the Peto area understood the denotational meanings of the 'development' calque used by radio announcers, though they could not explain why the announcers used the *u jóok'ol táanil* 'it develops' phrase (or its passivized causative form). Whenever I asked for the meanings of the calques, speakers offered variations of the

constructions based on *ma'alob* 'good' that are presented above. When I asked the radio announcers, they were not able to remember where they learned the calque. I believe that publications of the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) were the source. The INALI sends Maya texts to INPI radio stations as part of its outreach efforts. Radio announcers encounter Maya neologisms in these texts and occasionally adopt particular ones for use in broadcasts (see chapter three).

Voice of the Mayas radio talk interprets socioeconomic disparities as historical problems in need of administration, so as to enable Mayas' development within the nation. Talking about social issues this way subtly reframes certain negative stereotypes of 'Indian' identity. As the previous chapter explains, perceptions of indigeneity in the Yucatán are shaped by entrenched class-based and ethno-racial connotations of 'Indian' identities. Indigenous-developmental ideologies and projects aim to isolate the class component, in a way, by rendering economic status an external social-historical problem while centering ethnic Maya identity in a positive light as the basis for solidarity between the station and its publics. From the developmentalist perspective, issues like poverty and alcoholism are not intrinsic to Indigenous people, but rather are social problems that can be remedied with governmental support.

Projects of Indigenous development are highly valued by local communities. In the village of Yaxlol, local women operated a corn mill and small bakery, both of which were installed by the Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI), predecessor of the INPI. *Campesinos* 'peasant farmers' of Yaxlol received financial support from a federal program called PROCAMPO 'Program of direct support to the countryside,' which 'aims to complement the economic income of producers in the Mexican countryside, to contribute to their

individual economic growth and that of the country.'[8] Village residents participated in a variety of other projects aimed at their socioeconomic development, as well. They learned of these opportunities at village *asambleas* 'assemblies,' through Voice of the Mayas radio announcements, and from neighbors and relatives. Mayas of Yaxlol were always eager to learn of potential *proyeectos* 'projects' on the horizon.

But they did not usually talk about these developmental projects in terms of their Maya identities, or even in terms of their indigeneity. Instead, they understood and described the projects in terms of their socioeconomic standing as *óotsil* 'poor' people. A common refrain was *"Mina'an taak'in waye'"* 'There's no money here.' That was the problem that village residents understood various projects to be addressing.

On one revealing occasion, I was chatting with friends in the village when a visitor appeared in front of their house. The man, a coordinator for a program that assisted local *campesinos*, had arranged some financial support for the family months before. He had now returned with a photographer to take a picture of the family for an upcoming newsletter. The men, speaking in Spanish, asked the family to pose in and around one of the hammocks that stretched the length of the small, stick-built house. The grandfather of the family felt embarrassed to have his photo taken without a shirt on, so he left to find something to wear. His adult daughter, Lina (a pseudonym), gently teased him and explained the momentary delay to the visitors. Lina found it funny. 'He wants to put a shirt on for the picture,' she said to me, 'but they'll know we're poor when they see the house behind us!'

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[8] Quoted text is my translation from Spanish. Source: Gobierno de Mexico. "¿Qué es PROCAMPO?" https://www.gob.mx/epn/es/articulos/que-es-procampo. Accessed April 15, 2022.

It was true, of course, and it was the very reason for the picture. The men from town wanted a good photograph of the recipients of an Indigenous-developmental project. So, the more stereotypical signifiers of indigeneity in the picture—shirtless men, a woman wearing traditional clothing, a hammock under a thatched roof—the better. Indeed, when the grandfather returned, the photographer tried to persuade him, to no avail, to remove his shirt. In manufacturing a photographic representation of indigeneity amid development, some of the more desirable indexes of indigeneity were also indexes of poverty. But Lina and her family did not construe the signs of their indigeneity as such. They interpreted them instead as markers of their status as *óotsil* 'poor' people.

I found this interpretation generally to be the case in the community of Yaxlol, where residents' identities as poor *campesinos* seemed more relevant to them than did their Maya identities. During my field research, the village considered a proposal for a commercial development project on its communal *ejido* farmland. Jaime Ariel Hernández Santos, president of the Peto municipality at the time (2015-2018), had asked the village to donate a portion of its land for the construction of a private university. Advocates sought to persuade residents that the project would benefit the village. Residents were told that their children would be able to attend the university, and that the larger project would provide economic opportunities for the village at large. Ultimately, the *ejido* members of Yaxlol rejected the petition to donate land for the project. If the developers really wanted the land, some members told a local reporter, then they could pay for it.[9]

The official request was not made to "the people of Yaxlol," though it was discussed that way. The actual targets of the petition were the members of the village *ejido*, who held

[9] I have not cited this source in order to avoid revealing the identity of Yaxlol.

communal rights to the land. *Ejido* membership was arguably the most important basis for collective interest and action in Yaxlol. Members also viewed themselves as representing the village as a whole, in certain respects, but most residents of Yaxlol did not belong to the *ejido*. During the period of field research for this study, less than a quarter of the village's roughly 700 inhabitants had *ejidatario* status. Non-members had different stakes in the development proposal because they did not enjoy rights to the land that was being requested.

The land request therefore put *ejido* members in a bind. As *campesinos* 'peasant farmers,' they were generally inclined to guard every hectare of their apportioned land. But they were pressed to make the donation on behalf of the community at large. The pressure complicated members' efforts to negotiate their own views on the proposal. Deliberations over the land request took place at several public *reuniones* 'meetings' and *asambleas* 'assemblies.' The events, held at the village center, were well attended by residents. On some occasions, officials and advocates traveled to Yaxlol to address the community.

The meetings were explicitly convened as spaces for the sharing of individual *opiniones* 'opinions,' but the need for consensus was a recurring theme. Participants were not merely negotiating differences of opinion; they were concurrently managing social relations in the village. The problem of keeping the *ejido* members unified was related, but not coterminous, with keeping the village unified. Kin relations and religious affiliation presented obvious footing for building unity, but these relationships also offered avenues for the potential formation of rival factions. Consequently, participants oriented their individual claims carefully.

Some were so careful that they avoided taking definite stances on the proposed project in their public speech. These individuals cited potential benefits alongside problems. They readily took stances on ideals, such as being *unido* 'united' and doing what is best for the children of the

village, but then hedged when assessing the proposal itself. Some expressed the need for more information from the developers. Others emphasized the importance of consulting with '*abogados*' lawyers before agreeing to anything.

Notwithstanding the critical divide between *ejido* members and non-members, residents of Yaxlol did express themselves as a single group during these events. *Kaaj* 'town' identities have long been important in the region (see chapter one). Residents' identities as *Yaxlolilo'ob* 'people of Yaxlol' decisively shaped their perceptions of the proposal and figured prominently in their public discussions about it. Just as the municipal president presented the project as an opportunity for the Yaxlol community as a whole, residents saw themselves as having a collective incentive in accepting or rejecting the land request.

Indigenous identity and Maya language were certainly relevant in all this, given the nature of the proposal and the involvement of Spanish speakers from the capital city of Mérida. But Yaxlol residents invoked neither Maya-ness nor indigeneity as grounds for groupness during the assemblies. Instead, they cited their collective status as a *chan kaaj* 'small town' of *óotsil* 'poor' people as grounds for social solidarity and action. Individuals did this regardless of their position on the debate. Those in favor of the proposal spoke of the *beneficio* 'benefit' that the project would bring to the village, particularly for the young people dealing with limited work opportunities. Those opposed to the proposal saw it as an attempt to take advantage of Yaxlol because it was a poor community. In this view, *justicia* 'justice' for *campesinos* 'peasant farmers' required that members defend communal land from outside interests. Whereas those receptive to the proposal framed the issue as a problem of socioeconomic development, opponents repeatedly framed it as a problem of rights.

Predictably, *ejido* members did not merely disclose their positions at village assemblies. They attempted to shape public opinion about the proposal. Their efforts were complicated by the limited knowledge available about the project and, perhaps more importantly, by their limited knowledge about the stances of fellow *ejido* members. Many speakers mentioned this uncertainty when addressing the crowd. To negotiate the uncertainty, members employed a dual addressivity of sorts, aimed simultaneously at potential allies and opponents.

Some *ejido* members addressed the crowd as *compañeros* 'companions.' This was appropriate in context partly because participants lived in the same community. But *compañeros* is not merely a neighborly form of address. Especially in public meetings like these, vocative uses of the form carry political connotations. These speakers might have addressed the crowd as *vecinos* 'neighbors,' as they often do when greeting fellow Yaxlol residents who are not kin. Or they might have used the kin term *láak'tsil* 'relatives' in a tropic way, as the announcers at The Voice of the Mayas do in radio broadcasts. Instead, by opening and punctuating their monologues with *compañeros*, they made overt calls to political unity.

One *ejido* member, don Samuel,[10] repeatedly hailed his listeners *compañeros* as he argued against the request for land. He lamented a shift in the village, among younger generations, away from farming. "*Ba'ax ku yúuchul, compañeros*" 'What is happening, compañeros?' he asked the crowd. After declaring the merits of local agricultural traditions, he questioned the local value of the proposed development. "*Ma'ax ku beneficiar*" 'Who's going to benefit?' he asked. After a short pause, don Samuel answered his own question: "*Empresarios. Ma' to'oni*" 'Businessmen. Not us.'

Another *ejido* member, who had spoken earlier, disagreed. He asserted his position with

[10] This is a pseudonym.

much less vigor than opponents of the request did theirs. After acknowledging potential issues and reasons for caution, the member said that he thought the proposed project would bring *beneficio* 'benefit' to the village. Against the view that commercial ventures were trying to take advantage of the village, he questioned the government's ability to help the people of Yaxlol. No one from the *gobierno* 'government' helps the village, he argued. Government assistance is supposed to benefit *óotsilo'ob* 'poor people,' he said, but it does not truly do so. He told the crowd, "*Mina'an oportunidad ti' dependencia ti' gobierno*" 'There is no opportunity in governmental dependence.' This was a critique of governmental 'Indigenous development' efforts, but the speaker did not mention his community's indigeneity. Instead, he cited the poverty of Yaxlol residents as grounds for their groupness.

Both sides of the debate about the land request might have been interpreted in terms of Maya identity and indigeneity. Given Yaxlol's demographics, advocates could have easily framed the project as an undertaking in 'Indigenous development.' On the other hand, opponents could have construed the land request, and even the project itself, as manipulation of Indigenous citizens by powerful interests. I did not observe either side take this approach. Instead, residents of Yaxlol approached and negotiated the issue through a politics of class. Poor *campesinos* 'peasant farmers,' *negocios* 'businesses,' and *empresarios* 'businessmen' were understood by all to be the principal actors, whom the university and attendant enterprises would bring into relation. Advocates saw the relation between the two players as one of opportunity. Opponents saw it as exploitation.

The prominence of *campesino* 'peasant farmer' identity among Mayas in southern Yucatán partly reflects previous eras of assimilationist policy in Mexico, which I outlined in this dissertation's introductory chapter. It also reflects leftist political mobilization in the region. The

aforementioned political group *Antorcha Campesina* 'Peasant Torch' had an active following in Peto and its surrounding towns and villages during the period of my field research. Schoolteachers also organized politically, as they do across Mexico. Such groups gestured to Maya language and culture for different reasons, but Maya-ness was not their basis for group-making. Rather, it served as a means for linking with other groups for common political ends (e.g., Indigenous *campesinos*). In sum, social class and labor provided just as fertile grounds for political mobilization among Mayas as did ethnic or ethnolinguistic identity.

The group-building work of The Voice of the Mayas is also political, but not in the same way. The radio announcers take pains to avoid politics in their radio work. In his 2004 study of the radio station, Castells-Talens describes "what came to be informally known as the policy of the three no's [sic]: no politics, no religion, and no commercialism" (2004, 168). The radio station has long refused to broadcast political speeches or advertisements, religious proselytizing content, or paid advertisements. The policy was still enforced when I conducted my fieldwork, and it frustrated local factions of different types. For radio announcers, the rule was vital because it kept the station out of local and even national disputes. The policy will always be necessary, the announcers explained to me, because people will always want to *manejaartik* 'drive' the radio station toward their own ends.

The radio station's policy may be necessary for its institutional integrity, but it also holds consequences for the announcers' identity work. Most remarkably, the station's mediatized construction of "the Mayas" as a group proceeds via the erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000; Gal and Irvine 2019) of Maya speakers' crucial identities. That is, broadcast expressions and valorizations of Maya groupness are divorced from two of the most salient social identities among Maya speakers: religious affiliation and political party membership (see chapter one

regarding the local importance of these identities). Further, the station's exception to the "no religion" rule—broadcasts of ritual events deemed authentically Maya—implicitly folklorizes Maya identity and locates it in a space outside of politics. Beyond the radio station, too, contemporary rituals of Maya identity tend to function more as indexical icons of regional tradition than of ethnocultural groupness.

Conclusion

The data presented here reveal how professional Maya advocates conceive and promote Maya identity at a public institution with extensive social reach. Governmental mediation has important consequences for politics of indigeneity in Yucatán. The chapter has documented ongoing transformations in the social meanings of *maaya* 'Maya' and *máasewal* 'Indian, Indigenous,' which render the terms' referents more legible in national and global orders of identity. The transformations crucially involve an ethnicization of Maya identity, but persistent indexical associations impede official designations.

Maya media and ethnolinguistic advocacy would appear to empower 'the Maya' as a constituency in regional and national politics. But I have argued that state mediation neutralizes Maya and Indigenous identities even as it legitimates and valorizes them before wider publics. This is not to say that state-mediated Maya advocacy is unproductive or unsuccessful. The cultural and linguistic advocacy of The Voice of the Mayas enjoys popular support. Mayas in the Peto municipality also value the work of the radio station and the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI) for the social services and material advantages they offer the community at large. Additionally, those employed at these and related organizations find pathways for professionalization and socioeconomic advancement.

Subsequent chapters will examine linguistic facets of Maya advocacy, and will further analyze dissonances between the different indexical values linked to *maaya* and *máasewal* identities. It will become clearer that Maya speakers' hesitancies about their Maya-ness and their misgivings about their indigeneity are differently motivated. This complicates the work of the radio announcers and other Maya advocates, who already manage a variety of ideological tensions and contradictions. The next chapter takes as its point of departure one such contradiction: the use of a prestige register of language for effective mass communication.

Chapter Three
A Prestige Register for Mass Communication: Purified Maya at Radio XEPET/XHPET

Many celebrate Radio XEPET/XHPET 'The Voice of the Mayas' for broadcasting in the (Yucatec) Maya language. In public discourse, the radio station is interpreted as a vital realization of the linguistic rights of an Indigenous people. When budget cuts threatened the station in 2015, thirty-three years after its founding, writer and cultural advocate Edgar Rodríguez Cimé (2015) declared that "…*el pueblo maya yucateco lleva apenas 33 años de ser respetado su derecho a la información en su propio idioma*" '…the Yucatec Maya people have only had their right to information in their own language respected for 33 years' (English translation mine). Listeners, too, find it indispensable that the radio station broadcasts in Maya. The station's director and announcers cultivate the radio station as a channel for expression in and of the local language.

At the same time, the radio announcers see themselves as preserving Maya language. They regard the borrowing of Spanish lexemes as a problem to be remedied. The view is common among Maya language advocates. As Rhodes reports, linguistic purism is "central to and even hegemonic among contemporary Maya language fortification efforts" (2020, 326). Furthermore, as explained in chapter one, the use of standardized Maya (a purified register) offers a principal means of inhabiting the esteemed persona of *professional Maya advocate*. The Voice of the Mayas is therefore caught between competing norms of linguistic usage, namely those of a purified, aspirational Maya standard versus the so-called *xa'ak'a'an* 'mixed' Maya that is spoken by radio listeners. Radio announcers' ideological commitments to Maya purism conflict with their commitments to effective mass communication. The problem illustrates Gershon's observation that media ideologies and language ideologies do not necessarily align, even though they are closely interrelated (2010, 284).

In this chapter, I explicate the key features of Maya broadcast speech that emerge from this dynamic. The radio announcers employ a markedly de-Castilianized register of Maya, but they moderate their purism in ways that reflect their institutional objectives. In broadcasts, denotational ambiguity helps the radio announcers negotiate the competing demands of Maya purism and effective reference. The opacity of standardized Maya clearly hinders its popular adoption, but the social effectiveness of the register does not follow directly from the intelligibility of particular lexical items. Varied interpretations of the register among local listeners reveal a limited conventionalization of denotational and pragmatic values. In order to emphasize the unique discursive work of the announcers, I compare conventions of Maya radio with those of printed Maya. The comparison illuminates the current state of Maya language standardization. Maya purism is common, but purified Maya is not uniform.

This chapter clarifies the relationship between The Voice of the Mayas and the formal Maya *normalización* 'standardization' project that is led by linguists and educators. It also clarifies the relationship between *jach maaya* 'real Maya' and standardized Maya. Speakers may at times describe the standardized register as *jach maaya*, but the two are not the same. *Jach maaya* forms constitute a miscellaneous and indefinite set, which shares some lexemes with the focal domains of standardized Maya purism I identify below. Berkley described *jach maaya* as "vernacular purism" controlled by Maya elders, particularly senior men, and standard Maya as the "schooled purism of revitalization educators" (Berkley 1998, 2–3). The basic distinction is correct, I believe, and aptly characterizes Maya purism at my field sites. The long history of the *jach maaya* convention is evidenced by ethnographic accounts dating back nearly a century (see chapter one). Maya standardization, by contrast, is a modern endeavor, launched in literacy efforts of the 1980s and currently embodied in *normalización*. The National Indigenous

Languages Institute (INALI) has published norms for writing the language (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014), but the enregisterment of a Maya standard remains a limited and developing process.

For this reason, I tend to refer to "standardized Maya" rather than "standard Maya." The qualification is particularly apt when referring to speech. If a written Maya standard is currently under development, a spoken Maya standard remains on the horizon. Yet, the emerging norms of written Maya have gradually shaped spoken Maya at the radio station in significant ways, and continue to do so.

The difference between *jach maaya* and standardized Maya is increasingly obscured by their relationship. As Berkley observed, the standardized Maya of educators finds local uptake in the category of *jach maaya* among non-educators (1998, 232). Recently, Rhodes (2020) has described a counterpart process whereby *jach maaya* is institutionalized at the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) and other sites. The purified Maya used at The Voice of the Mayas exemplifies both processes, but neither process is seamless. Agents of standardization deem *jach maaya* lexemes essential to creating a Maya standard, but entrenched conceptions of *jach maaya* deter usage of those lexemes in everyday discourse. The two registers, thus, while overlapping differ *both* in their repertoire forms *and*, more importantly, in their metapragmatic (indexical) stereotypes.

In the Peto municipality, speakers' explanations of Maya language reveal the *axis of differentiation* (Gal and Irvine 2019) that I delineated in chapter one. Maya *normalización*, I explain below, reconfigures the semiotic values that structure *jach maaya* as a field of conceptualization and communicative practice. My analysis of structured differentiations helps account for the limited adoption of standardized Maya that is documented in chapter one. And

my ethnographic findings among listeners reveal that the semiotic reconfigurations of *normalización* render traditional *jach maaya* lexemes less recognizable to Maya speakers as *jach maaya*. At the same time, I explain, the perceived authenticity of integrated *jach maaya* lexemes does benefit the social prestige of the standardized register and its users, especially as to be used on the radio.

Patterned Purism, Denotational Ambiguity, Indexical Polyvalence

Maya purism is implemented exclusively via lexically focused de-Castilianization, that is, the use of Maya neologisms and archaisms in place of Spanish lexemes. To my knowledge, Maya purists only focus on the lexical level. At syntactic and pragmatic levels, de-Castilianized Maya actually utilizes numerous Spanish conventions (see chapter five). Note that I use the adjectives "purified" and "de-Castilianized" interchangeably when characterizing the standardized Maya register.[1] And I usually refer simply to "pure Maya lexemes" rather than specifying whether the forms in questions are neologisms, archaisms, or both. This is partly for brevity and partly because the distinction is complicated by archaic Maya neologisms from the colonial era.

Broadcast speech at The Voice of the Mayas has undergone significant de-Castilianization over the years, though it still depends crucially on Spanish loans. The heaviest uses of pure Maya occur in highly genred and frequently repeated segments of broadcast talk. Announcers told me that many of the pure Maya forms that they use most regularly have been in use since 2010, when they collectively decided on Maya replacements for certain Spanish loans

[1] Lexemes from other languages than Spanish are not subject to "purification" by Maya language advocates and standardizers, so far as I know. A revealing example is *máasewal* 'Indian, indigenous, commoner,' which standardized Maya prescribes in place of the Spanish loan *indígena* 'indigenous.' The lexeme is actually an old loan from Nahuatl.

(discussed below).[2] The announcers cited language preservation as the motivation for their divergence from the norms of spoken Maya. They viewed linguistic "mixing" as an escalating threat to Maya language.

But Maya purism is not formally mandated by the radio station's director or by its parent organization, the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI). Rather, it has been driven by the predilections of certain radio announcers and guided, indirectly, by linguistic prescriptions emanating from other institutional sites. The most important source of pure Maya lexemes for the radio announcers is the *Diccionario Maya Cordemex*, a large Maya-Spanish dictionary produced under the direction of Mexican linguist and anthropologist Alfredo Barrera Vázquez (Barrera Vásquez, et al. 1980). The text compiles entries from colonial dictionaries and modern sources. Maya speakers familiar with the *Cordemex* dictionary value it as an archive of *jach maaya* 'real Maya.'[3] Radio announcers consult the text when a desired Maya gloss for a Spanish form is not obvious.

