

Political Organization and Texts: Legislative Developments in Ecuador

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A recent rewriting of the Constitution in Ecuador resulted in the naming of Quichua as an official language of intercultural communication. This paper examines the social processes that produced such an update, as well as how these historical developments affected the co-text of crafting this legislative piece. I also consider how wordings of the document itself comment on the history of its production, as well as how this text artifact mediates future discourses about it. Through understanding this event as one point in an extended history of efforts by Indigenous groups, I consider how this updated draft of a constitution is a noteworthy step towards increased rights.

Introduction

The time is just after 1:00 am on July 28, 2008. Several members of the National Constituent Assembly, the group of legislators in charge of drafting Ecuador's new constitution, leave the room in protest. Tensions are running high, with insults being hurled in all directions. Some people are nearly in tears. Just a few hours before, members of the prominent pro-Indigenous rights political party, Pachakutik, had circulated an important document. Inscribed on this paper were the signatures of 66 assemblymen and assemblywomen who had pledged to make Quichua an official language of Ecuador, alongside Spanish. After signing, however, some supporters changed their minds. When it came time to vote, the proposal received only 38 votes out of the 99 individuals present. The opposition clapped, and the supporters were inconsolably upset. Why did people break their word that they would vote for the bill? Did legislators who changed their mind and stopped the passage of this bill in fact commit a low blow *un golpe bajo*? Who was to blame? Several members accused other voters of being disingenuous. Blame, however, was extended beyond those present in the room. The government in general, including Rafael Correa, the President of Ecuador, was described as influencing the vote. In the newspaper article from which these details are reconstructed, assemblyman Carlos Pilamunga expressed such broader frustrations: "It's worse when the President of the Republic uses our symbols and language to manipulate and trick our people. We're going to stop this." [*y es peor cuando el Presidente de la República usa nuestros símbolos e idioma para manipular y*

engañar a nuestros pueblos, eso lo vamos a parar] (account extrapolated from “El Quichua negado” in *El Universo*, 2008, my translation).

In Ecuador, Indigenous groups have long been subject to discrimination. Though Ecuadorian society has advanced much from the cruel and exploitative labor systems of the past, many Indigenous individuals remain poor, marginalized, and victims of daily discrimination. Such inequality is common throughout the Andes of South America. In comparison to other countries with substantial Indigenous populations, however, the case of Ecuador is promising. Through mobilization, nonviolent protest, and political maneuvering, Indigenous groups have successfully gained rights and representation from the government, at least officially (cf. Jackson & Warren, 2005). Social organization by Indigenous groups has yielded large, powerful organizations like CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador). Such efforts support increased political representation, as shown by the successes of the political party Pachakutik, whose main platform is the support of Indigenous issues. This type of political organization is partially responsible for the numerous agricultural, educational, and linguistic rights gained by Indigenous groups.

Much talk about rights and Indigenous movements has focused on Quichua as a single, emblematic language of Indigenous peoples (though the label “Quichua” also refers to a particular Indigenous group in addition to a variety of language). In reality, numerous ethnic groups exist under the “Indigenous” label, speaking various languages like Shuar, Waorani, Záparo, numerous varieties of Quichua, and, of course, Spanish. Further, the concept itself of “language” is utilized as an ideological construct, given that people blend linguistic signs from seemingly discrete codes in socially meaningful ways (Agha, 2009; Silverstein, 1998). However, “Quichua” is the only such code to have undergone governmental standardization (King & Haboud, 2007). This prioritizing, at the exclusion of other Indigenous codes, is just one of many examples that illustrate how ideologies hold that Quichua is a language singularly associated with Indigenous groups, thus “erasing” diacritics that may index different social images (Irvine & Gal, 2000). For their part, many dominant Indigenous organizations have also rallied around Quichua as an emblem of their struggles. The process of obscuring linguistic variation has led to consideration of Quichua not only as an oppressed language, but also an oppressor language (King & Hornberger, 2006). Through Indigenous leaders’ promotion of Quichua as the de facto official language of Indigenous individuals in Ecuador, and through attempts to officialize its status, Quichua is frequently viewed as an emblem of Indigenous rights.