Although the radio announcers share ideologies of purism with other agents of Maya standardization, the actual work of de-Castilianizing Maya language is not appreciably coordinated between relevant institutions. Guerrettaz has found that architects of Maya *normalización* ('standardization') conceive and carry out the process on the metaphor of a pyramid that has "government linguists" at the top (2019, 69). At the base of the pyramid, in Maya language classrooms, she observed "vast variation" in the implementation of Maya writing

[2] The radio station did not keep records of these meetings and the announcers could not provide detailed recollections. I was told that the meetings were not contentious.

[3] In his dissertation study of Maya language promotion in Yucatán, Josep Cru writes, "While attending a workshop on language rights in the town of Sotuta, a participant proudly told me that the jach (authentic) Maya could only be found in the authoritative Cordemex dictionary" (2014, 170).

norms" (Guerrettaz 2019, 74). The Voice of the Mayas is also at the base of the *normalización* pyramid, though it is not formally involved in the project. And as mentioned in chapter one, the station's longtime director speaks only Spanish. So, the Maya radio announcers manage the 'mixedness' of their own speech without oversight.

Upon the publication of Maya writing norms,[4] the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) sent a copy to the radio station. The announcers added the text to their library, where they keep Maya publications from the INALI and other agencies that send the texts as part of their outreach efforts. Announcers may leaf through these books and magazines, but they do not ordinarily study them.[5] Pure Maya lexemes do sometimes migrate from the pages of these texts into radio broadcasts, however. In the course of my field research, I saw the announcers occasionally and casually examine the language of these texts, which were typically composed in purified Maya. The announcers also encounter pure Maya lexemes through their interactions with Indigenous professionals who visit the radio station. On occasions such as El Día Internacional de la Lengua Materna ('International Mother Language Day'), the radio station hosts Maya language officials and advocates for public talks and interviews. These acquaintances with Maya publications and professionals stimulate the appearance of pure Maya lexemes in radio talk.

Despite the lax relationship between The Voice of the Mayas and the INALI, I think it is appropriate to classify the station's broadcast register as standardized Maya. The radio announcers are ideologically aligned with *normalización* and, through the influence of the

[4] *U Nu'ukbesajil u Ts'íibta'al Maayat'aan/Normas de Escritura para la Lengua Maya* 'Norms for Writing the Maya Language' (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014).
[5] Two of the announcers, however, have an academic interest in the language and examine Maya texts more closely than their colleagues. One of these announcers is currently writing a grammar of the language in his free time.

station, their public speech helps shape the enregisterment of what they target/project as a Maya standard. Besides, the implementation of standardized norms has not been tightly regimented in other relevant domains, either. Well before Guerrettaz (2019) noted the loose pyramidal structure of *normalización*, Brody (2004) described a "meandering evolution toward unified norms" in written Maya.

The pure Maya lexical items used by the radio announcers reveal a pattern: fields of linguistic purism have arisen where media production genres and the station's mission pose the most challenges for de-Castilianization. Put simply, the announcers trained themselves to avoid Spanish loans most carefully in broadcast contexts where they were most often inclined to use them. (All of the station's permanent announcers were habituated to the norms of 'mixed' everyday Maya speech prior to becoming users of standardized Maya on-air.) Today, they are very proficient in finding Maya replacements for Spanish lexical items that routinely appear in news articles and announcements from the station's parent organization.

Voice of the Mayas news reports, for example, are fairly impromptu translations of Spanish news articles into purified Maya. Before the broadcast, announcers read newspapers and online news sources for about an hour.[6] They select several articles, which they then translate at the microphone. Veteran radio announcers told me that this used to be a difficult undertaking. Years ago, they could not produce the extemporaneous Spanish-to-Maya translations that they easily produce today. One of the announcers recalled arriving early to the station in order to prepare written Maya translations, which she would then read into the microphone. In time, the announcers became adept at translating Spanish texts into Maya in real time. Familiarity with

[6] The announcers mainly consult these sources for their daily news reports*: Por Esto!*; *Diario de Yucatán*; sipse.com; poresto.net.

Spanish-language broadcast genres and a systematic reliance on corresponding pure Maya forms enables the announcers to produce unrehearsed Maya translations of Spanish texts on the air.

During my field research, I noted three terminological domains in which the announcers most systematically avoided Spanish loans: (1) civic and governmental terms; (2) media terms; and (3) time interval terms. Broadcasts at The Voice of the Mayas are punctuated with terms of civic and governmental discourse, in part due to the station's position and function within Mexico's National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI).[7] Announcers publicize projects of INPI and related organizations. They also apprise listeners of regional, national, and international news. In order to report the news and translate program and policy descriptions without resorting to Spanish, the announcers employ several uncommon Maya forms. The neologisms and archaisms on which the announcers most rely (for these purposes) refer to roles, organizations, sociopolitical practices, and administrative units. Media talk is another noticeably de-Castilianized field of discourse at the radio station because the announcers must discuss media technologies and programming throughout every day. Maya time units, as well, are a conspicuous feature of broadcast and office talk at the station, not only because some of them are uncommon, but also because the radio announcers talk frequently about scheduled events.

Traditionally spoken Maya incorporates Spanish lexemes heavily in each of the three domains. Spanish is the dominant language of formal institutions in Mexico, so Maya speakers normally employ countless Spanish terms when talking about public entities, organizations, and events. Maya speakers also use Spanish loans when talking about media technologies and programming genres (e.g., *tele* 'television,' *noticias* 'news'). The time interval terms of everyday

[7] Formerly the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI), which had itself formerly been the National Indigenist Institute (INI).

Maya speech are similarly 'mixed.' Though the Maya nouns *k'iin* 'day' and (to a lesser degree) *ja'ab* 'year' remain commonly used, Maya nouns for other time units (e.g., *uj/winal* 'month') sound archaic to speakers. Consequently, talk regarding bureaucratic matters, media, and time exhibit the most cohesive and elaborated fields of lexical purism in use at the radio station.

De-Castilianization is a striking feature of broadcast talk at The Voice of the Mayas, but there are practical and ideological limits on the announcers' linguistic purism. It is not possible to learn or devise Maya neologisms for all of the Spanish lexemes that the announcers are inclined to use. And though the announcers are ideologically invested in purified Maya, they also want to communicate effectively with their listeners. One announcer, who had been at the station since its early days, explained to me, "*Wá ka jach a'alik ka tsolik le máako' jach ich maaya, maaya maaya, yaan máaxe' ma' ku na'atik*" 'If you truly give your explanations to people truly in Maya, *Maya Maya*, then there are people who don't understand.'

I found the announcers to be pure language enthusiasts rather than steadfast purists. I never saw them police each other's Maya speech for Spanish loans. They enjoy deploying rare Maya forms, but do not anxiously avoid Spanish loans or keep up-to-date on the neologisms that appear in Maya print media. While the radio station's Maya broadcast register is conspicuously de-Castilianized, it still utilizes an assortment of Spanish loans.

Amid the two conflicting motivations—purified Maya versus effective communication—*pedagogical bilingual parallelism* arises as an appealing discursive technique. In broadcasts, radio announcers often pair uncommon Maya forms with their commonly used Spanish equivalents. The technique's effect is to punctuate radio broadcasts with fleeting moments of language instruction and advocacy. Three examples follow (Spanish forms are underlined).

…ichil deportes, ichil ketlamilo'ob…
ichil deportes ichil ketlamil- o'ob
within sports within competition B3PL
in sports, in competitions

…je' bix box janal wá relleno negro[8] *ku ya'ala'alo'…*
je' bix box janal wá relleno negro k- u y a'al-a'al- o'
like how black food or stuffed black IMPF A3 GLD say PASS D2
such as "black food" or "relleno negro" [as] it is called

…yéetel nu'ukulo' wá equipamiento…
yéetel nu'ukul-o' wá equipamiento
with tool D2 or equipment
with tools or equipment

Bilingual parallelism of this sort is neither planned nor consistently used. Sometimes, announcers spontaneously produce expressions like these when they use a neologism or archaism that they suspect their listeners will not understand. They also employ bilingual parallelism with Maya forms that listeners easily understand but seldom use. Announcers employ these constructions, too, when they catch themselves using Spanish forms out of habit. This appeared to be the case in the first example above. The announcer was translating a sports news article, so he had *deportes* (Sp., 'sports') on the mind. He caught his "error" and quickly, subtly reminded himself—and his listeners—that *ketlamilo'ob* is how one says *deportes* in Maya. Though I usually observed this bilingual parallelism in relatively improvisational stretches of broadcast talk, I also encountered it in programming that had been written in advance (e.g., the "*relleno negro*" example above).

The radio announcers' linguistic purism is especially noteworthy because one of the station's principal charges is the public translation of news reports and program explanations into the local language. When I asked announcers about the intelligibility of their radio talk, they held

[8] I find this calque interesting because *relleno negro* is a famous regional dish of Yucatán. Maya speakers and tourists alike know the dish by its Spanish name.

that listeners understood. One announcer told me, "*Ba'ax k kaxtike', es que, le t'aan k beetike' u na'ata'al tumen tu láakal máak*" 'What we find is that the speech we make is understood by everyone.' I often pressed the issue of obscure lexemes. In reply, announcers sometimes explained the rationale of the neologism in question, in order to demonstrate the transparency of its meaning. I was told that the meaning of *p'isk'iin* (measure-day) 'week' is readily evident, for example, because a week is a measure of days. Alternatively, announcers cited the high frequency with which they used particular forms in broadcasts. *Nu'ukbesaj* 'program' is uncommon, they explained, but listeners readily understand the word because they hear it used in daily broadcasts.

My own assessment is that the station's Maya-speaking listeners understand the speech of radio announcers, for the most part, but have varying command over the uncommon Maya lexical items that the announcers use. This appraisal is based on numerous interviews and impromptu broadcast listening sessions that I conducted with residents of Peto and Yaxlol. In interviews, first, I simply asked subjects whether they understood the Maya speech of radio announcers. Later, I asked subjects whether they could provide me with glosses for a series of pure Maya lexemes. Those that were *mayeros*—that is, capable Maya speakers—always claimed to understand the Maya speech of the announcers when I posed the question broadly.[9] In response to my follow-up questions about rare Maya lexemes, listeners explained that the announcers used some words that were incomprehensible and 'strange' (*jela'an*), but their language was nevertheless 'only Maya' (*chéen maaya*).

[9] Many young people speak limited Maya. This is especially the case in the town of Peto versus outlying communities like Yaxlol.

In radio listening sessions, I asked my co-listeners to clarify the meanings of certain pure Maya lexical items as they appeared in the broadcasts. Generally, participants were better able to decode pure Maya tokens in this activity than in the pure Maya "quizzes" I gave during structured interviews. This illustrates that listeners gain purchase on opaque lexical items, at times, by way of their co-textual matrix. Knowledge of the precise meanings of pure Maya lexemes is not always necessary for the effective comprehension of particular broadcast messages.

The pure Maya lexemes used by the radio announcers are of variable denotational transparency. Direct calques of common Spanish loans are the most accessible sort. Purified Maya greeting phrases, given in Table 3.1, offer a clear example.

Table 3.1. Greetings

Yucatec Maya	Spanish	English
ma'alob k'iin good day	buenos días	good day
ma'alob ja'atskab k'iin ma'alob ja'atskab k'iin good early morning day	buenos días	good morning
ma'alob chinil k'iin good bowed sun/day	buenas tardes	good afternoon
ma'alob áak'ab good night	buenas noches	good evening

Maya speakers commonly use Spanish greeting phrases with Mayanized phonetic realization (e.g., *diiyas, taardes, nooches*). The phrases are often abbreviated in casual speech (e.g., *bwéenas* 'good day,' *taardes* 'good afternoon'). At The Voice of the Mayas, the radio announcers use the purified greetings not only in broadcasts, but also in their off-air interactions with each other in the station. Outside the radio station and throughout the Yucatán, usage of the calqued greetings typically indexes the speaker's exposure to formal Maya language instruction

or engagement with politics of Maya identity.[10] The purified greetings are widely understood by Maya speakers, due to the directness of the calques and the ubiquity of their Spanish counterparts.

The denotational meanings of most Maya archaisms and neologisms are much less transparent. Below, I present an example from each of the three terminological domains introduced above (i.e., bureaucratic, media, and time interval terms). For everyday Maya speakers, none of these pure Maya lexemes are obvious semantic alternates for their designated Spanish counterparts. They exhibit a range of intelligibility.

YM	jo'olpóopil jo'ol-póop- il head-mat- REL	chíikul chíik-ul sign- REL	p'isk'iin p'is- k'iin measure-sun/day
Sp.	director, delegado, Presidente	señal, radio, televisión	semana
Semantic domain	authority figures	sign, signal	week

Bureaucratic discourse is an active field of Maya purism, in part because Maya advocacy in Yucatán is largely a state-mediated undertaking. The National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) has developed an array of Maya neologisms denoting governmental roles, principles, and processes. *Jo'olpóopil*, as glossed above, is derived from the title of an ancient Maya political-religious office: the 'person at the head of the woven mat.' Radio announcers use *jo'olpóopil* to replace the Spanish titles of various modern positions of leadership or authority, including *director* 'director,' *delegado* 'delegate,' and *presidente* 'president.'

Such multiple meanings for a form is the case with many of the pure Maya lexical items used at the radio station. Rather than developing a larger inventory of neologisms, the

[10] A brief discussion of calqued Maya greetings is offered by Rhodes (2020, 337).

announcers prefer to employ a relatively small set of forms in place of a variety of Spanish loans. They use two lexemes, for example, to refer to a wide range of groups: *múuch'tambal* ('group-among themselves') and *múuch'kabil* ('group-nation'). Announcers tend to use *múuch'tambal* to refer to more temporary groupings—committees, conventions, meetings—and *múuch'kabil* to refer to more fixed associations, such as civic groups and governmental organizations.

The translational approach involves a cost, however: reduced denotational specificity. Consequently, the co-text must carry additional denotational weight in order for the Maya form to successfully refer with precision. Usually, the radio announcers simply use a Spanish loan in cases where its avoidance would require considerable co-textual work.

I have never heard the pure Maya lexical items of this domain used in the everyday speech of Maya speakers. In talk regarding civic and governmental matters, the station's listeners use innumerable Spanish loans. However, I found that the bureaucratic archaisms and neologisms used in broadcasts are fairly accessible to listeners. When asked, listeners could provide me with Spanish glosses for most of them—and the glosses agreed with usage conventions at the radio station.

Pure Maya media terms tend to be neologisms rather than archaisms. For example, radio announcers use *chíikul,* as glossed above, to refer to media technologies, though the default denotational meaning of the lexeme is 'sign, signal.' The announcers pluralize *chíikul* to refer to media technologies in general: *chíikulo'ob* (Sp., *medios* [*de comunicación*]). The convention is motivated by the way that Spanish speakers use *señal* 'signal' to talk about media technologies (e.g., *señales como television y radio* '[media] signals like television and radio'). In order to avoid Spanish loans like *radio* and *televisión*, the announcers also use *chíikul* to refer to particular media technologies (e.g., *way ti' le chíikula'* 'here on the [radio] signal'). The practice

underspecifies reference and contributes to the denotational ambiguity of the neologism. Because of this, the announcers typically utilize the Spanish lexical items in broadcast contexts when they deem the specific technology essential to the message.

Notwithstanding the ostensible transparency of the calque, the use of *chíikul* to refer to media technologies is not widespread among Maya speakers. Understanding of the pure Maya lexeme, ironically, depends on familiarity with Spanish.[11] Interestingly, I found that listeners often heard certain uses of *chíikul* by radio announcers as *kúuchil* 'place.' The station renders its name, *La Voz de los Mayas* ('The Voice of the Mayas'), in Maya as *U chíikul u t'aan maayao'ob* (lit., 'the signal/radio of the language of the Mayas'). Many listeners, however, call the radio station *U kúuchil u t'aan maayao'ob* 'The place of the language of the Mayas'—a felicitous misinterpretation.

Finally, the meaning of *p'isk'iin* 'week', as glossed above, is also unclear to many of the radio station's listeners. I found this somewhat surprising, given that the announcers use the lexical item in broadcasts throughout the day, every day. As I explain above, announcers characterize the denotational meaning of *p'isk'iin* as transparent because a week is a measure of days. For listeners, however, 'measure day[s]' would seem to aptly characterize not only 'week,' but other time intervals, as well. Further, depending on the speech context, listeners do not necessarily construe the lexical item as a time interval. During an interview in Yaxlol, one man told me that he thought *p'isk'iin* meant *reloj* 'watch', that is, that it refers to an object used to measure time.[12] Listeners also expressed uncertainty about another Maya time interval term used

[11] Chapter five explores this problem at syntactic and pragmatic levels.
[12] A Maya-Spanish dictionary produced by the University of Quintana Roo agrees; the text offers *p'iisk'iin* and *p'isibk'iin/p'iisib k'iin* as Maya lexemes for *reloj* 'watch' (Gómez Navarrete 2009, 96, 164; cf., this entry from Bricker's Maya-English dictionary: *x p'isib-k'iin* 'watch, clock' [1998, 230]).

in broadcasts: *k'iintsil* 'hour.' Many could, however, provide me with at least one of the archaic Maya forms for *mes* 'month' (Sp.) when I asked.

There is substantial overlap between the Maya lexemes used at the radio station and those used at other institutions of Maya language standardization. However, because de-Castilianization is not stipulated by a central authority, the purified Maya used at these sites also exhibits variability. Maya authors at the forefront of *normalización* pursue de-Castilianization more diligently than do the radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas. In printed Maya texts, which increasingly circulate in electronic formats, one regularly encounters more abstruse Maya neologisms than in radio broadcasts.

The obscure quality results partly from a desire for parity with Spanish, which is a principal aim of Maya *normalización*. The goal is pursued and realized at multiple scales of discourse. At the lexical level, agents of *normalización* strive for lexeme-for-lexeme equivalence between purified Maya and Spanish. In the crafting of neologisms, grammatical complexity offers a means to expanded referential capacity.

In a bilingual edition of Mexico's Constitution that was produced by the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI 2015), for example, media technologies are specified with rather complicated Maya neologisms. The rationale behind these descriptive neologisms, presented below in Table 3.2, is as follows: radio, television, and telecommunications cause language, visual displays, and knowledge (respectively) to be far away; a radio station is a 'place' for radio; and communications media are 'places' of knowledge distribution. Radio

announcers at The Voice of the Mayas, by contrast, simply use *chíikul* 'signal' to replace all of the Spanish media terms given in the table.[13]

Table 3.2. Media Neologisms of the National Indigenous Languages Institute

Yucatec Maya	Spanish	English
náachkunsaj t'aan náach-kuns-aj t'aan far-CAUS-AP speech	radiodifusión	radio broadcasting
náachkunsaj cha'an náach-kuns-aj cha'an far-CAUS-AP spectacle/show	televisión	television
náachkunsaj ts'aaj ojéelal náach-kuns-aj ts'aaj ojéel-al far-CAUS-AP give know-REL	telecomunicaciones	telecommunications
u kúuchilil náachkunsaj t'aan u kúuchil-il náach-kuns-aj t'aan A3 place-POSS far-CAUS-AP speech	estación de radio	radio station
u kúuchilo'ob ts'aaj ojéelal u kúuchil-o'ob ts'aaj ojéel-al A3 place-B3PL give know-REL	medios de comunicación	communications media

In other topical fields, as well, the neologisms of Maya print media are more numerous and specific than those of Maya radio talk. But even assiduous attempts to purify Maya language do not achieve complete de-Castilianization. Purified Maya publications invariably utilize Spanish lexemes, albeit to a lessened degree. Moreover, usages of pure Maya lexical items differ between and even within texts. The variation, which impedes the enregisterment of a Maya standard, is not simply due to the difficulty of de-Castilianization. It also reflects a relative independence among the actors and institutions shaping Maya language standardization.

I have emphasized denotational meaning thus far because it lies at the foreground of an interesting problem of broadcast talk at The Voice of the Mayas: the radio announcers utilize a prestige register for mass communication. I now examine local interpretations of the social use

[13] Announcers pluralize *chíikul* when converting *telecomunicaciones* and *medios de comunicación* to Maya: *chíikulo'ob* 'signals.' Chapter five examines the convention of Spanish plural marking in standardized Maya.

and value of the register. Listeners' interpretations reveal an indexical complement to denotational ambiguity: differing indexical construals of single lexical items. Token instances of purified Maya lexical items index the announcers' ideological alignments within politics of language, but the occurrences also index socially salient characteristics of the speaker and the speech setting. For some listeners, interpretations of the latter sort compete with those of the former sort. For others, the social motivations behind the use of certain pure Maya lexical items in radio talk are indeterminate. This indexical polyvalence, which is made possible by the "ambivalent ground" of indexicality that Nakassis (2018) delineates, reflects the limited institutionalization of the purified Maya standard. At present, the *social domain* (Agha 2007, 25) of the register remains narrow; competent users represent a very small subset of Maya speakers: linguists, educators, authors, and media creators. The social distribution of Maya speakers that are able to merely recognize the register is an open empirical matter, which this study explored.

In my field research, I often asked Maya speakers why the radio station used uncommon Maya forms instead of the Spanish loans that everyone else seemed to use. Many speakers offered explanations that aligned with those given by radio announcers. This is unsurprising, as the radio station is fairly explicit about its language-preserving mission. Local notions of 'real' and 'mixed' Maya fit readily into a popular narrative about the decline of the language, which I heard voiced by peasant farmers and Indigenous professionals alike. The wider politics of the purified register were especially recognizable to the schoolteachers with whom I spoke. They located the register within the same basic contextual problems as did the radio announcers: the sociopolitical dominance of Spanish; the potential threat of linguistic and cultural loss; and the assertion and exercise of Indigenous rights.

Predictably, some listeners were not as attuned to the radio station's linguistic project and politics. When I asked about the purified Maya of radio broadcasts—especially the more abstruse forms—they would say, "Who knows why the announcers talk like that? I suppose they just enjoy talking like that." These listeners tended to be younger *campesinos* 'peasant farmers' or older monolinguals. They could certainly locate the radio station in a larger politics of language: in the face of Spanish's sociopolitical dominance, the radio announcers spoke to them in their own language. But some important politics at work *within* the speech of announcers were not as noticeable to them. Listeners did not necessarily interpret tokens of purified Maya radio talk as indexical of the radio station's commitment to preserving Maya language and encouraging Maya ethnolinguistic identity. Rather, the unusual Maya forms seemed, to some, to index individual announcers' expert knowledge of language and the world.

In Peto and nearby towns, generally, Maya speakers admired efforts to protect the language, but were not inclined to master the purified register themselves. They happily left that work to radio announcers and certain schoolteachers. The pattern fit into a broader tendency that I noted among Maya speakers: On matters of language, speakers tended to defer to the authority of elder speakers and teachers. At times, when arranging interviews for this study, I had to reassure my interlocutors (who were not elders nor teachers, and all of whom were Maya speakers) that they had sufficient linguistic knowledge for the task. Many seemed surprised that I wanted to ask them pointed questions about Maya language. One man in Yaxlol explained that he spoke Maya, but his grandmother *really* spoke Maya. He suggested we talk to her instead. Another offered to help me find a Maya book, so that I could learn correct Maya. He said, "*In wojel [maaya], pero ma' tu láakali"*" 'I know [Maya], but I don't know all of it.'

I seldom heard listeners comment (without my prompting) on Maya neologisms and archaisms when they appeared in radio broadcasts. Normally, my friends and neighbors listened casually to the radio and did not wonder aloud about the meanings of the uncommon lexical items that announcers used, or of the motivations behind them. When I asked listeners about the more accessible forms—Maya greetings, for example—they would simply say, 'Well, [Spanish greeting] is Spanish; [Maya greeting] is Maya.' I sometimes asked listeners why they did not use certain purified Maya forms. If they understood the form in question, they told me that they merely were not accustomed (*suuk*) to using it.

Maya-speaking schoolteachers and lay language enthusiasts diverged from these patterns. Again, teachers tended to be especially attuned to the politics of purified Maya. My status as an outsider prompted some to demonstrate their knowledge or teach me. If the radio was playing in the background, the teacher might hear a neologism or archaism and interrupt our conversation to bring it to my attention. 'He just said *áanalte'* on the radio. Do you know what *áanalte'* means?' The interaction would often give way to a casual pedagogical quiz: 'Okay, what about *péepen k'áak"*? Do you know what that means?' Whether or not the schoolteachers actually used these forms consistently in their everyday speech, they advocated them as authentic and correct Maya.[14] I found that members of the radio station's *consejo consultivo* 'advisory council' also tended to be Maya language enthusiasts, and sensitive to the Spanish loans in their speech.[15] During one public speaking event I attended at the station, a council member kept saying the

[14] On this point, I cannot confidently assess the routine speech habits of schoolteachers and Maya language enthusiasts. My presence seemed to encourage their use of rare Maya forms and avoidance of Spanish loans.

[15] These council members participate in meetings and workshops at the radio station on behalf of their communities. The workshops concern current and future programming at the station (e.g., what programs are popular, necessary).

Spanish *difícil* out of habit and correcting it to Maya *talam* 'difficult.' His presence at the popular Maya radio station, speaking with the announcers in a live broadcast, clearly made him anxious about his 'mixed' speech.

The varied interpretations of standardized Maya presented here reveal an uneven or "lumpy" conventionalization of the register's denotational and pragmatic values among Maya speakers at large. In the next section, I show how the ongoing enregisterment of a purified Maya standard is complicated by notions and conventions of *jach maaya* 'real Maya' purism. *Jach maaya* represents a vital resource for standardizing agents, but certain pragmatic values of *jach maaya* conflict with those desired of a modern Maya standard.

***Jach Maaya*, Reconfigured: A Structural Transformation of Semiotic Values**

When I first traveled to the town of Peto in 2011, people along the way mentioned to me that The Voice of the Mayas broadcasts in *jach maaya* 'real Maya.' More than two decades ago, Anthony Berkley encountered the same claim in the town of Chechmil (Chemax municipality), which sits at the edge of the radio station's signal range. In his dissertation on Maya purism, Berkley describes one family of enthusiastic listeners who spent money on batteries in order to be able to listen to the station's broadcasts at their ranch (1998, 95). "Almost every week," he writes, "I would run into one of their grown sons on the road who would eagerly teach me a new pure Maya form he had learned from the radio" (Berkley 1998, 95). Upon my arrival in Peto, I noticed that even the official slogan of the radio station mentioned 'real Maya': "*jach ma'alob, jach maaya, jach a ti'a'al*" 'very good, real Maya, truly yours.' Later, I learned that the station's announcers do regularly use lexemes associated with the *jach maaya* tradition, such as *péepen k'áak'* (lit., 'fire butterfly') in place of the Spanish *avión* 'airplane' and *kis buuts'* (lit., 'smoke-farter') instead of the Spanish *autobús* 'bus.'

Like the radio announcers, Maya authors and educators also replace Spanish loans with *jach maaya* lexemes. This all suggests a rather straightforward relationship between *jach maaya* and the purified register developing under the umbrella of *normalización* 'standardization.' However, certain factors dissuade me from viewing standardized Maya as a direct appropriation or modern iteration of *jach maaya*. Maya radio exemplifies the institutionalization of *jach maaya* that Rhodes (2020) describes, but also complicates it. Here, I show that basic features of *jach maaya* purism are at odds with the aims and practices of standardization. I also delineate semiotic incongruities, regarding interpretations of temporality and civility in language, that troubles the relationship between *jach maaya* and the emerging Maya standard.

Rhodes characterizes contemporary institutionalized *jach maaya* as "largely unintelligible today" (2020, 336). While I have found this to be the general case, the purified Maya of radio is much more intelligible to speakers than is the purified Maya of print and online media. As I explained above, institutional and ideological pressures restrain the linguistic purism of the radio announcers in Peto. Local Maya listeners mostly understand the purified Maya of broadcasts, even though they find particular lexical items unclear or indecipherable.

For the Maya *normalización* 'standardization' project, unintelligibility is largely a problematic consequence of linguistic purism. (It is problematic because it hinders popular engagement with the standardized register.) In conventional *jach maaya* purism, however, the unintelligibility of pure Maya lexemes is a focal and even celebrated object of discourse.

Another issue is that standardized Maya and *jach maaya* are vastly different as linguistic registers. Standardized Maya is used for manifold communicative ends in mediatized and educational contexts. Though its base of users remains very limited, the administered expansion of the register into new domains of usage is fundamental to *normalización* 'standardization.'

Jach maaya discourse, by contrast, is almost wholly citational by convention. Speakers mention pure Maya examples, but do not normally utilize the forms in speech. Berkley states the case more strongly, writing that *jach maaya* is "restricted from appearing in the genre [*tsikbal*] 'respectful conversation' except in mention mode" (1998, 5). This leads him to characterize *jach maaya* as a "constructed register" (Berkley 1998, 5–6).[16]

It is significant, then, that Maya radio announcers use *jach maaya* lexemes in talk that resembles (and often simulates) quotidian *tsikbal* 'conversation' before a large Maya-speaking public. The utilization of these lexemes as referential defaults would seem to reveal the liberation of *jach maaya* from its confinement in mention mode. However, a notable finding of my fieldwork is that local listeners generally did not regard the purified Maya speech of the radio announcers as *jach maaya*. Predictably, many recognized certain pure lexemes used in broadcasts as *jach maaya*.[17] But listeners identified the broadcast register itself simply as *maaya*. Moreover, when I asked Maya speakers in Peto and Yaxlol to simply cite *jach maaya* forms, they never cited the pure Maya forms that appear most frequently and systematically in radio broadcasts (e.g., *chíikul* 'signal,' *p'isk'iin* 'week'). By contrast, speakers identified the Maya in printed texts, which they seldomly encountered, as *jach maaya* 'real Maya.' This all demonstrates that the routine use of *jach maaya* lexical items in ordinary, direct speech renders them less recognizable to speakers as *jach maaya.*

When I asked listeners whether *jach maaya* was spoken on the radio, I was usually met with a revealing answer that invoked *Xepetino y Xepetina*, the name of a program produced by

[16] Armstrong-Fumero (2009) draws a distinction between what he calls "Imaginary Maya" and "Deep Maya"; Guerrettaz (2013) explores the indeterminate status of *jach maaya* as a language variety. For a discussion of this problem, see chapter one.
[17] Examples include *uj/winal* 'month,' *péepen k'áak'* 'airplane' (lit., 'fire butterfly'), and archaic Maya numbers.

the radio station in the 1980s and 1990s. The program remains popular among listeners—so popular, in fact, that announcers sometimes broadcast reruns even today. *Xepetino y Xepetina* showcases fictional interactions wherein characters (voiced by radio announcers) reveal the meanings of *jach maaya* lexemes. The characters' speech is recognizable to listeners as *jach maaya* not by virtue of linguistic forms alone, but also because of the interactional format. Listeners' citation of this particular radio show reveals that for everyday Maya speakers at my field sites, at least, *jach maaya* remains anchored to mention mode.

An excerpt from the first episode of *Xepetino y Xepetina* appears below. The dyadic exchange between the characters Kutsja and Armando hinges on the denotational meaning of a particular lexeme. First, Armando identifies *carta* 'letter'—a lexeme universally used by Maya speakers—as Spanish. He then discloses the uncommon Maya counterpart to the Spanish loan: *ts'iibil ju'un* (lit., 'writing of paper'). This is more than a revelation of *jach maaya*, however. Armando dissuades Kutsja from 'mixing our language' with Spanish. Later in the dialogue, Armando says to Kutsja, 'we need to learn all of the words left to us by our ancestors.'

Kutsja: *Bey tu ya'alaj teen Xepetino tu carta.*
bey t- u y- a'al-aj teen Xepetino t- u carta
thus PFV A3 GLD say TR IPR1 Xepetino PREP A3 carta
That's what Xepetino told me in a letter.

Le o'olal way yaanene'.
le o'olal way yaan-en- e'
DET reason here exist B1 D3
That's why I'm here.

Armando: *Bix ta wa'alaj. Carta?*
bix t- a w- a'al-aj carta
how PFV A2 GLD say TR letter
What did you say? Carta?

Kutsja: *Beyo'. Tumen tu tuxtaj teen Xepetino*
beyo' tumen t- u tuxt- aj teen Xepetino
thus because PFV A3 send PFV.TR IPR1 Xepetino
Yes, because Xepetino sent me

jun p'éel ti' le p'isk'iin j máano'—
jun p'éel ti' le p'is-k'iin j- máan-o'
one NC PREP DET measure.day PFV pass D2
a letter last week—

Armando: *Ma' bey u ya'alalo' chan Kutsja. Ts'íibil ju'un.*
ma' bey u y- a'al-a'al- o' chan Kutsja ts'íibil ju'un
NEG thus A3 GLD say PASS D2 little Kutsja written paper
That is not how it is said, little Kutsja. Ts'íibil ju'un.

Ma' wá táan a wilike' le ken a wa'al cartae'
ma' wá táan a w- il- ik- e' le ken a w- a'al carta-e'
NEG if PROG A2 GLD see TR D3 DET FUT A2 GLD say letter D3
Don't you see? If you say "carta,"

táan a xa'ak'besik k t'aan yéetel le kastelan t'aano'
táan a xa'ak'-bes- ik k t'aan yéetel le kastelan t'aan- o'
PROG A2 mix CAUS TR A1PL speech with DET Spanish speech D2
you are mixing our language with Spanish.

[…]

k'abéet k kanik tu láakal le t'aano'ob
k'abéet k kan- ik t- u láakal le t'aan- o'ob
necessary A1PL learn TR PREP A3 all DET speech B3PL
we need to learn all of the words

j p'a'at to'on tumen k ch'ilankabilo'obo'
j p'a'at to'on tumen k ch'ilankabil- o'ob- o'
PFV leave-PASS IPR1PL because A1PL ancestor/parent B3PL D2
left to us by our ancestors.

As the transcript indicates, performances of pure Maya in *Xepetino y Xepetina* are overtly prescriptive. Indeed, they are more prescriptive than the performances of purism I have observed among Maya speakers in face-to-face discourse. The radio show adapts the *jach maaya* genre for the purpose of encouraging the de-Castilianization of Maya language. For the announcers, fictional characters offered safe channels for a strident message against 'mixing' Maya with

Spanish. Characters in the show aggressively police each other's speech for Spanish lexemes—lexemes that are used by all Maya listeners.

But the radio program, whose production has long discontinued, is an exception of sorts. In most broadcast speech, as explained above, the radio announcers employ a more subtle language pedagogy. Instances of pedagogical bilingual parallelism in broadcast speech qualify uses of pure Maya lexemes with implicit mentions—a halfway point, of sorts, between the mention mode of *jach maaya* discourse and ordinary *tsikbal* 'conversation.'

Agents of Maya *normalización* regard *jach maaya* lexemes as indispensable to the Maya standard, but entrenched interpretations of *jach maaya* hinder popular usage. In the town of Peto and village of Yaxlol, speakers' explanations of Maya language reflected the *axis of differentiation* (Gal and Irvine 2019) presented in chapter one and reproduced in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3. Axis of Differentiation: *Jach Maaya* versus *Xa'ak'a'an Maaya*

Language Variety	Axis of Differentiation			
	purity	temporality	spatiality	civility
jach maaya 'real Maya'	pure	archaic	distant	uncivilized
xa'ak'a'an maaya 'mixed Maya'	mixed	modern	local	civilized

The first distinction in Table 3.3 between *xa'ak'a'an maaya* 'mixed Maya' and *jach maaya* 'real Maya' turns explicitly on the basis of purity. Second, Maya speakers universally conceive linguistic purity chronologically: pure Maya is *úuchben* 'ancient' and mixed Maya is 'modern'. Third, speakers also attribute *jach maaya* speech to contemporary Mayas living in distant locales, though they regard the supposed variety itself to be ancient. Architects of standardized Maya value pure forms for their authentic Maya provenance, but the use of forms deemed ancient inhibits the social distribution of a modern, purified Maya standard. For most speakers, pure Maya belongs in the past.

The perceived archaic quality of *jach maaya* also involves speakers' interpretations of (in)civility in language. Some of the most commonly cited *jach maaya* examples are deemed crude or humorous by Maya speakers. A classic example, noted by other anthropologists, is *kische'*—literally, 'fart wood,' that is, wood that one farts on—to mean 'stool/chair' (var., *kisikche'/kisibche'*; e.g., Berkley 1998, Rhodes 2020). Berkley (1998) found that elders associated *jach maaya* with "archaic lives, social violence, and cultural isolation" (1998, 19). He notes that one of his interlocutors, Don José, "expressed views typical of senior speakers, viewing pure Maya as 'ugly' and 'strange,' emphasizing his continuity with respected ancestors but also his break with a stigmatized ethnic past" (Berkley 1998, 185).

These interpretations of *jach maaya* resonate with the negative stereotypes of 'Indian' (*máasewal, indio*) identities examined in the previous chapter, which are similarly hinged on archaic and uncivilized qualities. I encountered comparable interpretations among Maya speakers at my field sites and at numerous other locations on the peninsula. Outside the radio station, the two most commonly voiced characterizations of *jach maaya* were *úuchben* 'ancient' and *jela'an* 'strange'—qualities that relate directly to the "temporality" and "civility" dimensions of the axis of differentiation that I have delineated. Speakers' negative evaluations usually concerned particular *jach maaya* lexical items rather than *jach maaya* as an imagined language variety. For Maya speakers, relishing in the crude or amusing qualities of *jach maaya* examples is part of the appeal of the citational performances. Speakers readily cited examples of this sort to me. I was told that certain uses of the feminine prefix *x-* were *jach maaya*; speakers evaluated these uses as derogatory or overly intimate.[18] According to some, it was also *jach maaya* to say

[18] Chapter four provides an analysis centered on the Maya feminine prefix. Speakers' uses and metapragmatic descriptions of this prefix illuminate *jach maaya* as a cultural concept.

wíinik rather than *máak* ‘man, person.’ In the distant villages where *jach maaya* is still spoken today, they explained, people do not merely use *wíinik* in linguistic contexts where *máak* would be used locally (e.g., *Máax le máako’* / *Máax le wíiniko’* ‘Who is that man?’). Speakers of *jach maaya* also call each other *wíinik*, they said. Rather than greeting a neighbor respectfully (e.g., *bix a beel don Pablo* ‘How are you, Sir Paul?’), a *jach maaya* speaker brusquely says, *ba’ax ka wa’alik wíinik* ‘What do you say, man?’ For Maya speakers in Peto and Yaxlol, imagined *jach maaya* interactions like this one seemed culturally authentic, socially coarse, and slightly humorous.

I found that these notions of Maya language endured even at The Voice of the Mayas. Radio announcers, like their listeners, perceived *jach maaya* at the horizon: in outlying towns and villages, in Valladolid, in Quintana Roo. And as chapter four explains, the announcers use radio programming genres to manage certain *jach maaya* forms that are too crude for polite speech, but desirable for their authenticity. At the same time, the announcers regularly used several *jach maaya* lexical items in their default broadcast speech, including lexical items that their listeners characterized as *úuchben* ‘ancient’ or *jela’an* ‘strange.’ Still, when I asked announcers if they spoke *jach maaya* themselves, they readily pointed out evidence of ‘mixedness’ in their own speech.

How, then, do we account for the radio station’s slogan: *jach ma’alob, jach maaya, jach a ti’a’al* ‘very good, real Maya, truly yours’? The announcers explained to me that the slogan is actually a Maya translation of a slogan conceived by the radio station’s Spanish-speaking director: *más buena*, *más maya*, *más tuya* ‘more good, more Maya, more yours.’ The radio announcers liked the slogan, but Maya does not have a counterpart to the Spanish *más* ‘more,’ so they used the Maya intensifier *jach* ‘very’ instead. (My English gloss for the slogan renders *jach*

variably because *jach ma'alob, jach maaya,* and *jach a ti'a'al* each have conventionalized meanings for Maya speakers.) Of course, in choosing this slogan, the announcers understood and appreciated that *jach maaya* refers, by default, to the pure and authentic form of the language.

The radio announcers are not merely caught between the rival norms of the purified Maya standard and everyday spoken Maya; they are also active participants in a changing model of Maya language and speakers. Maya *normalización* entails a reconfiguration of semiotic values that structure *jach maaya* as a field of cultural conceptualization and communicative practice. Specifically, *normalización* inverts the "purity" *axis of differentiation* (Gal and Irvine 2019) and reconfigures the "spatiality" axis. In the revised model, schematized below in Table 3.4, pure Maya language is the appropriate medium for modern, civil discourse. It emanates from institutional centers in a movement that corresponds with the urban-rural continuum. (Recall the pyramidal structure of *normalización*, described above.) As explained above, purist standardization renders pure Maya lexemes less recognizable to Maya speakers as *jach maaya*. This facilitates the aims of normalizing agents, who present their purified register as 'the Maya language' (YM: *maaya t'aan*; Sp.: *la lengua maya*). The counterpart to the enregisterment of standardized Maya – through the transformation of *jach maaya* into standardized Maya – is the further marginalization of 'mixed' Maya. Under purist *normalización*, linguistic mixedness is increasingly construed as "archaic" in the sense of being outmoded, whereas what was previously "archaic" is modernized (as standardized). The "uncivilized" caption includes social stereotypes of Indigenous Yucatecans who speak 'mixed' Maya: poor, unschooled, monolingual, rustic.

Table 3.4. Axis of Differentiation Figurated by Maya *Normalización* 'Standardization'

Language Variety	Axis of Differentiation			
	purity	temporality	spatiality	civility
[Received Differentiation]				
jach maaya 'real Maya'	pure	archaic	distant	uncivilized
xa'ak'a'an maaya 'mixed Maya'	mixed	modern	local	civilized
[Promoted Differentiation]	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇
xa'ak'a'an maaya 'mixed Maya'	mixed	archaic	peripheries	uncivilized
Standardized Maya	pure	modern	centers	civilized

This is the conical model of standard that Silverstein describes, wherein users of standard are located "top-and-center" of "an essentially conical structure of understood social difference and stratification" (2010, 339). But as I have shown, the ideological reconfiguration is inhibited by enduring cultural conceptions, even among users of standardized Maya. Speakers in the Peto area view 'mixed' Maya as the "neutral" language and envision pure Maya at the periphery.