This paper examines the most recent movement to make Quichua an official language of Ecuador. Such legislation can be best understood as one part of a larger political process of rewriting Ecuador’s Constitution in 2008. It is also a result of broader struggle for human rights that has persisted in Ecuador for decades. Though this 2008 attempt at officialization of Quichua ultimately failed, the movement ushered in new constitutional recognitions of Indigenous groups. Many years ago, Cooper (1989) proposed a framework for approaching topics under the theme of “language planning.” He asked scholars to consider “(1) What actors (2) attempt to influence what behaviors (3) of which people (4) for what ends (5) under what conditions (6) by what means (7) through what decision making process (8) with what effect?” (p. 98). In order to understand how Quichua could be designated

an official language in Ecuador, one must consider not only the numerous political actors who met to draft a new Constitution, but also how their stances have been shaped by a history of politics, discrimination, Indigenous representation, and ideologies. In other words, the components of this framework focus on studying how social processes yield language policy decisions.

Through an analysis of the historical processes of social protest in Ecuador, I analyze how political changes have yielded recent rewritings in the Ecuadorian Constitution. By analyzing newspaper accounts of the Constitutional meetings, I not only hope to update a trajectory of rights gained by Indigenous groups, but to also illustrate why these changes are, in fact, progressive. Central to this argument will be that ideologies about “nations” and “languages” have shaped Indigenous politics in Ecuador for decades (cf. Becker, 2008). The single event of Constitutional rewriting, then, will be considered a byproduct of numerous previous struggles for Indigenous representation. Through linking to other historical events, one can see how changes in the Constitution are posited at a given point in time and that they simultaneously reflect events of the past. They are also affected by, as well as mediate, future responses by various actors. This paper argues that the current Constitution is itself a reflexive commentary on prior social actions. While such text artifacts are often entextualized, or presented as cohesive, separate units of analysis, they are indexical of the processes that led to their emergence (Silverstein & Urban, 1996). The final form in which a document emerges not only comments on that past, but also mediates future discourses about it. The revision of Ecuador’s latest Constitution is conveys such social processes.

Indigenous Movements and Nations in Ecuador

“Whereas education is an important avenue for social mobility and advancement, educational policies have long served to repress Quechua and Quechua speakers” (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004, p. 28). Such a quote suggests how ideologies about languages and education are indicative of a broader Indigenous movement in Ecuador. In Ecuador’s recent history, Indigenous mobilization over nationalism, educational and linguistic control, and agrarian reform has united seemingly disparate groups. In Ecuador, Indigenous groups have challenged any traditional notions about who constitutes a “nation.” In this context, as with many cases around the world, the idea of a given nation fails to coincide with that of a nation-state. As Blommaert (2006) writes, a nation is merely a product of nationalism, which itself is only developed as an ideological process. Nationalism involves an imagination of how people cohere as a group (Anderson, 2006). In Ecuador, beliefs about nations have been promoted, re-written, and strategically deployed both towards and by Indigenous groups. “Nation,” for example, is a metacultural label for Indigenous groups of various heritages within Ecuador. These imaginations are often emphasized when actors socially organize (King & Hornberger, 2006). Thus, this paper addresses how imaginations of “nationalism” are not abstract phenomena, but rather how they are concretely mobilized and even inserted into highly performative documents like Constitutions.

This consideration supports how Harvey (1990) emphasizes that nations do not freeze and continue throughout time in their original forms. Nations and

nationalisms stabilize, change, and reformulate over time and space. Such changes affect and are affected by a number of individuals and institutions, such as politically organized entities, multinational corporations, and a host of individual actors (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002). In fact, ideologies about nationalism frequently emerge as reactions against the state (Blommaert, 2006). Various state actors, as well as movements opposed to the state, often focus on vernacular languages and education to convey a united community (Anderson, 1983). A single linguistic variety, then, is frequently imagined to coincide with a single nation or group, but it often does not (Urciuoli, 1995). In Ecuador, Indigenous movements are often linked to themes of nations vis-à-vis the state, and Indigenous languages-vis-à-vis Spanish. As I hope to show, ideologies about nations and languages have been salient in Ecuador's social movements for many years. The current re-writing of the Constitution shows a culmination of such beliefs.

In Ecuador, Indigenous groups have focused on achieving political, economic, and social independence. Such organization occurs against traditional holds on power in society. In nation-states in Latin America more generally, much economic disparity exists between the rich and the poor. Unfortunately, Ecuador is no exception, as indicated by the World Bank's estimates that 38% of the population lives at the national poverty line (World Bank, 2010). Scholars have noted how wealth is often controlled by powerful white elites, many of whom own large amounts of land and have successful business ventures (e.g. Hanratty, 1991; Becker, 2008). Many self-identifying Indigenous individuals find themselves at the other end of the socio-economic spectrum; they and poor mestizos are often socially and economically marginalized by society. With such traditional stratification, upward mobilization becomes difficult for lower classes.

Through increased organization and political power, however, Indigenous groups in Ecuador have become some of the most successful in the Andes at gaining reform. As Becker (2008) writes, seeds for political organization and mobilization can only be understood within a history of social processes leading to them. While one can trace Indigenous mobilization in Ecuador throughout history, the 1980s onward was an especially progressive era for Indigenous rights. As King & Haboud (2007) note, Indigenous political movements have yielded many advances in language and educational policy in Ecuador. These policies, then, are best understood when placed within a broader socio-historical context of Indigenous organization. It is within these co-texts that linguistic policies are produced.

Blommaert (2006) notes how ideologies about "nationality" often develop in response to the state and dominant groups. Significantly, Indigenous groups in Ecuador often refer to themselves as "nations." As King (2001) writes, in order to underscore their unique political developments from dominant populations, as well as their own beliefs vis-à-vis the broader community, Ecuadorian Indigenous groups often self-identify as *naciones* (p. 35). In Ecuador, boundaries between self-proclaimed Indigenous nations are often delineated through the beliefs and practices of the people within them. Perhaps one of the most salient features used to distinguish Indigenous groups, however, are ideologies about homogeneous languages. As Agha (2007) writes, perceivable signs often become linked to the collective social personae of groups. When signs are widely understood as singularly indexical of a given group, they are considered emblems. Emblems, then, are enregistered; they commonly reflect a salient group membership to a wide social

domain. In this case, ideologies about discrete “languages” uphold linguistic varieties as enregistered emblems of nations. The discrete language (e.g. “Quichua,” and not the various registers through which communication usually occurs) is often believed to represent its speakers as a group. Thus, various nations may identify and be identified through device of language.

As King (2001) notes, geographically disparate groups, such as residents of Otavalo in the Northern Andes and those of Saraguro in the Southern Andes, are often considered the same nation because both are believed to speak Quichua. In other parts of the region, ideologies of linguistic varieties as emblems of groups distinguish Haorani and Shuar groups. Thus, notions of nations, key to political organization, are undergirded by ideologies about a linguistic variety as an emblem of a particular group.

Furthermore, pan-Indigenous organizations like CONAIE support ideologies about Quichua as an emblem of Indigenous individuals as a whole. Initiatives like the recent movement for Quichua officialization have linked Indigenous recognition with the recognition of “a” Quichua language. Quichua, then, becomes an ideologically salient emblem of Ecuadorian Indigenous groups collectively. In another example, the only Indigenous linguistic variety to have been standardized was Quichua, which occurred during the 1980s. Such initiatives mask the languages, varieties, and registers that are spoken by different Indigenous individuals, but this designation is often strategically useful. This emphasis is even evident in CONAIE’s founding. Legislation enacted during the 1980s, then, led to greater emphasis on Indigenous languages and education.