Attention to these structured differentiations can help us account for the limited popular adoption of standardized Maya. The narrow social domain of the register does not simply reflect a lack of institutional pressures or material incentives. The Voice of the Mayas, a treasured and trusted institution, circulates the register before a large population of Maya speakers every day. But as my ethnographic work among listeners reveals, the purist aspirations of Maya *normalización* are impeded considerably by popular and enduring interpretations of purity in language among Mayas.

This is not to say that the transformative integration of *jach maaya* forms in standardized Maya is unsuccessful. Indeed, it represents a thriving field of enterprise and recognition for Indigenous language professionals, particularly those working in the arenas of education and media. And the customary boundary between *jach maaya* and polite *tsikbal* 'conversation' facilitates the establishment of standardized Maya as a prestige register. Just as speakers defer to

the linguistic authority of community members who can cite *jach maaya* examples, so do they defer to the authority of the purified Maya that they encounter in radio broadcasts and published texts. When I first arrived in Peto, my presence made perfect sense to some of the locals with whom I first spoke. I wanted to learn Maya, so of course I had come to Peto. The Maya of the radio announcers is *jach legítimo* 'very legitimate,' one woman said. Local interpretations of standardized Maya by way of longstanding notions of *jach maaya*, then, both inhibit and enable popular reception of the standardized register.

Conclusion

I have explained how the radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas manage their competing allegiances to norms of spoken Maya and the emerging Maya standard. In broadcasts, they frequently negotiate conflicts between their dual commitments to Maya purism and effective reference. The techniques they employ to negotiate these ideological conflicts, such as bilingual parallelism and ambiguous lexemes, result in a Maya broadcast register whose purism is both marked and moderated. Maya listeners find the register intelligible, but have varying command over its pure Maya lexical items. Though the purism of radio announcers gets in the way of the referential message at times, it also enhances the social value of radio talk.

But the relationship between linguistic purity and perceived legitimacy is complicated by cultural conceptions. Here, I have shown that Maya *normalización* 'standardization' involves not simply a recovery or realization of *jach maaya* 'real Maya,' but rather a structural transformation of its values, from archaic to modern, uncivilized to sophisticated, past to present/future, and so on. This semiotic reconfiguration—along lines of purity, temporality, spatiality, and civility—has mediated a social reordering of authority over language. At the time of my field research, half of the permanent announcers at The Voice of the Mayas were women, and all were schooled

Maya-Spanish bilinguals. This contrasts sharply with *jach maaya* purism, which is led by elder men that possess citational mastery over the supposed variety's lexemes. As Berkley notes, the social solidarity achieved through *jach maaya* discourse is asymmetrical. He explains, "Women and youth are produced as ignorant of language and history. Control over knowledge of pure language participates in the construction of gendered and generational authority invested predominantly in elder men" (Berkley 1998, 3).

We might interpret the incorporation of *jach maaya* lexemes and values in standardized Maya as an appropriation of a customary mode of authority. In a sense it is, but the standardized register and 'mixed' Maya are not in significant competition at present. Rather, standardized Maya has entered contexts previously occupied by Spanish, such as classrooms and media channels.[19] Moreover, the integration of *jach maaya* lexemes in the standardized register involves a substantial semiotic transformation. As explained above, the transformation renders *jach maaya* 'real Maya' less recognizable as such to speakers, including even those who use the standardized register.[20] 'Mixed' Maya discourse proceeds undeterred in contexts where it has always thrived.

[19] This helps account for the sympathetic neutrality that I encountered among everyday Maya speakers toward the standardized register. Because standardized Maya does not, for the most part, actively encroach on their own fields of usage, Maya speakers tend to interpret the register as a specialized fashion of speaking rather than a viable alternative for their own everyday speech.

[20] On this point, it is telling that "jach maaya" is not mentioned anywhere in the text of *Normas de escritura para la lengua maya* '*Norms for Writing the Maya Language*' (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014).

Chapter Four
Complications and Evocations of Maya Authenticity

Owing to its institutional credentials and associations with expert speakers, standardized Maya is today something of a prestige linguistic variety. The register is used by educated Maya-Spanish bilinguals in professionalized contexts; it is taught in classrooms, published in print and online media, and used in radio broadcasts. *Agentes normalizadores* 'agents of standardization' are working to associate the purified register with social progress, economic advancement, and modernity. But everyday speakers envision pure Maya language beyond the horizons of their own social order, namely, in the ancient past and in contemporary outlying communities. They recognize authenticity in linguistic purity, but their image of authentic Maya language and speakers conflicts with the vision of standardizers, who prescribe purified Maya language as the appropriate medium for modern, civil discourse. The ongoing standardization of Maya language thus pursues a structural transformation, delineated in the previous chapter, of the customary model of Maya language and personhood.

Radio announcers at the Voice of the Mayas play a unique role in the transformation because the radio station is both instrumental and peripheral to the project of *normalización* 'standardization' that is led by Mexico's National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) and Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). The announcers' institutional objectives, ideological commitments, and professional interests align them with standardization, but the alignment is necessarily moderated by their need to conform to local speech norms and roles as public communicators. Even as they broadcast the standardized register and its attendant ideologies, they circulate countervailing local values that complicate their ethnolinguistic advocacy.

This chapter investigates these complications by way of a popular Maya radionovela of The Voice of the Mayas. For the fictional program, the announcers create voices for authentic

Maya selves that are also—from the perspective of the professional announcers—Maya others. The data presented here illuminate indexical fields (Eckert 2008) in the vicinity of standardized Maya language, and they reveal language advocates' strategies for negotiating these fields. My analysis focuses on the use and avoidance of the Maya feminine agentive prefix *x-* and the noun *na'* 'mother.' At The Voice of the Mayas, deployments of these linguistic forms help the announcers to construct figures of authentic Maya-ness that resonate with listeners. The figures conflict, however, with those that the announcers formulate for most of their broadcast content and identity work. Comparison with other mediatized texts reveals the problem to be a general one facing the enregisterment of a purified Maya standard. Certain Maya linguistic forms are desirable because they are established alternates to Spanish loans, but the negative meanings indexically attached to them inhibit their use in polite speech. Analyzing the attempted semantic amelioration of some pejorative linguistic forms, I aim to show, elucidates the changing social value of Maya language and identity in the Yucatán.

Interfering Indexical Values and the Mayas of *Maruch's Kitchen*

Elaborating on Silverstein's (2003) notion of indexical order, Eckert argues that the meanings of linguistic variables "are not precise or fixed but rather constitute a field of potential meanings—an *indexical field*, or constellation of ideologically related meanings, any one of which can be activated in the situated use of the variable" (2008, 454). The notion of indexical field is especially helpful for the Yucatecan case, wherein the ongoing enregisterment of standardized Maya translates and transforms the norms of everyday speakers. The process is complicated by ambiguities and contradictions amid indexical values.

The problem can be likened to the interference patterns of waves, such as light and sound. Waves traveling in the same medium combine with each other, rather than stop or deflect

each other as solids do when occupying the same space. *Constructive interference* occurs when the waves are *in phase* with each other and combine. The amplitude of the resultant wave is the sum of its constituent waves. If the waves are not in phase with each other, the interference is *destructive*, and the resulting amplitude is smaller. Agha (2007) briefly makes the analogy in a discussion of deictic categories:

> A deictic category formulates a sketch of referent(s). The sketch is readily complicated by text-level indexicality, that is, by the superimposed effects of accompanying signs. An analogy might help. In optics, we say that superimposed light waves exhibit interference (reinforce or cancel each other), sometimes yielding visible patterns of diffraction. Under text-level indexicality, deictic tokens exhibit interference, too, yielding patterns of cumulative reinforcement and cancellation in construal (45).

Compare the passage to Silverstein's observation that higher order indexical values do not necessarily replace the lower order indexical values from which they dialectically arise; the values of the two orders may "blend" with each other (2003, 194). Competing indexical values do not behave like colliding objects, though we may be inclined conceptualize them that way. An analogy of wave interference therefore helps us visualize ideological linkages within indexical fields, generally, and the activation of those linkages in practice.

In the analogy, the interfering waves correspond to the intersecting indexical values of single denotational forms. The resulting amplitude corresponds to the ideological force bearing on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the form in context. (The ideological "oomph" in Silverstein's terms: "the force that follows from uniformity, intensity, and sociological spread" [2003, 194].) Straightforward examples of indexical interference are provided by Maya language purism, so I begin there before broadening the analysis.

There is considerable ideological alignment between *jach maaya* 'real Maya' purism and the standardization efforts of recent decades in the Yucatán. The perceived *úuchben* 'old, ancient' quality of *jach maaya* lexemes authorizes their appearance in the standardized register,

and considerably augments the authority of the standardized register itself. In turn, the interactional efficacy of many *jach maaya* lexemes—their amplitude as one of their dimensions, in the wave interference analogy—is heightened by the institutional authority of the standardized register. Examples include Maya numeral lexemes greater than 'three,' which have been replaced by Spanish loans, and *jo'olpóopil* 'head of the mat,' the title of an ancient political-religious office. As we saw in the previous chapter, standardized Maya utilizes the lexeme *jo'olpóopil* in place of various modern Spanish titles that lack Maya counterparts, such as *director* 'director,' *presidente* 'president,' and *delegado* 'delegate.'

Especially for schooled bilinguals, the supposed correctness (i.e., as Maya rather than Spanish) and recognized ancientness of many *jach maaya* lexemes enhance each other. Speakers readily invoke the oldness of pure Maya when explaining its rarity and advocating its appearance in standardized Maya. And they appeal to the Maya-ness of archaic linguistic forms when justifying their use in contemporary speech (e.g., 'Yes, *jo'olpóopil* is a very old word, but *director* is Spanish.'). The logics of *jach maaya* and standardized Maya purism are thus "in phase" in many cases, so most of the *jach maaya* forms incorporated into standardized Maya exhibit "constructive" indexical interference effects for the register's users.

The register's base of users is relatively small, however, and contexts of its appropriate use remain quite limited (e.g., as we have seen in previous chapters, mediatized texts, language instruction). In most quotidian discourse, speakers' perceptions of archaic provenance constrain the successful deployment of *jach maaya* lexemes; that is, on another dimension of the indexical "wave" form (as manifest in distinct contexts of usage) we find "out of phase" diffraction effects. Indeed, the very identification of pure Maya with ancient speech and speakers implicitly rationalizes its absence from modern speech. When a Maya speaker tells an anthropologist that a

particular lexeme is *úuchben* 'old, ancient,' she is not necessarily endorsing the lexeme. For speakers of modern, 'mixed' Maya, who virtually always identify as such, the indexical meaning interferes "destructively" with the variable's prescribed denotational use in the standard.

Language ideologies, as they construe distinct contextual modulations of speech (context of use; users; etc.), are what bring interfering indexical meanings in or out of phase with each other. The everyday speaker and the Maya purist offer precisely the same justification for their contrary linguistic prescriptions: the variable in question is *úuchben* 'old, ancient.' Yet depending on the speaker's ideological orientation (and in particular, as mediated by the particular contexts of usage), linguistic 'mixedness' may be evaluated neutrally (or positively) as a sign of modernity or negatively as a sign of cultural loss (given Spanish's own ambivalent enregistered connotations of modernity and mobility). The institutionally ascendant latter position of purist *normalización* 'standardization' obscures the former interpretation (contesting Spanish's supposed monopoly on modernity), but it is a widespread one among Maya speakers, though it is not often articulated pointedly.

Comparable semiotic dynamics are at work beyond the domain of Maya language purism. Indigenous Yucatecans negotiate disparate values linked indexically to their identities. A range of practices that are endorsed by Maya advocates are indexical of both indigeneity and poverty. Subsistence agriculture, rural material culture, and the use of Maya language are prime examples. As discussed in chapter one, in everyday interactions in the Peto municipality, I found, Maya speakers usually interpreted the practices as reflections of their *óotsil* 'poor' status, rather than as emblems of their ethnolinguistic identity. Yet, and by the very same logic, they also viewed Maya identity as intertwined with poverty. Speakers regarded poorer towns as being more Maya, linguistically and culturally (see chapter one). The social valorization of Maya

identity is encumbered by entrenched ethnic connotations of 'Indian' (*indio*, *máasewal*) identities, which stereotypically link Maya speech and speakers not merely with poverty, but also with alcoholism, licentiousness, and violence. Recall Gabbert's explanation, cited in chapter one: "The terms *masewal* and *indio* are associated with ignorance, rudeness, bad manners, etc. and [are] used…to belittle someone. If somebody is poor and ignorant it is said that 'he is very Indian' (*es muy masewal* or *es hach indio*). To talk vulgarly is called 'to talk very Indian' (*hablar muy masewal*, *hach masewal ku t'an*)" (2001, 482).

Residents in the town of Peto commonly associate negative stereotypes of 'Indian' identities with the outlying communities. The neighboring town of Tahdziú, especially, is regarded as dissolute and dangerous on these grounds. Men are described as fierce and untrustworthy. It is said that women in the markedly poor town wear gold necklaces and earrings, even though they cannot feed their children. In smaller communities around Peto, I found, residents' views of outsiders and neighboring towns were similarly motivated. My friends and neighbors in the village of Yaxlol had family living in the nearby town of Chacsinkín, but they still regarded the latter town and its residents warily. The town was safe enough, I was told, but not like Yaxlol. Some people from Chacsinkín had 'bad ways' (*k'aas u moodo*), they explained. In Chacsinkín, of course, residents described their town to me as *tranquilo* 'calm, peaceful.' It was other towns that one needed to worry about, they claimed. Just as Maya speakers locate authentic Maya language (*jach maaya*) elsewhere, they envision the negative qualities attributed to 'Indians' as embodied by Maya-speaking others at near and far peripheries.

In radio broadcasts at The Voice of the Mayas, the announcers reframe negative stereotypes of 'Indians' by presenting socioeconomic disparities as historical problems in need of governmental intervention (see chapter two). Like their listeners, however, they interpret and

even celebrate the humble material lives of *óotsil máako'ob* 'poor people' on the rural periphery as culturally authentic, both as Maya and as *campesinos* 'peasant farmers.' Indexical resonances between *maaya* and *campesino* identities are partly a legacy of *indigenismo* in Mexico. Today's valorizations of Maya identity, which the Mexican state circulates under the banner of cultural and linguistic plurality, are in dialogic relation with historical valorizations of *campesino* identity, which the Mexican state circulated for assimilationist ends. Poor Mayas constitute a focal social type that the radio station addresses in broadcasts and represents in the regional public imagination.

The radio announcers and their poor Maya listeners share an ethnolinguistic affiliation, but they do not share poverty. Permanent staff announcers enjoy middle class salaries with pensions. Notwithstanding their highly public profession, radio announcers are fully embedded in the community as kin, neighbors, and residents. They are not treated as celebrities, though they are well known and respected in the Peto municipality. Importantly, the announcers have close relations, including kin relations, with *óotsil* 'poor, humble' Mayas, and can claim family histories of belonging to modest (*campesino*) backgrounds. The relations inspire and legitimate their public work as Maya advocates.

In their public work, the radio announcers inhabit a *professional Maya advocate* role, delineated in chapter one, that transcends their roles as biographical individuals. The social role is a corrective counterpart to a highly recognizable social type in the Yucatán: *the poor Indian* (also delineated in chapter one). It is corrective in two senses. First, one basic social objective of the professional Maya advocate is to alleviate the poverty of fellow Mayas. Second, by inhabiting the professional role effectively (that is, having had *their own* [historical] poverty alleviated *as* Maya), individual Mayas may counter, in their social being, negative stereotypes

associated with poor 'Indians' (*indios, macehuales*). In this sense, professional Maya advocates hold themselves as paragons of future collective mobility. Several factors help the radio announcers to inhabit the professional Maya advocate role, including the institutional authority of The Voice of the Mayas and its parent organization (INPI); the asymmetrical format of radio discourse; and the use of a prestige register, standardized Maya, as well as authoritative genres such as 'the news' and official 'announcements' (see chapter three). Paradoxically, but not incidentally, these critical factors represent dimensions of social distance between the radio announcers and their listeners. The distance is valuable to the announcers, who fashion the radio station as a source of objective public discourse on issues pertaining to Yucatecans.

But the radio announcers inhabit other roles or personas in their broadcasts, as well, some of which contrast sharply with the role of professional Maya advocate that they usually inhabit. An example is offered by *Maruch's Kitchen* (*U K'ooben X-Maruch*), a popular program that is part comedic radionovela and part cooking show. The radio drama centers on a fictional family that lives in a small, unspecified village in the state of Quintana Roo, a region that locals of the Peto municipality deem to be a *jach maaya* 'real Maya' zone. To produce the culinary component of each episode, the program's author interviews a woman in the region about how she makes a particular dish. Each episode consists of a pre-recorded performance of the fictional narrative followed by a pre-recorded interview about a food recipe.[1]

In both its dramatic and instructional aspects, *Maruch's Kitchen* aims to represent everyday life in rural, Maya speech communities. Furthermore, in its promotion of traditional regional cuisine, the program advances the radio station's commitment to Maya cultural

[1] The program's author links these two components in each episode by having a character mention the food dish that is the focus of the culinary segment.

advocacy. Before each episode, an introductory message from the program's author tells listeners: "*Ti' le nukbesaja' te' ken a ch'en xikin te'ex bix u be'eta'al le jejela'as jáanalo'ob tan u bin u tubsa'al ti' le k'íino'oba"*" 'In this program, you're going to hear how to prepare different foods that are being lost these days.' *Maruch's Kitchen* is meant to entertain listeners, as well. The author of the comedic radionovela, a longtime announcer of the station, takes artistic liberties when composing the scripts for the show. The fictional characters embody hybrid personas. They are recognizable, if exaggerated, examples of the rural Mayas that constitute a large segment of the radio station's listenership. But the characters also advance ideological commitments of the announcers regarding Maya language and identity. At such times, the fictional Mayas serve as alter egos of the professional Maya advocate personae that announcers normally inhabit in their broadcasts. The comedic radionovela thus models *nonprofessional* Maya advocacy for listeners.

Compared to other programming, *Maruch's Kitchen* affords the radio announcers more latitude in their Maya group-making work. The program puts Maya identity front and center, but it is an image of Maya-ness that conflicts with the images that the announcers normally cultivate. The program celebrates linkages between Indigenous identity and *óotsil* 'poor, humble' status, even as it problematizes them. And the radionovela utilizes folk notions of Maya identity for theatrical ends. Maya speakers construe supposed *jach maaya* 'real Maya' interactions as culturally authentic, socially coarse, and sometimes humorous (see chapter three). For this reason, as Berkley observes, *jach maaya* lexical items have customarily been restricted to mention mode (1998). Speakers enjoy citing *jach maaya* examples such as *kisib che'* 'chair, stool' (lit., 'fart wood') and *kis buuts'* 'bus, truck' (lit., 'smoke-farter'), but do not use them as denotational defaults in *tsikbal* 'conversation' interactions. By contrast, the characters of

Maruch's Kitchen use such *jach maaya* 'real Maya' lexical items directly in their fictional conversations.[2]

This deviation from Maya speech norms contributes to the theatrical quality of the dialogue in the radionovela. Each episode is punctuated with interpersonal conflicts and comical exchanges. The program's characters routinely argue and yell at each other. The announcer who composes the scripts for the show writes them in Maya, but includes brief affective descriptions in Spanish, in order to guide the performances of her fellow announcers during recordings. Typical stage directions include *burlón* 'mocking,' *riendo* 'laughing,' *enojado* 'angry,' and *gritando* 'screaming.' Often, the speech of the program's characters is quite coarse. They threaten and insult each other. They frequently use bald imperatives (especially *mak a chi'* 'shut up') and the expletive *x-la'.* Maya speakers use *x-la'* (lit., 'rotten, worn out') when referring to deteriorated or damaged objects, and they employ it generally as a curse word. *X-la'* is considered rather impolite. The radionovela's characters even say *jooykep* 'flaccid penis,' which Maya speakers use as a crude and insulting way of saying 'lazy' when referring to men.

As we might expect, this sort of talk does not appear in the morning news show or similar programming at the station. The radio announcers, who normally project a professionalized demeanor on the air, delight in voicing the unpolished imaginary Maya *campesinos* 'peasant farmers' of *Maruch's Kitchen*. The program is meant to be humorous, and listeners find the rudeness and vulgarity of the characters to be very funny. For the announcers, indexical associations with competing stereotypes of personhood offer resources for the manufacture of programming content. Certain Maya variables that are deemed 'bad, ugly' (*k'aas*) or 'strange'

[2] Yet, I found that listeners did not cite *Maruch's Kitchen* when I asked if *jach maaya* 'real Maya' were spoken on the radio. As I explain in chapter three, with additional evidence, *jach maaya* is anchored to mention mode for Maya speakers at my field sites.

(*jela'an*) do not fit easily in formal discourse, mediatized or otherwise. They are ideal, however, for nostalgic and comical broadcasts that celebrate notions of indigeneity as rough and unsophisticated. In *Maruch's Kitchen*, token instances of such variables—and coarse Maya speech, generally—are meant by the radio announcers to index authentic Maya-ness.

The fictional format of *Maruch's Kitchen* allows the announcers to deliver more strident messages about language and identity than they do when inhabiting their usual radio personae. Rather than politely encourage listeners not to be *su'ulak* 'ashamed' of their language or ethnocultural identities, as they normally do, the announcers can offer the prescription more sternly under the guise of fictional characters and entertaining dialogue. In one episode of the program, for example, a character named Om has traveled to Cancún and finds himself unable to communicate with his limited Spanish.[3] He needs to buy a bus ticket, but the man behind the counter does not speak Maya, despite having the face of a 'very Maya person' (line 3). Om responds with an internal monologue that does more than merely advocate Maya language. He expresses harsh criticism toward the ticket seller for failing to embody an Indigenous, Maya identity by using Maya language. Om draws explicit connections, for listeners, between the man's physical characteristics, presumed language, and Indigenous status.

U jetan mejenquisi màaka',
u jeta'an mejen kisin máak-a'
A3 much little devil man D1
This son of a devil, [line 1]

ma'atan bin u na'atik maya,
ma'atan bin u na'atik maaya
no EVID A3 understand Maya
it doesn't seem like he understands Maya, [line 2]

[3] In the transcription that follows, the first line reproduces a segment of a script written by the program's author. My interlinear glosses on the second line amend the first line on matters of tone marking and orthography.

ile' la bix u yich jach maya wìinik,
ile' la bix u yich jach maaya wìinik
look [?] how A3 eye/face very Maya person
(But) look how his face (is that of a) very Maya person. [line 3]

ba'axten bey le màako'ob ku meyajo'ob noj kaajo',
ba'axten bey le máak- o'ob k- u meyaj-o'ob noj kaaj- o'
why thus DET man B3PL IMPF A3 work B3PL big town D2
Why are people who work in big towns like this? [line 4]

ku tukultiko'obe' je'el u ta'akik màak u macehualile',
k- u tukul-tik- o'ob-e' je'el u ta'ak-ik máak u máasewal- il- e'
IMPF A3 think TR PL TOP ASSUR A3 hide TR man A3 Indian, Indigenous REL D3
They think they can surely hide their indigeneity. [line 5]

lelo ma'atan u pajtal tumen tu ch'i'ibalil máake'
le- lo' ma'atan u pajtal tumen t- u ch'i'ibal-il máak-e'
DET D2 no A3 possible because PREP A3 lineage REL man TOP
But that's certainly not possible because in this lineage, [line 6]

seeb u yila'al macehual.
séeb u y- il- a'al máasewal.
quickly A3 GLD see PASS Indian/Indigenous
he is quickly seen to be Indigenous [line 7]

Le x-la' maaka' kex ka' u ya'al ma'atan u na'atik mayae',
le x- la' máak-a' kex ka' u y- a'al ma'atan u na'atik maaya-e'
DET FEM rotten man D1 although again A3 GLD say-PASS no A3 understand Maya- D3
This damn guy, though it's been said twice that he doesn't understand Maya, [line 8]

jach mayeroo ba'ax yan ti'e'e
jach mayero ba'ax yan ti'- e'
real Maya speaker what exist PREP D3
a Maya speaker is what he really is. [line 9]

su'ulak u ya'al ma'atan u t'anik maya.
su'ulak u y- a'al ma'atan u t'an- ik maaya
ashamed A3 GLD say-PASS no A3 speak TR Maya
He's ashamed to speak. He won't speak Maya. [line 10]

The phrase *u máasewalil* 'his/her/their indigeneity' (line 5) is not commonly used among everyday speakers, in my experience, but it is readily understandable to them. Notice how the construction isolates 'indigeneity' from 'Indian.' It deftly negotiates prevalent conceptions of

Maya speakers, who typically bristle at being called 'Indians,' by referring instead to the quality that 'Indians' possess. Even Om's more direct identification of the ticket seller as *máasewal* is carefully mitigated (lines 6–7). He posits hypothetical observers who are able to identify the man as *máasewal* because people in the man's 'lineage' are 'obviously Indigenous' (lit., 'quickly seen to be Indian/Indigenous'). The scene articulates indigeneity as an abstract, identifiable quality, and it brings it into conjunction with Maya-ness, both as a linguistic identity (lines 8–9) and as a type of personhood (*maaya wíinik*, line 3).

Om's monologue illustrates how the radionovela packages ethnolinguistic advocacy in simulations of highly informal language. Previous chapters showed how announcers put the informational function of the radio station in the service of enregisterment and group-making. As this scene illustrates, the station's entertainment function is similarly regimented. Notice that not a single Spanish lexical item appears in the transcript above. Though Spanish loans do occasionally appear in the dialogue of *Maruch's Kitchen*, the radio announcers' commitments to language preservation mostly outweigh the show's realist aspirations. The program's author, Estela Uh Balam, makes considerable use of the schooled purism of standardized Maya in composing the scripts for the radionovela (e.g., Maya calques of Spanish greetings, rare Maya time interval terms, etc.). She also writes elaborated Maya constructions into the characters' voices, in order to avoid Spanish loans. In these ways, the humble *campesinos* of the radio drama employ standardized Maya and elements of *jach maaya*. So, the speech of the radionovela is simultaneously "authentic" (in part) by virtue of its *k'aas* 'bad, ugly' qualities and "correct" on account of its schooled purism. *Maruch's Kitchen* articulates a pointedly Maya voice that listeners find compelling, though the voice lacks readily identifiable speakers in the "real world."

The crude language and rough demeanor of characters in *Maruch's Kitchen* taps into established conceptions of Maya language and personhood. Dramatized incivility in the radionovela also reflects the social distance between the radio announcers and Maya *campesinos* 'peasant farmers' who, again, comprise a substantial portion of the listening audience. The radio announcers are not *ayik'alo'ob* 'rich people,' but they have significantly more economic security and social prestige than Maya *campesinos* possess. The differential enables the radio announcers to present caricatured portraits of the latter social type. Local *campesino* listeners never get offended by the portraits, so far as I know. On the contrary, the radionovela is extremely popular with that segment of radio listeners.

My *campesino* friends and neighbors in the village of the Yaxlol loved the program. Some even recalled humorous exchanges between the radionovela's characters, spontaneously, when the topic of *Maruch's Kitchen* arose in conversation. They interpreted the radionovela as a comedic story and not a critical social parody of Maya *campesinos*. (This is how the program's author explained it to me, as well.) The interpretation is facilitated by the absence of common stereotypes of 'poor Indians' in *Maruch's Kitchen*, especially alcoholism. Moreover, the radionovela valorizes the lives of *óotsil* 'poor, humble' Mayas as quintessentially Maya on account of their language and rural lifeway. The radionovela does not satirize the Maya *campesinos* that it depicts so much as it folklorizes them. The folklorization contributes to the success of the program. As I explain in chapter two, radio announcers and listeners share folklorized notions of Maya language and culture.

Maruch's Kitchen is in the service of other social goals beside entertainment and cultural preservation. Through its characters, the comedic radionovela explores serious national issues like poverty, the social marginalization of Indigenous people, and migration to the United States.

In so doing, the fictional program complements the station's informative functions regarding the 'development' of Indigenous citizens and communities. One task of radio announcers, which reflects objectives of the station's parent organization, is making listeners aware of government programs aimed at their social and economic advancement. The announcers regularly discuss social and economic *talamilo'ob* 'difficulties' of Indigenous communities in news reports and talk programs (see chapter two). They dramatize these difficulties in *Maruch's Kitchen*.

A Prefix Problem and a Knotty Kin Term

Here, I focus on two linguistic forms, the feminine prefix *x-* and the lexeme *na'* 'mother,' whose patterns of use demonstrate and clarify social dynamics outlined in the previous section. In radio broadcasts and other mediatized texts, the variable usage of the two forms reveals not only disagreements between the norms of everyday Maya speakers and the emerging standard, but also shifting social interpretations of Maya and Indigenous identity in the Yucatán. The conflicts can be discerned in part through the strategies that speakers employ to manage them in discourse.

In Yucatec Maya, the prefixes *x-* and *j-* mark feminine and masculine gender of the noun they modify, respectively. (In the present work, I include a nonstandard hyphen with the prefixes in order to make them more noticeable to the reader.) Bricker (1998) calls the forms *agentive prefixes*; other Mayanists call them *gender prefixes* or *gender markers* (e.g., Campbell 1998; Lois 1998). Gender marking is optional in Yucatec Maya. One may say either *x-ch'úupal* or *ch'úupal* ('girl'), for example, either *Maria* or *x-Maria*, and either *David* or *j-David*. Affixing the feminine *x-* to *kéej* 'deer' specifies the referent as 'doe.' When affixed to a girl's or woman's name, *x-* often indexes familiarity or endearment. Conversely, the feminine prefix also has negative meanings and interpretations. Its use can be meant or interpreted as overly familiar or

disparaging. Brody writes, "It should be noted that many women consider the prefix [*x*-] deprecatory and are highly critical of its use; this is a complex social phenomenon worthy of further study" (2004, 63n30). Such critical sentiments about the prefix are not novel. Andrade, in a grammatical manuscript based on data collected in the early 1930s, writes, "As in Old Yucatec, *x*- is used to indicate the female, often in disparaging terms" (1955, Part 3.3).

Grammatical optionality would seem to afford gender-marked nouns with variable and innovative indexical meanings. Further, for speakers and analysts of Maya, construal of the prefix is complicated by the fact that *x*- does not always or only indicate feminine gender. *X*- has become integrated into the names of many plants and small animals (Bricker 1998; Brody 2004, 281). When I asked native speakers about the prefix, after they explained its use as a feminine marker, they typically associated the prefix with vermin (e.g., *x-nook'ol* 'worm,' *x-chiiwol* 'tarantula'). Additionally, instrumental nouns take a prefix *x*- (Bricker 1998; Lois 1998, 245n31; Brody 2004, 63, 281).[4] Note also the prefix's appearance in the aforementioned expletive *x-la'* 'rotten.' Here, *x*- does not mark feminine gender, though it may trope on it; *x-la'* may be used to characterize inanimate objects and animate beings of either gender.

Unsurprisingly, I found that speakers were less able to articulate semantic and pragmatic conventions for the prefix *x*- than they were for lexemes and grammatical constructions. One woman in Yaxlol told me that the prefix was rude and therefore not commonly used in the village. She explained, however, that people in the nearby town of Chacsinkín used *x*- all the time. Another woman told me that the feminine prefix was *jach maaya* 'real Maya.'[5] In fact, I

[4] Instrumental nouns may be derived as follows: x–ROOT TRANSITIVE–Vb (e.g., *chak* 'boil' → *x-chakab* 'pot').
[5] Berkley notes that *jach maaya* counterparts to everyday Maya lexemes are "frequently humorous, insulting, and marked with [(i)*x*-] 'a feminine prefix' which indexes familiarity and smallness" (1998, 103–4).

found *x-* to be widely used in Yaxlol. Speakers routinely used it with the names of girls and women. Because they did not use the prefix with the names of all girls or women, it seemed to be socially significant whenever it appeared.

Generally, usage of *x-* appears to index social proximity as often as it indexes social distance. I observed friendly and intimate deployments of the prefix every day over the course of my fieldwork. Especially in Yaxlol, uses of *x-* regularly seemed to presuppose and entail social intimacy between speaker and addressee (or referent). Many women used the prefix when addressing female family members and certain neighbors and friends. Men routinely used *x-* when addressing women who were kin, but were less inclined to use the prefix when addressing women who were not. Occasionally, I observed men address elderly non-kin women with *x-* in what appeared to be affectionate (and perhaps tropic) uses of the prefix. Women and men alike often used the prefix when addressing girls, both within and beyond boundaries of household and family.

Notwithstanding these affable uses of the prefix, I regularly noted cases where *x-* indexed social distance. People in Yaxlol referred to the town doctor as *x-doctooraj*, for example. The young woman, who spoke only Spanish, had come from central Mexico for a residency in Yaxlol. Residents of Yaxlol also tended to use the prefix when mentioning the name of a local woman who was considered by many to be an immoral troublemaker. When partaking in gossip that negatively evaluated this woman, my interlocutors sometimes lengthened the sound of the *x-* when saying her name. I confirmed with multiple speakers that emphasizing the *x-* is used to iconically index one's affective stance toward the referent. A more enunciated prefix typically signals more disapproval.

In Maya print media today, feminine *x*- appears regularly, but inconsistently. The recently published book of Maya writing norms advocates the use of both gender prefixes. Moreover, it encourages the recuperation of the markers' full, archaic forms (*ix*- and *aj*-) for the names of offices and roles (e.g., *ixka'ansaj* '[female] teacher,' *ajkolnáal* '[male] farmer'; INALI 2014, 122-129, 284-291). The diminutivizing indexical meanings of the feminine prefix are difficult to flout, however, so *x*- appears throughout this text with *ch'íup* 'girl' but not with *ko'olel* 'woman' (n.b., the authors of the text use the masculine *j*- with *xiib* 'boy'). Differing treatments of 'girl' and 'woman' within single Maya publications are quite common, and they reflect the contrasting indexical meanings conventionally associated with the prefix. They can be observed, for example, in the Jehovah's Witnesses' Maya biblical translation (Watch Tower 2012), in which *x*- appears consistently before the noun 'girl' but not before 'woman.' In the text, the prefix does not appear before the names of women, with one telling exception: *x-Jezabel*. Observe, then, that *x*- has diminutivizing indexical meanings with 'girl' and pejorative meanings with 'Jezebel' (Sp., Jezabel). This, again, is precisely how Maya speakers typically use the prefix; *x*- can index intimacy or disapproval.

The prefix *x*- would appear to present a challenge, then, for Maya standardization efforts and attendant media projects. In its basic function as a feminine agentive marker, the prefix is certainly "correct" Maya, but discourse conventions in Maya speech communities imbue it with weighty indexical meanings and oppose its indiscriminate use. Moreover, in contrast to the purified Maya lexemes examined in chapter three, the prefix's sublexical status and participation in other grammatical functions would seem to render it less susceptible to the awareness of speakers (see Silverstein [1977]1981).

At The Voice of the Mayas, the announcers manage the prefix in revealing ways. They generally avoid marking (human) feminine gender. In news reports, talk programs, and office talk, the women who work at the radio station are not referred to with *x-* before their names. (Interestingly, I occasionally heard the Spanish diminutive suffix *-ita* used with the names of certain female employees of the radio station.) The radio announcers also typically omit the prefix from the nouns *ch'úupal* 'girl' and *ko'olel* 'woman.' The title of the morning show 'Women's Voices' is rendered *U T'aanilo'ob Ko'olel*, rather than *U T'aanilo'ob x-Ko'olel*. Announcers initially cited politeness as the reason for omitting the prefix, but upon further reflection they noted that the matter was not so clear-cut. The social appropriateness of *x-* depends on context and the speaker's intention, one of them concluded.

The radio announcers do not always avoid the feminine prefix on the air, however. They make heavy use of it in *Maruch's Kitchen*. In the show's fictional component, *x-* always appears before the names of female characters. And the characters use the prefix with the nouns 'girl' and 'woman' alike: *x-ch'úupal, x-ko'olel*. They also frequently use the expletive *x-la'*, as I mentioned above. Although use of the prefix is heightened in the show, the characters' affectionate, diminutive, and pejorative deployments of *x-* typically adhere to local communicative conventions. An interesting exception concerns *x-ba'al* (lit., female thing), an impolite way of saying 'girlfriend.' The construction has vulgar and humorous meanings for Maya speakers. Normally—and certainly in polite speech—Maya speakers use the Spanish *novia* 'girlfriend.' The characters in *Maruch's Kitchen* flout this convention. Three instances of earnest and polite tokens of *x-ba'al* 'girlfriend' taken from one episode of the program follow.

chéen táan in tukultik in x-ba'al in p'atmaj te' kajtalilo'
chéen táan in tukul-tik in x- ba'al in p'at- maj te' kaj- tal- il- o'
just PROG A1 think TR A1 FEM thing A1 leave TR PREP town INCH INH D2
I'm just worried about my girlfriend, who I left back home.

wá séeb u yeemel a wóol
wá séeb u y- éemel a w- óol
if fast A3 GLD descent A2 GLD heart
If suddenly your heart sinks

u ti'al a we'esik a yaakunaj ti' a x-ba'ale'
u ti'al a w- e'es- ik a yaakunaj ti' a x- ba'al- e'
A3 POSS A2 GLD show TR A2 love PREP A2 FEM thing D3
to reveal your love for your girlfriend…

wá ku ts'o'okol a beel yéetel a x-ba'al
wá k- u ts'o'okol a beel y- éetel a x- ba'al
if IMPF A3 TERM A2 road GLD with A2 FEM thing
If you marry your girlfriend…

It is significant that these utterances are not meant to be offensive, comical, or even pointedly casual. Based on Maya discourse norms, we should expect to see the Spanish *novia* in place of *x-ba'al* in each of them. Why did the program's author and director make this choice? Certainly, *x-ba'al* is appealing to the radio announcers because it is Maya rather than Spanish. But commitment to language purification is not the only motivating factor in the crafting of this program's language. Radio programming objectives and local stereotypes of Maya language and identity are also influential guiding factors. For announcers and listeners alike, the crude and unsophisticated connotations of *x-ba'al* 'girlfriend' seem to suit the show's rustic characters.

Why is *x-* desirable for this radio program but not for the morning news or for *Women's Voices*, a talk program that explores topics of interest and concern for women in Yucatán? When I asked this question, radio announcers and listeners seemed to have some difficulty answering. The announcers agreed that the prefix in conjunction with a person's name is "correct" Maya,

but it is not polite enough for professional talk. The characters in *Maruch's Kitchen* live in a small town, they explained, and that is just how people in small towns in the region talk.

I contend that the prominence of *x-* in *Maruch's Kitchen* is not motivated solely by realism. Crudeness and coarseness, instantiated as qualia by usages of the feminine prefix, serve the program's comedic and nostalgic aspirations.[6] Radio listeners find many instances of *x-* in the radionovela funny *because* they experience them as improper, such as when they hear the character Tacio loudly and angrily address his wife, Meech, with the prefix: "x-Meech!" But listeners also construe in the fictional interactions a kind of earthy authenticity that is indexical and iconic of the *campesino* 'peasant farmer' social persona. This earthy authenticity has conflicting cultural values, which are manifest in positive valuations of 'peasant farmers' as humble and hard-working and negative valuations of 'poor Indians' as rough and uncivilized. *Maruch's Kitchen* is especially entertaining to listeners because its characters flirt the line between the two social personae.

We may implicate another linguistic form in the same problem. Some, but not all, Maya kin terms have been replaced by Spanish lexemes. To refer to parents, Maya speakers use the Spanish *papá* and *mamá* with Maya intonation: *paapaj* and *maamaj*. The archaic Maya forms are *yuum/taataj* for 'father' and *na'* for 'mother.' The Maya kin terms appear in publications today, but the audience for these texts is quite limited. The archaic *yuum* and *taataj* 'father' are not typically used by Maya speakers today. Speakers do use the term *na'* 'mother,' but the usage is limited and often has derogatory entailments. It is used when referring to animals (e.g., *x-na' kéej* 'doe'). The lexeme also appears in a popular insult, which doubles as a curse word: *peel a*

[6] For anthropological applications of the qualia concept, see Chumley and Harkness (2013); Gal (2013); Ingebretson (2017); Munn (1986).

na' 'your mother's vagina.' This Maya insult, presumably a calque of the Spanish *chinga tu madre* 'fuck your mother,' is very well known in Yucatán. Indeed, a few Spanish speakers have produced comical videos explaining *peel a na'* and published them on the internet.[7] Fairly often during my research, Yucatecan Spanish speakers who did not speak Maya mentioned the insult to me when the topic of Maya language arose in conversation (e.g., 'I speak a little bit of Maya: *peel a na'*!'). In the Yucatán, Maya speakers and Spanish speakers alike consider the insult to be both obscene and humorous.

Purists of Maya language thus encounter a problem: *maamaj* is quite obviously Spanish and in need of replacement, but speakers commonly consider *na'* to be inappropriate when used to refer to human mothers. On the rare occasions that I observed speakers use *na'* to refer to human mothers earnestly and kindly, the speaker was attuned to politics of Maya language and identity; the reference was made in the third person; and the mother in question was not present. Mothers winced when I asked them how they would respond if their children referred to them with *na*' rather than the Spanish loan. The qualia of vulgarity and animality instantiated by *na'* are incompatible with the lexeme's prescribed usage under purist standardization.

As with the feminine prefix, I am not aware of the historical process whereby *na'* 'mother' became derogative. It is not an uncommon phenomenon. Scholars of other languages have documented the pejoration of female terms and lexical items with feminine associations (e.g., Kochman-Haładyj 2007). Regarding the Maya case, I notice that the lexeme appears in Catholic prayers from the colonial period. For example, a 1620 Maya version of the *El Ave Mariá* 'Hail Mary' prayer renders 'mother of God' as *v naa Diose*, that is, *u na' Diose'* [3

[7] Tila Maria Sesto, "¿Como Entender a un Yucateco? ¡Pelana!" ['How to understand a Yucatecan? Your mother's vagina!'], published on December 22, 2014, YouTube video, 0:08:49, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5HDgjrHZ5Q.

mother god-TOP] in modern orthography (Acuña 1998, 149 in Hanks 2010, 259). Today, the problematic status of the lexeme is evidenced by varying treatments of it in mediatized Maya texts. In the aforementioned book of writing norms for the Maya language (INALI, 2014), *yuum* is consistently used for 'father,' but 'mother' appears variably as *maam* (from the Spanish *mamá*) or *na'*. The Jehovah's Witnesses' Maya biblical translation, similarly, uses the archaic Maya *taata[j]* 'father' and the Spanish-derived *maama* 'mother' (Watch Tower, 2012). In mediatized texts that do use *na'*, I notice that the form is sometimes modified by *ki'ichpam* 'pretty.' *Ki'ichpam na'* 'pretty mother' usually sits alongside an unqualified *yuum/taataj* 'father' in such texts, suggesting that the adjectival modification is an attempt to mitigate the crude and animalistic meanings that have come to be associated with *na'*. In any case, unvarnished tokens of *na'* do appear regularly in published Maya texts. It is worth noting that the readership of these texts is very small and select. These educated, bilingual readers likely value fidelity to authentic Maya more than they are bothered by the negative meanings associated with the kin term.

Because of the lexeme's vulgar connotations, the announcers at The Voice of the Mayas tend to use the Spanish-derived *maamaj* rather than *na'* in broadcasts. Perhaps unsurprisingly by now, the represented discourse in the program *Maruch's Kitchen* is an important exception to the practice. The radionovela's characters consistently use *na'* to address and refer to their mothers. Three examples follow.

lelo' ma' a ti'a'ali' u ti'a'al a na'
le- lo' ma' a ti'a'al- i' u ti'a'al a na'
DET D2 NEG A2 POSS D3 A3 POSS A2 mother
That isn't yours; it belongs to your mother.

táan u taal in na' be'ooráa' yaan u yilikech
táan u taal in na' be'ooráa' yaan u y- il- ik- ech
PROG A3 come A1 mother now exist A3 GLD see TR B2
My mother is coming now. She is going to see you.

kux túun in na' tu'ux yaan
kux túun in na' tu'ux yaan
and then A1 mother where exist
And my mother—where is she?

Unlike the Mayas of *Maruch's Kitchen*, actual Maya speakers living in poor, rural villages would be very unlikely to use *na'* to refer to their mothers. The radio announcer who writes the show's scripts told me that she uses *na'* simply because it is Maya rather than Spanish. But in other radio programs, such as news reports, she and her colleagues normally use the Spanish-origin kin term instead. People are not 'accustomed' (*suuk*) to using the Maya form to address and refer to their mothers, they explained. The fictional world of *Maruch's Kitchen* would appear to offer the announcers a relatively safe interactional space for promoting a pure Maya lexeme that has impure connotations. I claim, however, that *na'* appeals to the radio announcers not only because it is Maya rather than Spanish, but also, just as with the feminine-marked forms discussed above, because the crude meanings associated with *na'* seem (to announcers and listeners) to suit this particular program's characters. This is because the meanings align with longstanding notions of indigeneity as hardy and folksy.

The patterned variation we observe arises from speakers' attempted negotiations of indexical fields via ideological activation (Eckert 2008) and erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000; Gal and Irvine 2019). In speakers' implementations and rationalizations of the two linguistic forms, we observe multi-ordered indexicality and its management. Mediatized texts that implement the forms successfully refer, but their interactional efficacy is limited or reduced by certain of the forms' ideologically related meanings. Everyday Maya speakers who encounter the texts will likely find token instances of feminine *x-* and *na'* 'mother' to be odd, comical, or rude. Users of standardized Maya must therefore weigh their commitment to the register against their adherence to Maya communicative norms.

By using the forms in accordance with standard norms, speakers or writers index their knowledge of 'correct' Maya language and their commitment to using it. Such individuals' (standardized) usages of feminine *x-* and *na'* 'mother' are typically oriented to two imagined personae on the receiving end of the messages: fellow professional Maya advocates habituated to norms of standardized Maya and/or *mayeros* 'Maya speakers' habituated to everyday speech norms. The two personae oppose each other, but most speakers that are able to effectively occupy the former are able to occupy the latter. This is because many professional Maya advocates are *mayeros* 'Maya speakers' before they are schooled in standardized Maya.

Especially in mediatized discourse, Maya advocates orient their messages to both personae simultaneously. The messages are ideologically stratified as a result. Standard usages of feminine *x-* and *na'* 'mother' index ideological alignment with schooled Maya advocates, while conveying an implicit prescriptive message toward everyday *mayeros* 'Maya speakers': one should use feminine *x-* and *na'* 'mother' because they are 'correct' Maya. Depending on the individual speaker and speech context, however, norms of everyday speech may supersede standard prescriptions.

Hence the unreliable appearance, in mediatized Maya, of *na'* 'mother' and the feminine prefix. And hence standard users' efforts to mitigate the problematic indexical presuppositions and entailments of these forms. In the case of the feminine prefix, strong indexical associations with small referents and vermin (mentioned above) are ideologically out of phase with one of the prefix's key grammatical functions: indexing feminine gender for adult human referents. Similarly, in the case of *na'* 'mother,' animalistic indexical associations are ideologically out of phase with the lexeme's prescribed use as a human kin term. When a user of standardized Maya writes *ki'ichpam na'* 'pretty mother,' the adjective *ki'ichpam* 'pretty' is meant to do more than

characterize the referent. 'Pretty' is also employed to counteract (ideally, erase) the negative indexical meanings of the form *na'* 'mother' itself. (I confirmed this hypothesis with several native Maya speakers. Additional evidence is mentioned above: differing treatments of 'mother' and 'father' within single texts.)

The phrase 'pretty mother' is therefore a kind of (attempted) indexical counter-interference. Its usage shows that the ideological rationalization of standardized Maya proponents—that *maamaj* is Spanish and *na'* is Maya—is not persuasive enough for most speakers, including speakers of the standardized register. Note that the same pejorative indexical meanings that interfere destructively in polite conversation (*tsikbal*) interfere constructively for interactions that are meant to be crude, humorous, or insulting. The insult *peel a na'* ('your mother's vagina'), for example, is more efficacious because of the animalistic indexical meanings linked to *na'* ('mother'), which superimpose onto the act of reference. Speakers told me that the phrase would still be insulting, of course, if used with the Spanish lexeme for 'mother' (*peel a maamaj*). But the popular version that uses the Maya lexeme *na'* is more insulting, they said.

Feminine *x-* and *na'* 'mother' are deemed correct in de-Castilianized Maya for the obvious reason that they are indisputably Maya. Everyday speakers perceive the forms to be authentic Maya—too authentic, indeed, for courteous references to humans. The problem illustrates an aspect of the sociohistorical relationship between Maya and Spanish speech on the peninsula. Maya is notably 'mixed' within domains of civility, such as greetings, kin terms, and religion. This would appear to be a legacy of Yucatán's colonial mission, which sought to produce *indios reducidos* 'ordered Indians' that conducted themselves in accordance with *policía cristiana* 'Christian civility' (Hanks 2010). The project was mediated and enabled by a linguistic

reordering, Hanks argues, that crucially shaped the historical development of the language (2010).

Berkley's (1998) doctoral dissertation sheds light on the historical relationship between Maya linguistic purism and Spanish colonization. He assembles historical textual evidence that the 'mixed' Maya of Spanish elites provided a linguistic model for *indios* 'Indians' embedded in asymmetrical relations of power (Berkley 1998, 45). Modern folk ideologies about the 'mixed' quality of Maya speech would therefore appear to be the legacy of an Indigenous appropriation of a power code in the colonial era. In central Mexico, as the work of Jane Hill and Kenneth Hill (1986) reveals, local ideologies of 'pure' and 'mixed' Mexicano [Nahuatl] reflect a similar history: Spanish became a power code after the arrival of Spaniards; next emerged a hispanized Mexicano 'power code' that incorporated Spanish lexemes; finally, a purist code of Mexicano arose in opposition to 'mixed' Mexicano.

In the Yucatán today, while Maya advocates regard the adoption of Spanish lexemes as a threat to the language, everyday speakers interpret the 'mixedness' of their speech as a sign of their modernity. Conversely, they associate pure Maya language with incivility, vulgarity, and the ancient past. These popular interpretations impede the establishment of a modern, purified Maya standard.

Conclusion

This chapter has described enduring local conceptions of authentic Maya-ness and indigeneity that complicate the identity work at institutions like The Voice of the Mayas. Disparities between the coarse talk of *Maruch's Kitchen* and the default broadcast register analyzed in chapter three reveal that radio work mediates ethnolinguistic identity work in quite direct ways at the radio station. It is not surprising that the speech the announcers use to voice

characters in a radio drama differs from the speech used in other programming genres at the radio station. The basic and obvious differences are motivated primarily by the genre conventions of popular Mexican radio, which the announcers take up in a rather straightforward fashion. What is notable, though, is how the different broadcast voices hook into different figures of Maya identity.

The *professional Maya advocate* role serves the radio station's social objectives and suits its institutional norms. And it aligns with social interests and commitments of the radio announcers. Accordingly, it is the figure of Maya personhood that most announcers inhabit most of the time, by way of polite *tsikbal* 'conversation' punctuated with pure Maya lexemes. However, for some programming purposes, as I have shown here, conflicting ideas about Maya or Indigenous identity offer more desirable or appropriate imagery. This is especially the case for nostalgic, comedic, and dramatic renderings of authentic Maya-ness. *Maruch's Kitchen* presents an image of Indigenous personhood that is hardy and unsophisticated. The image accords with common perceptions, but contrasts significantly with the figure of the Indigenous professional that the announcers and other Maya advocates cultivate.

Radio programming genres thus offer a resource for the public representation of different figures of Maya identity. In quite direct ways, the station's programming schedule arranges and localizes contrasting personae—the professional Maya advocate for the morning news, the poor *campesino* for the afternoon radionovela, the modern Maya youth for the evening talk program called 'New Maya generation,' and so on. The announcers employ various genres in order to channel and construct different Maya voices, but the resulting lines between vocal channels are not sharply drawn. As I have shown, the fictional *campesinos* 'peasant farmers' of *Maruch's Kitchen* embody hybrid personas. They plant corn and tend chickens like many of the station's

listeners, but they also express ideological commitments of the announcers that voice them. The characters provide models of *nonprofessional* Maya advocacy for the radio station's listening public.

The field of state-mediated Indigenous advocacy garners popular support in the Peto municipality. But as reported in previous chapters, I found limited uptake of Maya identity promotion among local radio listeners, and scant adoption of spoken standardized Maya. A heritage-based notion of Maya identity was widely held, and many Mayas interpreted facets of their ethnolinguistic identities in terms of their class positionalities as *óotsil* 'poor' and/or as *campesinos* 'peasant farmers.' Residents of the Peto municipality were especially receptive to folkloric presentations of Maya language and culture, both in radio broadcasts and via other formats (e.g., public dance performances). Hence the popularity of *Maruch's* Kitchen, whose fictional characters are recognizable as icons of regional Yucatecan culture as well as Maya ethnolinguistic identity. The speech of said characters is incongruous by reason of its standardized purity, but it conveys enduring countervailing cultural notions that resonate with the station's listeners.

Chapter Five
Register Calques and 'Respectful Conversation': Ideological Limits of Maya Purism and Expansions of the Developing Maya Standard

Maya purism represents a dominant ideological force in Maya language advocacy and standardization. This dissertation has investigated contemporary relations between two varieties of Maya purism studied by Berkley (1998) more than two decades ago, namely, the schooled purism of "standard Maya" and an older tradition of "vernacular purism" that centers on *jach maaya* 'real Maya' lexical examples. I have focused on radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas in Peto, Yucatán, who find themselves caught between longstanding Maya norms and the linguistic prescriptions of the current Maya language *normalización* 'standardization' program that is directed by Maya linguists and educators, and backed by state initiatives and institutions. Previous chapters revealed how popular Maya purism both informs and encumbers the purism of today's language standardizers. Though the institutionalization of standardized Maya has increased steadily in recent years, I have found scant popular usage of the register among Maya speakers at my field sites.

The current chapter reveals and investigates another limit of Maya purism by way of an apparent contradiction: the emerging Maya standard, despite its marked lexical purism, is *structured* by Spanish to a considerable extent. The Maya register applies various Spanish norms at syntactic and pragmatic levels of language. The linguistic adoptions are conditioned by the historical relationship between Maya and Spanish on the Yucatán Peninsula, and encouraged by the expansive goals of Maya language advocacy and standardization. In contrast to lexical borrowing, Maya speakers do not normally identify these kinds of Castilianization as linguistic 'mixing.' Indeed, such Spanish influences are generally not articulated in metapragmatic discourse among Maya speakers nor do they seem to rise to speakers' metapragmatic awareness

(Silverstein 1981). The phenomenon therefore presents compelling problems of linguistic awareness, ideology, and change.

The chapter comprises two parts, the first of which shows that Maya language advocates directly assume Spanish registers and genres as models for the development of Maya language. The intertwined processes of mediatization and standardization have brought Maya language into fields of discourse that have long been dominated by Spanish. The expansion has occurred via *register calques* that systematically translate arrangements of Spanish language, speaker roles or personae, and social practices. Whereas lexical calques of standardized Maya usually arise from Maya purism, the register calques presented here result instead from a largely automatic application of Spanish norms. The calques I describe exemplify a significant mode of Castilianization in Maya language, but Maya speakers typically do not interpret the translational integration of Spanish registers and their attendant genres as linguistic 'mixing' or cultural loss; indeed, quite the opposite. Moreover, while the calques may appear to simply regiment Maya linguistic forms with Spanish structures, I show that they actually involve a more complicated dynamic of Castilianization and Mayanization. I focus on the Maya register named *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation,' which has come to serve as a matrix for different register calques that are employed in standardized Maya.

The second part of the chapter reveals how the bilingual architects and users of standardized Maya conceptualize Maya language in the syntactic and pragmatic terms of Spanish language. After presenting examples of phrasal calques in standardized Maya, the chapter offers a focused examination of plural marking. Plural marking is quite obligatory in Spanish (Iannucci 1952; Bock, et al. 2012), but is not obligatory in Yucatec Maya (Lucy 1992; Pfeiler 2009; Butler et al. 2014; Butler and Couoh Pool 2017). I organize data from my field research and evidence

from published Maya texts to show that standardized Maya applies Spanish plural marking conventions. As with the examples presented in the first part of the chapter, this cross-linguistic influence escapes notice of speakers and is not a topic of local metapragmatic discourse.

Register Calques and the Contemporary 'Re-functionalization' of Maya Language

The current statement of institutionally authorized Yucatec Maya language prescriptions is available in book form: *U Nu'ukbesajil u Ts'íibta'al Maayat'aan/Normas de Escritura para la Lengua Maya* 'Norms for Writing the Maya Language' (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014). Production of the text, abbreviated hereafter as *Normas*, was administered by Mexico's National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI) and Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). A basic premise of the *Normas* project is that the establishment of a written Maya standard will expand the communicative capacities and social prestige of the language. Stated objectives of the standardizers include: 'To expand the uses of the Maya language as an effective means of communication' and 'To strengthen the written culture of Maya language through the increase and development of written genres' (my translation; Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014, 20-1 [YM], 177 [Sp.]).

The expansive ambitions of Maya language *normalización* 'standardization' are also evident in the proposals approved by the 'Peninsular Congress for the Institutionalization of Maya Language,' which the INALI convened in 2018.[1] A general principle of the congress was that institutional parity between Maya and Spanish is necessary in order to guarantee the exercise of the linguistic rights of Maya people. What follows are my translations of the approved proposals as reported by Fidencio Briceño Chel (2021), Maya linguist and a director of the

[1] 'Peninsular Congress for the Institutionalization of the Maya language' *Congreso peninsular para la Institucionalización de la lengua maya*. Accessed January 27, 2023. https://site.inali.gob.mx/Micrositios/ congreso_peninsular/.

Normas project: (1) 'That public and private institutions use the Maya language in all official matters'; (2) 'That all sectors of civil society participate in linguistic standardization and planning efforts'; (3) 'That bilingual education (Maya-Spanish) be implemented in the educational system of the states of the peninsula'; (4) 'That the written use of the Maya language be integrated in a regularized manner, through writing standards, as a common practice in public services, procedures and information'; (5) 'That the transmission and learning of the Maya language be promoted in all social sectors.'

Briceño Chel characterizes *normalización* 'standardization' as a means to a necessary *refuncionalización* 're-functionalization' of the Maya language (2021). Though linguist Havránek's writings on standardization do not appear to have inspired Briceño Chel, the latter author's *refuncionalización* encompasses the "functional differentiation" and "intellectualization" of standard language described by Havránek ([1932]1964, 6). Formal schooling represents a primary target domain of standardizing efforts. And as previous chapters have documented, Maya speakers now employ subsidiary registers of standardized Maya in media production, journalism, and governmental administration. Furthermore, by way of standardization, Maya language is increasingly used to articulate itself as a scientific object via grammatical terminology and formal descriptions (Guerrettaz 2015; Rhodes 2016).

My claim is not that technical and intellectual capabilities of Maya language are a recent phenomenon. Undoubtedly, the language exhibited substantial functional differentiation and intellectualization (in Havránek's senses of the terms) before the arrival of the Spanish. Maya language was used to run a polity, conduct organized religious practices, mediate trade relationships, and so on. And the language undoubtedly served theoretical and technical ends before contact with Spanish (e.g., astronomy, calendrics). Well into the colonial period, Maya

was spoken by settler elites and their descendants. The variety of Maya language that emerged from the colonial encounter mediated religious missionization and governmental administration (Hanks 2010).

Nevertheless, colonization and the subsequent rise of the Mexican nation-state displaced—or 'de-functionalized,' we might say—Maya language from institutional centers, reducing its social power in relation to Spanish. It is through a 're-functionalization' of Maya language that Briceño Chel and colleagues aim to counter this social displacement. The *Normas* text defines this as the 'status' dimension of *normalización* 'standardization,' which involves "[c]hanging the functions of a language with the purpose of increasing its prestige, that is, promoting its use in formal spaces and contexts or [in spaces and contexts] only intended for majority languages such as school, church, politics and teaching" (my translation; Briceño Chel 2010 *in* Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014, 176).

For users of standardized Maya, the state-mediated administration of Maya language and culture provides avenues into valued occupational specialties. Compared to most Maya speakers, users of the standardized register have more formal education, greater command of Spanish, and higher economic status. In addition to providing a means for embodying linguistic expertise in specific professions, usage of the standardized register evokes the persona of professional Maya advocate, an esteemed and recognizable social figure in the Mexican Yucatán today. Yet, spoken Maya conventionally evokes a set of contrastive, but also overlapping, social personae that are even more recognizable: 'poor person' (*óotsil máak*), 'peasant farmer' (*campesino*), 'Indian' (*indio*, a derogatory term in the region). (See the description and differentiation of these categories in the introductory chapter above.)

The pursuit of re-extending the use of Maya language by speakers in Yucatecan society is shared by Maya language advocates that are not affiliated with the *normalización* program. "*La lengua también es territorio*" ('Language is also territory'), writes Maya activist and media figure Yazmín Yadira Novelo Montejo, employing a metaphor that is martial as well as spatial. She depicts Maya speakers as protagonists in a 'struggle in the symbolic field [that] takes language as the main axis of battle.'[2] Despite an historical decline in the proportion of Maya speakers relative to Yucatán's total population, Novelo Montejo argues, Maya language is nevertheless 'rejuvenating itself' through 'linguistic revitalization' efforts led by young Maya speakers. Her examples include Ya[a]len K'uj, a Maya rap musician, and Sáasil Sánchez, a Maya author that serves as editor of the Maya-language section of a newspaper named *La Jornada Maya*.

Spanish language has provided inspiration and infrastructure for the various developments. Maya language *normalización* 'standardization' and *revitalización* 'revitalization' rely on *register calques* that translate configurations of Spanish language, speaker roles or personae, and social practices.[3] Proponents seek the establishment of counterpart Maya-language roles and institutional settings for esteemed registers. And they aspire to have popular genres such as *noticias* 'news' and *películas* 'movies' available to the Yucatecan public at large 'in Maya' (*ich maaya*), just as the genres are available in Spanish language. The selection of source registers and genres reflects the institutional motivations of Maya language maintenance in Mexico, delineated in chapter one.

[2] All single-quoted passages in this paragraph are my translations from the Spanish original (Novelo Montejo 2017).
[3] Gal notes that enregisterment by way of translation is "richly documented in accounts of Christian missionization" (2015, 230).

It is the organized focus on *configurations* of linguistic repertoires, speaker roles, and social functions or purposes that warrants the register calque analytic. Register calques of standardized Maya encompass lexical calques motivated by purism, namely, the Maya neologisms prescribed as replacements for Spanish lexemes commonly used in spoken Maya. But the register calques are not themselves driven by Maya purism; speakers apply them reflexively, though to varying degrees, owing to three factors: (1) the ascendance of Spanish language in Mexico, and relatedly, (2) the prevalence of Maya-Spanish bilingualism among Maya language advocates; and (3) the absence, in many cases, of counterpart Maya registers to the Spanish registers from which such configurations are calqued.

While register calques facilitate the expansion of Maya language onto new sociolinguistic terrain, they also reorder Maya language and speakers according to norms of Mexican Spanish (Hanks 2010). Key examples of register calques in standardized Maya are evident in the fields of education and media, which represent domains of Spanish language dominance in Mexico. The socially valued roles associated with academic and media registers are stereotypically linked with Spanish speakers and language. In the modern era, increasingly, national projects of Indigenous advocacy and *desarrollo* 'development' have mediated the entry of Maya speakers into both fields. The primary federal agencies are the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP), which oversees *educación indígena* 'Indigenous education' in Mexico; the National Indigenous Languages Institute (INALI), which produces Maya-language publications (print and digital); and the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI), which operates a Maya-language radio station in each Mexican state on the Yucatán Peninsula. Institutionalizations of Maya language in Mexico thus compartmentalize the language and its speakers from the Mexican citizenry at large.

Educational programs and media productions directed at Maya language speakers are largely modeled on their Spanish-language counterparts. The modeling includes occupational roles, namely, *maestro/maestra* 'teacher,' *profesor/profesora* 'professor,' *escritor/escritora* 'writer,' and media *locutor/locutora* 'announcer.' Though standardized Maya employs Maya neologisms for some of the roles, such as *aj ka'ansaj/ix ka'ansaj* 'teacher' in place of the Spanish *maestro/maestra*, the counterpart occupations (i.e., Maya and Spanish) share modes of preparation and performance. Aspiring *educación indígena* 'Indigenous education' teachers in the Mexican Yucatán pursue university education and certification, for example, as do those seeking careers as *maestros* 'teachers' in conventional Spanish-speaking classrooms.

Additionally, the aforementioned agencies replicate the contexts of Spanish-language role performance for Maya professionals: classrooms, conferences, radio stations, and publishing operations. In some cases where governmental support is insufficient for the provision of equivalent Maya-language services, Maya academic and media registers share usage contexts with their Spanish language counterparts. Examples include Maya-language programming that airs amid Spanish-language programming on public television; and Maya-language instruction at the university level.

Likewise, the linguistic repertoires of standardized Maya in the two fields are fashioned after repertoires of Mexican Spanish. Schoolbooks of *educación indígena* 'Indigenous education' programs in Yucatán replicate content and follow genre conventions of Spanish-language education in Mexico. *Educación indígena* classrooms are insufficiently staffed with Maya-speaking teachers, according to press reports, so Spanish remains the language of instruction in many such classrooms (Kauil 2019). Nevertheless, the developing relation between standard and everyday Maya parallels the relation between standard Mexican Spanish and Yucatecan Spanish.

The standard registers are used by schooled speakers in contexts deemed official, while the common registers are stereotypically associated with regional culture and unschooled speakers of lower socioeconomic status. Command of standardized Maya, like command of standard Mexican Spanish, opens pathways of social recognition and material advancement.

Though Maya-language media productions often focus reflexively on Maya culture and identity, they nevertheless follow the conventions of Spanish-language media. Maya publications conform to such Spanish genres as *libro* 'book,' *revista* 'journal,' *noticias* 'news,' *informe* 'report,' and *aviso* 'announcement.' Maya radio production is also fashioned according to Mexican radio production genres, as previous chapters have shown. At The Voice of the Mayas, the radio announcers use Maya neologisms to refer to their programs (Table 5.1 below). I found that local (Maya) radio listeners, by contrast, invariably used the appropriate Spanish genre names to refer to the programs. The pattern reflects the radio station's reproduction of Mexican Spanish radio norms, albeit through the medium of purified Maya speech. When the announcers provide 'the news' on the air, they do not merely translate the referential content of Spanish news articles into Maya language (see chapter three). They translate the role of Mexican Spanish news broadcaster and genre conventions of *las noticias* 'the news' into Maya-language discourse.

Table 5.1. Maya Media Neologisms

Maya	Spanish	English
nu'ukbesaj nu'uk- bes- aj explain/order-CAUS-AP	programa	program
p[é]ektsil p[é]ek- tsil motion-REV news	noticia	news
popol t'aan popol t'aan course.as.thread speech	cuento	story
k'uben t'aan k'uben t'aan commissioned speech	aviso	announcement
ki'imak óolal happy heart-REL happiness	saludo	greeting

The pattern holds for television and film, as well, though Maya-language content remains very limited in those media formats. In 2013, a Maya-language telenovela titled *Baktun* received considerable attention by national and international press, including the *New York Times* (Archibold 2013). The telenovela aired on public television in Quintana Roo and now circulates on the internet. *Baktun* emphatically presents Maya language and culture while conforming to basic conventions of the Spanish telenovela genre (e.g., scripted dialogue, dramatic plot structure).

The register and genre calques would appear to contravene linguistic purism, a principal ideological force in Maya language advocacy. But Maya speakers typically do not interpret register loan translations as instances of *xa'ak'a'an* 'mixed' language or culture. On the contrary, speakers assume prevailing Spanish registers and associated genres as universal types instantiated (or not) in particular languages. At my field sites, where I found metapragmatic discourse about the incorporation of Spanish lexemes in Maya speech to be ubiquitous, I never encountered spontaneous talk about the Spanish derivation of certain Maya registers.

I have presented register calques of standardized Maya as Castilianizing influences on the language that are especially noteworthy because Maya language standardizers and advocates pursue a program of de-Castilianization. But the calques I have described also represent Maya appropriations of Spanish discourse. Most noticeably, the Spanish source registers undergo Mayanization in the sense that their repertoire characteristics are translated into Maya language, enabling Maya speakers to inhabit roles conventionally occupied by Spanish speakers. Less obvious is how Maya communicative norms shape the interpretation of Spanish registers and guide their incorporation in Maya discourse. Speakers interpret registers of both languages in relation to each other, and they draw equivalences between registers of Maya and Spanish, but the corresponding registers align variably and imperfectly. Adoptions of Spanish register conventions require calibrations of Maya and Spanish metapragmatic categories.

The primary example is offered by standardized implementations of Maya *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation.' As an established mode of performing civil sociality, the *tsikbal* register lends itself to the needs and norms of standard language in particular and to the social aspirations of Maya language advocacy more broadly. Here, I show that extensions of *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' through standardization and mediatization are reshaping the register.

Derived from the verb root *tsik* 'respect,' the intransitive stem *tsikbal* yields inflected verbs and nouns. Maya speakers use the lexeme *tsikbal* 'converse, conversation' to refer to a wide range of discourse that includes conversation as well as narratives; casual exchanges as well as more formal interactions; and speech events across a private-public continuum. Suffixation of *tsikbal* with *-t-ik* derives the transitive *tsikbaltik* 'tell, recount.' The nominals *u tsikbal* [A3-respect-POS] and *u tsikbalil* [A3-respect-POS-REL] have speakers and narratives,

respectively, as possessors (e.g., *u tsikbal Luisa* ‘Luisa’s discussion’; *u tsikbalil Juan t’u’ul* ‘the story of John the rabbit’).

Despite the variety, Berkley explains, *tsikbal* constitutes “a way of speaking” that has “an identifiable form and mode of conduct,” namely, the unmarked sense of *tsikbal* conveyed by the intransitive verbal form, which communicates a speaking subject that is “engaged in respectful activity” (2001, 346–7). (The Maya verb *a’alik* ‘to say,’ by contrast, is neutral with regard to the quality of respectfulness.) Hanks identifies Maya *tsikbal* as a “symmetric” genre of interaction in contrast with relatively asymmetrical genres that include *k’eey*, *láank’eey* ‘bawl out, criticize sharply,’ *tusik beel* ‘order around,’ *tsíik* ‘pay respect to,’ and *u’uyik t’aan* ‘obey’ (1990, 115-123).[4]

While Hanks bases relative asymmetry on the salience of “structurally based status differences between participants” in given interactions (Hanks 1990, 116), symmetry also characterizes interactional features of *tsikbal* ‘respectful conversation.’ Speakers convey respect and achieve interactional symmetry through *tsikbal* in myriad ways, such as by greeting interlocutors, using the appropriate honorific prefixes (e.g., *don* [male], *doña* [female]), and taking turns when speaking. At my field sites in the Peto region, I have found that speakers often characterize speech events as *tsikbal* ‘respectful conversation’ when potential alternative interpretations of the events arise. After an instance of *báaxal t’aan* ‘joking, playful speech’ that might be interpreted as *pooch’il t’aan* ‘insulting speech,’ a speaker might declare that the current speaking event is *chéen tsikbal* ‘only conversation.’ Or a speaker might reassure an addressee that the current interaction is *chéen tsikbal* ‘only conversation’ and will not entail weighty risk or obligation.

[4] I have modified Hanks’ and Berkley’s orthographic conventions slightly.

In the present work, I refer to *tsikbal* as a linguistic register and use the English gloss 'respectful conversation' when doing so. When referring to *tsikbal* as a lexeme, I use the English gloss 'converse, conversation.' I classify *tsikbal* as a register, rather than as a genre, because I am here focused on associations between speaker roles, linguistic usages, and contexts. But as several have noted, there is a lack of consensus on the difference between register and genre, and on the relation between the two concepts, among scholars that use the terms (e.g., Sampson 1997; Frog 2015; Biber and Conrad 2019). Frog observes that, while neither term has been consistently employed, "…definitions of genre and register have been inclined to converge as a historical process" (2015, 90). He writes, "Genre definitions have become increasingly oriented to interest in cultural resources of expression and interpretation in the *parole* of folklore. At the same time, register has advanced from being viewed as a variety of language associated with particular situational circumstances to the cultural systems which provide models for expressive behaviors (verbal and otherwise) in contexts of social practice and interaction" (Frog 2015, 90). Biber and Conrad view register and genre, along with style, "…as *different approaches or perspectives for analyzing text varieties*, and *not* as different kinds of texts or different varieties" (2019, 15, emphasis in original). Linguistic anthropologists have usefully theorized genres and registers as models that *speakers* construct and apply. Briggs and Bauman (1992), for example, conceptualize genres as models that speakers use strategically for the production of texts. Agha has developed a notion of register as "reflexive model of discursive behavior" (2007, 80).

Owing to its broad referential and pragmatic scope, as well as its ideological linkages with 'respect,' the *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' register has come to serve as the primary matrix for register calques employed in standardized Maya. Speakers use verbal and nominal forms of the lexeme *tsikbal* to refer to an assortment of Maya language usages that are modeled

on registers and associated genres of Spanish language. Crucially, enactments of the adopted registers and genres constitute 'respectful' action of different types. The principal registers are authorial, broadcast, academic, and civil/governmental. The genres are numerous and include those denoted in Spanish as *entrevista* 'interview,' *conferencia* 'conference,' *cuento* 'story, account,' *relato* 'story, tale,' *leyenda* 'legend,' *narración* 'narration,' and *historia* 'history.' Examples of published Maya books whose titles feature *tsikbal* are presented in Table 5.2 below, with the provided Spanish glosses and my own English glosses.

Table 5.2. Published Varieties of *Tsikbal*

U tsikbalo'ob mejen paalal (Martínez Huchim, et al. 1997) *Cuentos de niños* 'children's stories'
U tsikbalil juntul chak nuxib wíinik (Canché Canul 1998) *La leyenda del hombre colorado* 'the legend of the old red man'
Ma' chéen tsikbalo'obi (Canché Móo 2004) *No son sólo cuentos* 'not just stories'
Tsikbaló yo'lal u kajnáalilo'ob mayab (Cauich Muñoz 2004) *Historias sobre los habitantes del Mayab* 'histories of the inhabitants of the Mayab'
Kan maaya yéetel mejen tsikbalo'ob (May May 2002) *Aprenda maya con breves diálogos* 'learn Maya with short dialogues'

Linguistic purism may contribute to some referential extensions of the lexeme *tsikbal* 'converse, conversation.' The extensions enable speakers to avoid Spanish genre and register labels that lack suitable Maya counterparts, but I claim that purism is not the leading influence behind the extensions described here. As previous chapters have documented, architects of standardized Maya readily devise neologisms to be used in place of Spanish lexical items (e.g., the Maya *ki'imak óolal* ['happiness'] as a replacement for the Spanish *saludo* 'greeting').[5]

[5] Besides, even in cases where a relevant Maya neologism is used in place of a Spanish label for a register or discourse genre, speakers may *additionally* characterize the speech as *tsikbal*.

The more important factor is the longstanding expansiveness of *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' as a cultural model of linguistic practice. *Tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' constitutes a wide category that encompasses several other categories of language. Maya speakers have long held *asambleas* 'assemblies' and *reuniones* 'meetings,' for example, wherein Maya language provides a medium of performance for adopted Spanish roles (e.g., *comisario* 'town mayor') and textual genres (e.g., *solicitud* 'application,' *agenda* 'agenda'). Speakers regard the genred speech of those events, too, as varieties of *tsikbal*, albeit marked ones. Though I did not observe popular adoption of standardized Maya in the Peto region, I did find that speakers commonly recognized the language of standardized register calques as *tsikbal*, and referred to it with nominal and verbal forms of the lexeme. A formal, pre-recorded interview that aired on the radio was referred to as *tsikbal*, as was a live broadcast wherein announcers chatted casually before listeners.

Purism aside, it might be objected that Maya speakers simply characterize a wide array of speech event types as *tsikbal*, including many that Maya speakers conventionally denote with Spanish metapragmatic nouns. This is true, and it actually facilitates the register loan translations that I am describing. For Maya advocates and speakers in general, the public use of Maya language in esteemed institutions and media outlets indexes the respectability of Maya speakers as a segment of Yucatecan society. The *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' register's union of discourse and 'respect' is especially salient in light of the enduring stereotypes, discussed in previous chapters, that link Maya speech with low status and negative social traits. Maya advocates have utilized the *tsikbal* register as a mode for public expressions of Maya identity. Institutional and mediatized implementations of *tsikbal* are often topically focused on one premise of Maya group belonging or another, be it shared language, culture, or ancestry. In

myriad ways, as previous chapters have illustrated, the broadcast *tsikbal* of radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas formulates their Maya listeners as an ethnolinguistic group within regional, national, and global orders of identity.

Current sociolinguistic extensions of Maya *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' reverse the longstanding cultural priority on the register as a mode of social and interactional symmetry. Standardized Maya *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' populates discourse that is markedly asymmetrical by reason of its institutional placement and authoritative status. The discourse is characterized by interactional asymmetry, as well. Whereas Maya *tsikbal* is usually conducted verbally between co-present interlocutors, usage of the standardized register is currently limited to relatively monologic formats, namely published texts, academic fora, and media broadcasts. Maya purism provides an additional dimension of asymmetry. Standardized *tsikbal* is infused with neologistic and archaic lexical items, many of whose meanings are opaque to most Maya speakers.

Applications of *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' in standardized Maya evoke the *tsik* 'respect' that Maya speakers have customarily performed through the register, but also reformulate it by way of the aforementioned asymmetries. In the relatively monologic fora where standardized Maya is spoken, speakers regularly engage their unnamed addressees with the hortative *ko'one'ex tsikbal* 'let's chat.' As chapter two explains, Maya radio announcers routinely address their listeners during live broadcasts in ways that simulate face-to-face *tsikbal* between friends or neighbors. But the characteristic 'respect' of standardized Maya 'respectful conversation' is a formal and formally educated respectability. The register's users signal their own linguistic knowledge and authority, while showing respect toward their addressees in ways that are recognizable as *tsikbal*. They do this most noticeably by employing Maya lexical forms

in place of Spanish verbal courtesies that Maya speakers conventionally use in the course of *tsikbal*, such as *ma'alob k'iin* 'good day' in place of *buenos días* 'good day' and *nib óolal* (lit.,) 'participate in heart' in place of *gracias* 'thanks.'

These latter two example phrases are direct syntactic calques from Spanish populated with Maya lexical material, a basic strategy of Maya purism. In the section that follows, I show that Maya speakers also utilize a variety of syntactic calques that are not motivated by purism when translating Spanish-language registers and genres into Maya language. My analysis of such calques illuminates the degree to which developers and users of standardized Maya unconsciously apply Spanish linguistic conventions. I offer several examples of phrasal calques, followed by a focused examination of plural marking conventions in ordinary versus standardized Maya.

Syntactic Calques of Standardized Maya: Linguistic 'Completeness' and 'Correctness'

The performance of 'respect' in standardized Maya *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' draws on Spanish syntax and fashions of speaking. One example concerns references to death. In Maya radio talk and print media, the following phrase is used to report deaths: *j sa'at u kuxtal* 'his/her life was lost' (pl., *j sa'at u kuxtalo'ob* 'their lives were lost'). The phrasal construction is patterned after the Spanish *perdió su vida* 'his/her life was lost.' During my field research, I only encountered the calque in radio broadcasts. In customary Maya *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation,' speakers always used the perfective intransitive *j kíimij* 'he/she died' to refer to deaths that had occurred. When I asked radio announcers to explain the divergence between the two registers, they told me that *j sa'at u kuxtal* 'his/her life was lost' was more polite and appropriate for public speech. It would be too blunt, one announcer told me, to report someone's death on the air by simply saying *j kíimij* 'he died.' Thus, when read through Spanish syntactic and pragmatic

norms, customary Maya fashions of speaking about death in 'respectful conversation' come to be regarded as brusque and inappropriate.

Several expressions that index the formal respectability of standardized Maya for the register's users are modeled on Spanish phrases. For example, standardized Maya features calques based on the Spanish verb phrase *dar a conocer* 'to make known' (lit., to give to know), such as the passive imperfective *ku ts'a'abal k'ajóoltbil* 'it is made known' and the transitive perfective *tu ts'áaj k'ajóoltbil* 'she/he made it known.' The Spanish phrase is used to refer to various acts of making known, including those that correspond with the English verbs 'announce,' 'reveal,' 'publish,' 'release,' and 'disclose.' Usages of the Maya neologism follow suit, and appear regularly in Maya publications (print and online) and radio broadcasts. Radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas use the phrase heavily in their broadcasts. They use it especially when introducing news items or official announcements:

> *Ku ts'a'abal k'ajóoltbile'…*
> k- u ts'a'-abal k'ajóol-t- bil- e'
> IMPF A3 give-PASS know- TR- PART- TOP
> 'As for what is made known…'

The phrase's passive voice and incorporated verb of knowing (*k'ajóol-t*) help the radio announcers present themselves as neutral conveyers of information for the public. The calque seems fitting, to announcers, for referring to a range of communicative actions, including announcing, revealing, presenting, reporting, and publishing. In radio broadcasts, the practice of prefacing descriptions of news items with the topicalized phrase (*-e'*) metricalizes events of reporting, and helps mark 'the news' (*péektsilo'ob*) as a genre.

Everyday Maya speakers use different Maya forms to fulfill the same discourse functions. When recounting news stories or public announcements, speakers tend to use the verb *a'al* 'say' or the hearsay particle *bin* 'it is said.' When directly reporting the speech event in

question, speakers use the quotative *kij* (see Lucy 1993). Additionally, speakers use the verb *tsol* 'explain' for some cases where users of standard might employ *ku ts'a'abal k'ajóoltbil* 'it is made known.' Everyday Maya speakers readily understand the calqued phrase when they encounter it, in my experience, but they do not use it themselves. Many do not recognize the calque as a counterpart to the Spanish phrase, however, as the recognition depends on a command of Spanish that they may lack. When I asked about the meaning of *ku ts'a'abal k'ajóoltbil* 'it is made known,' speakers usually provided me with the Maya gloss *ku ya'ala'al* 'it is said,' rather than the Spanish *dar a conocer* that inspires the phrase.

Different factors would seem to account for the lack of popular adoption of *ku ts'a'abal k'ajóoltbil* 'it is made known.' Everyday Maya speakers' lack of interest in the calque may owe largely to the fact that other (aforementioned) established forms meet the same communitive needs. Here, I want to emphasize the importance of Maya speakers' variable engagement with Spanish in shaping patterns of usage. The architects and users of standardized Maya are educated bilinguals whose command of, and immersion in, Spanish differentiates them from everyday Maya speakers. Whereas many Maya speakers have limited literacy and conversational proficiency in Spanish, users of standardized Maya possess a mastery of Spanish that includes conversational fluency, literacy, and knowledge of specialized registers (e.g., academic, occupational). The 'it is made known' calque is not desirable for purposes of de-Castilianization in any straightforward way, as are Maya neologisms for Spanish loans like *computadora* 'computer,' which lack obvious Maya counterparts. Its appearance in standardized Maya owes instead to the register's bilingual users translating certain terms and phrases from Spanish registers and genres into Maya (e.g., standard Mexican Spanish, *las noticias* 'the news').

References to days and time in Maya radio talk diverge from local speech norms for the same reason. Normally, Maya speakers use the suffix *-ak* to refer to past days, weeks, months, and years. To refer to last Friday, for example, one adds the suffix to the Spanish *viernes* 'Friday': *viernesak* 'the Friday past.' The radio announcers, however, use wordier phrasing: *le viernes j máano'* (DET Friday PFV-pass-D2), likely on the model of the Spanish *el viernes pasado*. The referential meanings of such phrases are transparent to everyday Maya speakers. I have never observed announcers or listeners comment on the convention without my prompting.

Radio announcers use expanded time phrases in broadcasts, as well. To say 'fifteen minutes until twelve o'clock,' for example, Maya speakers typically use the following phrases.

quince minutos u ti'a'al las doce
quince minutos u ti'a'al las doce
fifteen minutes A3 for DET twelve
'fifteen minutes until twelve o'clock'

quince minutos u bin las doce
quince minutos u bin las doce
fifteen minutes A3 go DET twelve
'fifteen minutes until twelve o'clock'

Radio announcers, by contrast, use more complicated phrasing. And here, too, the bilingual announcers render Spanish structure in Maya form. The following example translates a Spanish fashion of speaking about time: *faltan quince minutos para las doce* (lit., lacking fifteen minutes for twelve).

quince minutos ku binetik u ts'a'ik las doce
quince minutos k- u binet- ik u ts'a'-ik las doce
fifteen minutes IMPF A3 lack- IMPF.TR A3 give- IMPF.TR DET twelve
'fifteen minutes until twelve o'clock'

For users of standardized Maya, syntactic calques like those I have described are vital to the pragmatic efficacy of the register calques in which they are embedded. The syntactic calques

help render Maya registers, radio talk in this case, as coherent Maya-language equivalents of socially valued registers of Spanish.

All of the standardized Maya phrases that I have presented in this section are syntactically expanded in comparison with their non-standardized counterparts. The expansions constitute a significant difference between the two registers. During my field research, however, I never encountered spontaneous commentary on the syntactic extensions of standardized Maya. When asked, Maya speakers described the constructions to me as normal Maya—*chéen maaya* 'just Maya,' they said. When pressed, speakers characterized the constructions as *máas chuka'an* 'more complete' than their non-standardized equivalents. Radio announcers told me that using 'more complete' speech helped ensure that listeners would understand the message clearly. I heard this explanation from local Maya listeners, as well. One friend told me, 'The announcers talk like that so that the people living way out there in small villages can understand.'

These answers to my questions about *máas chuka'an* 'more complete' speech presumed a quantitative correlation between linguistic form and referential efficaciousness. The conjecture (Gal and Irvine 2019) is not merely that speech with more lexical items communicates more referential content, but that it communicates referential content more successfully. Speakers' answers to my questions also presumed a hierarchy of Maya language competence with a spatial and socioeconomic distribution. It is the poor, monolingual Maya speakers in small villages on the horizon that are presumed to require speech that is 'more complete' in order to comprehend broadcast messages. But as I have explained, *mas chuka'an* 'more complete' Maya speech requires the imagined public of monolingual Maya listeners to negotiate a variety of Spanish communicative conventions.

In my field research, I encountered scant metapragmatic discourse about phrasal loan translations as such. Indeed, many even rejected my suggestions that calqued Maya phrases could, in a certain respect, be considered Spanish. Local determinations of 'Maya' versus 'Spanish,' when they were made, were based on the perceived provenance of individual words. I found this to be the case for typical Maya speakers in the Peto region, as well as for users of standardized Maya, namely the radio announcers at The Voice of the Mayas and certain schoolteachers. But as the preceding examples show, the application of Spanish norms in standardized Maya proceeds by way of syntactic and pragmatic translations, rather than discrete lexemic replacements.

The register calques I have presented involve relatively limited fields of language use and their linked roles and practices. In what follows, I organize data from Maya-language publications and my radio fieldwork to show that standardized Maya applies Spanish plural marking conventions. Whereas the register calques I have presented involve relatively limited fields of language use and their linked roles and practices, the presumed scope of the calqued plural marking norms is the 'Maya language' (*maaya t'aan*) and all of its speakers.

Plural marking is not obligatory in Yucatec Maya (Lucy 1992; Pfeiler 2009; Butler et al. 2014; Butler and Couoh Pool 2017). Lucy (1992) provides an overview:

> The basic Yucatec pattern is to disregard number, and most lexical noun phrases are Neutral in number. Plural may be distinguished facultatively (for example, for emphasis) either by lexical noun inflection or by concord with cross-referencing pronouns in the verb complex. Singular and Plural may also be signaled facultatively by a variety of specific quantitative modifiers…In the absence of any pattern of obligatory number marking these facultative signals can not be used to ground or provide any reliable information concerning inherent lexical number. Number distinctions as such simply do not have the general significance within Yucatec grammar that they do in English, and grammatical number is expressed very indifferently in comparison with English. (Lucy 1992, 55-6)

Lucy compares Yucatec Maya with English, but the basic differences hold for a comparison between Yucatec Maya and Spanish. Plural marking tends to be optional in classifier languages like Yucatec Maya, and more obligatory in non-classifier languages like Spanish and English (see Greenberg 1972; Sanches and Slobin 1973). Compared to English, Spanish exhibits a heightened preference for count nouns and relatively limited use of noun classifiers (Iannucci 1952, 69). In almost all cases, explain Bock et al., number is specified on verbs, nouns, pronouns, and adjectives in Spanish (2012, 20). Spanish verb forms are inflected for person and number.[6] Nominal plural marking is done with the suffix *-[e]s* in conjunction with multiple agreement markers (Butt, et al. 2019, 19-29).

There are exceptions, of course. Butt and co-authors identify several in their reference grammar of modern Spanish (2019, esp. 21–4). There is also flexibility in Spanish, as in English, between mass and count nouns. Spanish mass nouns may be "converted" to count nouns by way of pluralization. The pluralized noun may come to denote varieties of the same substance, such as in the phrase *los mejores vinos franceses* 'the best French wines' (example from Iannucci 1952, 43-4; see also Butt, et al. 2019, 24–5).

For our purposes, the important point is that plural marking and agreement are quite obligatory in Spanish, but optional in Yucatec Maya. Lucy observes in the latter language an "overwhelming tendency in everyday speech to limit plural inflection and concord to animate entities or to objects in one-to-one relation to an animate possessor" (1992, 55). Inanimate but "self-segmenting" entities, such as automobiles, also fall within the scope of typical pluralization in Yucatec Maya (Lucy 1992, 58-61). But while animate and animate-like entities are often

[6] See Piñeros (2017) on the person-number relation in Spanish verbs.

pluralized, they are not obligatorily pluralized. Speakers sometimes omit plural markers even when referring to multiple addressees or co-present speakers.

In comparison with typical Maya speakers, users of the standardized register overmark plurals on nouns as well as verbs. In formal print media of both the paper and internet-mediated sorts, pronominal markers are used quite consistently on nouns and verbs to indicate plurality. In radio talk at The Voice of the Mayas, the announcers mark plurals more often, and more consistently, than do local Maya listeners. This is especially the case in broadcasts that are explicitly translational from Spanish to Maya, such as news reports and public announcements.

Increased plural marking is neither deliberately employed nor commented on by the radio announcers. The radio station's listeners do not appear to take note, either. During my field research for this study, I never heard listeners mention the issue without my prompting. In response to my questions, radio announcers and listeners offered contrasting rationalizations of plural marking. The announcers readily invoked the Spanish *plural* to account for their use of the Maya plural suffixes: *tumen plural* 'because [the referent] is plural.' Unsurprisingly, Maya-speaking listeners also recognized that the suffixes mark plurality. But when offered hypothetical examples with marked and unmarked options, they deemed both options acceptable. 'It's still the same' (*laili' leti'e'*), they explained. They characterized speech marked for plurality as *mas chuka'an* 'more complete.'

Plural-marking tendencies in standardized Maya are presumably motivated by Spanish grammatical conventions. The most compelling evidence of grammatical pressure from Spanish on Maya would be (1) consistent plural inflection across 1st, 2nd, and 3rd persons; and (2) plural marking irrespective of animacy. Such evidence is readily available. Given the (Maya-Spanish) bilingual format of many publications, one may easily compare plural marking between the

Maya and Spanish versions. Rather than enumerate examples of all marking types, I focus here on nominal plural inflection. The limited focus is due partly to the fact that verbal plural inflection is complicated by syntactic ambiguity in the third person (Lucy 1992, 53). The examples provided below come from several published texts, which I cite, along with supplemental examples, in Appendix B. I organize my comparative discussion with an analytical framework developed by Lucy, though I do not employ his methodology (1992, 85-148) here. I should note that my aim here is to demonstrate Spanish plural marking conventions in standardized Maya, rather than prove any claims about the degree of conventionalization.

In his comparison of Yucatec Maya and English plural marking, Lucy (1992, 57-61) organizes noun phrases into three types according to two referential features, [± animate] and [± discrete]. The three groupings are not based directly on formal distributional patterns of the languages, nor on the referents themselves. Lucy aims, rather, "to characterize distributional regularities insofar as they represent or refer to the world in a characteristically linguistic fashion…" (1992, 58-9). So, while noun phrases of the first type refer to animate referents, typically, some noun phrases of this type "refer to referents which share the typical volitional, agentive, or motive properties of such animates as these are relevant to predication" (Lucy 1992, 58). Noun phrases semantically marked 'discrete' typically refer to "discrete objects and similar stably segmented entities," whereas noun phrases of the third type refer to "tangible materials (or substances) with malleable form and similar segmentable entities" (Lucy 1992, 58). Lucy intends for his analytical framework to be applied to other languages and grammatical categories (1992, 61).

Spanish exhibits the same pattern of typical pluralization as does English: lexical noun phrase types with the referential features [+ animate] and [– animate, + discrete] are typically

marked for plurality, while those of the [– animate, – discrete] type are normally not. Unsurprisingly, Yucatec Maya noun phrases of the [+ animate] type are regularly pluralized in the standardized register. More interesting is that the register's users commonly pluralize [– animate, + discrete] noun phrases. Examples include nouns referring to manufactured objects and entities, such as *áanalte'ob* 'books' (Sp., *libros*), *ju'uno'ob* 'papers' (Sp., *papeles*), *nu'ukulilo'ob* 'tools' (Sp., *herramientas*), najo'ob 'buildings' (Sp., *edificios*), and so on. Nouns that refer to natural materials are also marked for plurality: *tuunicho'ob* 'stones, rocks' (Sp., *piedras, rocas*), che'ob 'trees' (Sp., *árboles*), *k'áaxo'ob* 'forests' (Sp., *montes*). Thus, for both noun phrase types, the plural-marking conventions of standardized Maya correspond with those of Spanish.

We should least expect Yucatec Maya noun phrases of the [– animate, – discrete] type to be marked for plurality. And indeed, even in standardized Maya, such noun phrases are usually not pluralized. In Spanish, too, [– animate, – discrete] nouns are not countable by default. But as I explain above, they may be pluralized to denote varieties of the same material or phenomenon. Standardized Maya tellingly employs calques of these pluralized [– animate, – discrete] Spanish nouns. For example, *k'oja'anilo'ob* 'illnesses' is used to refer collectively to various kinds of illness, and *aceite'ob* 'oils' refers to different varieties of oil (from the Spanish *aceite* 'oil').[7]

However, Maya speakers customarily tend to use the Spanish *clases* 'classes' to refer to multiplicities of inanimate, indiscrete phenomena. A pertinent example appears in a published collection of Maya narratives (emphases and English translation mine):

> *Beora' u clasesil ba'al yaan, yaan diabetes, yaan tuberculosis, yaan jump'éel monton. Yaan colesterol, yaan jump'éel monton k'oja'anil ku taal.* (Monforte, et al. 2010, 193)
>
> 'Now, the classes of things that exist, there is diabetes, there is tuberculosis, there is a heap [of them]. There is cholesterol, there is a heap of illness that comes.'

[7] Normally, Maya speakers would say *aceiteso'ob*. Users of standardized Maya deem the Spanish plural *-s* unnecessary in conjunction with the Maya plural *-o'ob*.

The formula (A3 classes-REL + [noun]) is highly productive, but purist ideology inhibits the use of the Spanish lexeme *clases* 'classes' in the standardized register. Notice, in the second sentence, that the speaker does not pluralize *k'oja'anil* 'illness' when referring collectively to different sorts of illness. A user of standardized Maya would likely pluralize 'illness' here, on the model of Spanish pluralizing conventions: *hay un montón de enfermedades* 'there is a heap of illnesses.' Interestingly, the speaker cited here does use the pluralized *k'oja'anilo'ob* 'illnesses' at three points in the text (versus seven tokens of the singular *k'oja'anil*). The point holds, however, that marking nouns of this sort for plurality is not typical among Maya speakers.

Table 5.3 summarizes typical pluralization with respect to referential features in customary Yucatec Maya, standardized Yucatec Maya, Spanish, and English (note: this table is a modified reproduction of Table 12 in Lucy, 1992, 61, which compares Yucatec Maya and English).

Table 5.3. Typical Pluralization of Lexical Noun Phrases

	Lexical noun phrase type		
Features:	[+ animate]	[– animate] [+ discrete]	[– animate] [– discrete]
Language, marking			
Yucatec Maya, plural	yes	no	no
Standardized Yucatec Maya, plural	yes	yes	no
Spanish, plural	yes	yes	no
English, plural	yes	yes	no

Heightened plural marking in standardized Maya reflects Maya speakers' increasing habituation to Spanish language and training through formal education. In a reanalysis of Butler, Jaeger, and Bohnemeyer's (2014) psycholinguistic study of Yucatec Maya plural marking, Butler and Couoh Pool (2017) found a relationship between education and the production of

plural morphology in Yucatec Maya-Spanish bilinguals.

The ongoing conventionalization of plural marking is readily apparent and codified in *Normas* (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014), the book of Maya writing norms discussed above. In their formal discussion of the topic, the authors stipulate the use of plural markers by using the causative constructions *ku k'a'abetkuunsiko'ob* (lit., 'they cause to be necessary') and *ku k'a'abetkuunsa'al* (lit., 'is caused to be necessary'). The constructions are appropriately glossed in English as 'requires' and 'is required,' respectively. The bound morpheme *-[o']ob* 'is required' in order to pluralize a noun, the authors explain, and verbs 'require' up to three pluralizing morphemes. Interestingly, the book's Spanish rendering of the discussion is less prescriptive: The Yucatec morpheme *-[o']ob* 'is used' (*se utiliza*) to pluralize a noun, and verbs 'can use' (*pueden utilizar*) up to three pluralizing morphemes (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014, 134-6, 298-9). The Maya plural suffix *o'ob* is not characterized as optional in either language version.

Throughout the text, Maya nouns and verbs with plural referents and arguments are typically, though not always, inflected for plurality. Pronominal markers are used on verbs to indicate plural arguments in the first, second, and third person. Third-person references to plural inanimate entities, as well as animates, are usually marked with the plural *-o'ob*. The text even pluralizes linguistic terms, such as Maya neologisms used for parts of speech (e.g., *ya'abkunsajilo'ob* 'pluralizers' [lit., 'things that make many']; *bixilo'ob* 'adjectives' [lit., 'the hows']).

To illustrate the authors' treatment of plurals in the text, in Spanish and Maya, I have reproduced the introductory summaries for 'Lexical categories of the Maya language' section. I have underlined the noun phrases with plural referents in both versions, in order to facilitate a

comparison between the two texts (ellipses in original). The English translation that follows is mine.

> *Categorías léxicas de la lengua maya*
> *Se toma el acuerdo de la posibilidad de escribir diferentes tipos de conceptos en lengua maya, tales como los nombres, los verbos, los adjetivos, los adverbios, los nexos y los elementos discontinuos. Seguidamente, se presenta una breve explicación referente a la conceptualización de dichos grupos de palabras.* (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014, 217)
>
> *U jejeláas t'aanilo'ob maayat'aan*
> *Jjéets' u tuukulile' je'el u béeytal u ts'íibta'al jejeláas jets'tuukulo'ob ich maayat'aane', je'el bix le k'aaba'obo', le péeksilo'obo', le bixilo'obo', le jelbesajbixilo'obo', le tsaytuukulo'ob yéetel le ka'amáat t'aano'obo'. Te' ts'íibo'ob ku taala', yaan u bin u jáan tsóolol bix u na'ata'al le jejeláas t'aano'ob ts'o'ok u ya'ala'alo'.* (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014, 53)
>
> 'Lexical categories of the Maya language'
> 'Agreement is reached on the possibility of writing different types of concepts in the Maya language, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, links and discontinuous elements. Then, a brief explanation regarding the conceptualization of these groups of words is presented.'

As the evident structural similarity between the two versions indicates, the text's authors have striven for denotational parity between Maya and Spanish. One may, at a glance, compare the underlined Spanish and Maya segments for the suffixes *-[e]s* and *-o'ob*, respectively, and see that this denotational parity extends to the domain of plural marking. In fact, the Maya counterpart to every single pluralized Spanish lexeme is also marked for plurality. I organize the forms and provide English glosses in Table 5.4 below. I have provided more literal glosses for the Maya neologisms in order to highlight their denotational ambiguity.[8] Notice that *seguidamente/te' ts'íibo'ob ku taala'* 'next' is a counterexample: a non-pluralized Spanish noun phrase with a pluralized Maya complement. It is also a counterexample in the sense that the Maya calque is intelligible to everyday speakers, whereas the others cited in the table are not.

[8] Chapter three investigates the issue of denotational transparency in standardized Maya.

Table 5.4. 'Lexical Categories of the Maya Language' of *Normas* Text

Spanish lexeme	**Maya neologism (with literal gloss)**
categorías léxicas 'lexical categories'	*u jejeláas t'aanilo'ob* 'language differences'
conceptos 'concepts'	*jets'tuukulo'ob* 'secured thoughts'
nombres 'nouns'	*k'aaba'ob* 'names'
verbos 'verbs'	*péeksilo'ob* 'movers'
adjetivos 'adjectives'	*bixilo'ob* 'hows'
adverbios 'adverbs'	*jelbesajbixilo'ob* 'how-changers'
nexos 'relations'	*tsaytuukulo'ob* 'spliced thoughts'
elementos discontinuos 'discontinuous elements'	*ka'amáat t'aano'ob* 'double-order languages'
seguidamente 'next'	*te' ts'íibo'ob ku taala'* 'the coming writings'
grupos de palabras 'groups of words'	*jejeláas t'aano'ob* 'different languages'

Source: Briceño Chel and Can Tec (2014)

Interestingly, the parity in plural marking between the Maya and Spanish versions of *Normas* decreases slightly in longer stretches of text. At some points, it appears, norms of Maya speech persist amid pressure from Spanish pluralizing conventions. In the text's presentation of the *normalización/jets'tuukulo'ob* 'standardization' concept, for example, the Maya version uses singular verbs in some places where the Spanish version uses pluralized noun phrases. For instance, whereas the Spanish text refers to "*las dimensiones*" 'the dimensions' of language standardization, the Maya text refers to "*bix u beeta'al*" 'how [language standardization] is done' (Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014, 20, 176). Similarly, the Spanish text refers to "*las argumentaciones teóricas*" 'the theoretical arguments' of "*agentes normalizadores*" 'standardizing agents,' while the Maya text refers to "*bix u tuukul*" 'how [these agents] think.'

Here, the Maya verb *tuukul* 'think' is inflected for the third person, but not marked for plurality. The lengthy Maya replacement for *agentes normalizadores* 'standardizing agents,' however, is pluralized in the text: "*tuláakal le máaxo'ob táakpajo'ob te' jets't'aanil ichil le meyajo'ob beeta'ab uti'al u béeychajal le jets't'aana'*" 'all the people that participated in the standardizing work done in order to make the standardization happen.'

Maya speakers do not interpret plural marking in terms of purity or mixedness. Although I did not encounter unprompted metapragmatic discourse about the topic, the questions I posed to speakers elicited the value of *completeness* in language, thereby holding out, implicitly, Spanish as more referentially or conceptually complete in its denotation, which is to say, as a denotational metalanguage for (standardized) Maya. As I explain above, most speakers evaluated my hypothetical plural examples of marked and unmarked alternatives as equally acceptable, but described the marked constructions as *mas chuka'an* 'more complete' than their unmarked counterparts. Maya radio announcers also invoked the property of completeness in reply to my questions about plurality, but did so negatively. For these schooled, bilingual users of standardized Maya, my unmarked plural examples were *ma' chuka'ani'* 'not complete' and therefore incorrect Maya.

The ideological link between perceived linguistic completeness and correctness is evident in other conventions of standardized Maya. In radio broadcasts at The Voice of the Mayas, announcers tend to fully enunciate preverbal markers, which Maya speakers regularly contract (e.g., *táan u bin* → *tun bin* 'she is going'). When I asked radio announcers about the tendency, which was not a formal policy of the station, they explained that pronouncing the complete preverbal markers improved the comprehensibility of their broadcast messages. *Normas*, the Maya writing norms book published in 2014 (after the fieldwork interaction here described),

proscribes linguistic contractions of any type in “non-literary” texts: ‘Contractions may only be used when writing a literary text of any type, either as a literary style of the author or for the dialogues of the characters in the work’ (my translation; Briceño Chel and Can Tec 2014, 215).

The assumption is that Maya discourse must explicitly express the full underlying denotational structure of the language in order to be correct. As a prescription of standardized Maya, linguistic ‘completeness’ doubly marginalizes common Maya speakers. It does so first by prohibiting the linguistic contractions that permeate spoken Maya. Second, as an avenue for Castilianization, ‘completeness’ encompasses denotational structures of Spanish origin over which most Maya speakers have relatively limited control.

Conclusion

The data presented here demonstrate a substantial application of Spanish norms in the emerging Maya standard at multiple levels of language. The development of standardized Maya is channeled through genres and registers of Spanish. Syntactic and pragmatic calques of Spanish mediate the entry of Maya language into these genres and registers. The mediations, which have been vital to the expansion of Maya language into new fields of discourse, would appear contrary to ideologies of Maya purism. But whereas lexical borrowing inspires pervasive metapragmatic discourse on ‘mixed’ language and culture, I found that the Castilianizing aspects of register calques are generally not identified as such by Maya speakers. For the most part, developers and users of standardized Maya automatically apply the Spanish conventions.

While I have presented significant Spanish influences on Maya language, I have also shown that register calques of standardized Maya do not simply mold Maya language and speakers with Spanish templates. I have described a dual process of Castilianization and Mayanization, wherein adopted Spanish norms are mediated by Maya linguistic registers and

implemented in the service of Maya ethnolinguistic advocacy. Extensions of the Maya *tsikbal* 'respectful conversation' register, in particular, have enabled the translational integration of valued registers of Spanish into Maya discourse. Yet, as I have explained, the integrations reshape the Maya matrix register to some degree. By way of intertwined processes of standardization and mediatization, sociolinguistic extensions of Maya *tsikbal* reverse the customary cultural emphasis on the register as a mode of social-interactional symmetry.

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