As Indigenous groups began to demand political power, and multinational corporations became more interested in Ecuador, discourses of multiculturalism began to ensue. Minaya-Rowe (1986) writes how governments in the Andes prioritized economic and technological advancement during the 1980s. In such endeavors, she writes, ideologies about advancing a national citizenry, or some form of a unified population, were commonly held as essential. These ideologies promote that, without considering all sectors of the population as a national unit, the country would be unable to move forward. Thus, we can see ideologies about what a nation is, and who it includes, in government policy. Focusing on education and linguistic backgrounds resulted, then, at least in part, from prioritized calls for more democratic, inclusive states. During this time period, however, experts on Indigenous education began to collaborate throughout the Andes. Pan-regional unity helped provide resources to enact legislation (King & Haboud, 2007). Such movements linked together Indigenous groups from across the Andes. These actions, then, also promoted Indigenous unity over ideologies holding that nations coincide with nation-state boundaries.

Several education-oriented pieces of legislation emerged in Ecuador from this collaboration. On January 12th, 1981, Decree No. 000529 officialized bilingual intercultural education in both Spanish and Quichua in majority Indigenous areas. A new Ecuadorian Constitution followed up on these changes in 1983. Article 27 announced that “the educational systems of predominantly Indigenous zones should use Quichua (or the community’s respective language) as the primary language of education, and Spanish as the language of intercultural relations” (King & Haboud, 2007, p. 59). Thus, one can see legal focus on linguistic varieties, Indigenous groups, and education, as well as ideologies linking them to separate

spheres, during the earlier phase of organization. It is from this co-text that such officializations emerged.

Also, in order to implement these policies, the National Directorate of Bilingual Indigenous Intercultural Education (DINEIB) was created in 1988. This organization was established for directing and organizing schools in areas with a population that was more than half Indigenous. Some tasks of the organization include creating pedagogy for schools, coordinating directorates located in regions throughout the country, implementing educational programs, and training teachers (Krainer, 1996). Thus, in an important development for Ecuadorian society, Indigenous groups increased control over their own education, with less governmental interference than ever before.

Furthermore, describing developments in the 1980s is incomplete without understanding how CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) emerged on the national scene. In 1980, Indigenous representatives met to create CONACNIE, or the National Coordinating Council of the Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador. This organization was formed out of two smaller groups seeking Indigenous rights. Through promoting ethno-nationalist discourses, and partnering with non-governmental organizations and transnational agencies, these organizations were able to draw from the increasing interest of the international community (Becker, 2008). Though there was tension between groups, especially between those from the Amazon and from the Highlands, unity was deemed key to Indigenous struggle. "If we do not reinforce our unity, there is a danger that various maneuvers would divide us, and we would lose our presence," observed the organization (as cited in Becker, 2008, p. 168). Ideologies about various Indigenous groups, groups who often considered themselves separate nations, as well as ideologies about how these nations could be unified, actually bolstered Indigenous organization. Even though these groups were sometimes quite disparate, reactions against the dominant majority defined and continually redefined notions of groups. The founding of Indigenous groups placed a pan-Indigenous nationalism at the forefront of endeavors.

In 1986, representatives met and organized CONAIE to replace CONACNIE as an unwavering pan-Indigenous movement. Some initial platforms of the organization included land, economic development, education and Indigenous languages, traditional medicine, and promoting diplomatic relations with the Sandinista government in Nicaragua (Becker, 2008). Thus, language, especially Quichua, as well as education, were pivotal to CONAIE from the beginning, and international influence on Indigenous rights can be seen from early on. Since then, CONAIE has become one of the most powerful and successful Indigenous organizations on the continent. CONAIE and its leaders have been pivotal for gaining rights for Indigenous groups in the most recent Constitution. It is noteworthy that efforts by DINEIB and CONAIE have both focused largely on Quichua as an isolated language, with less consideration of other Indigenous linguistic varieties. From the beginnings of Indigenous organization, support for Indigenous languages was largely support for Quichua, in part because of the comparatively high number of Quichua-speakers. It is easy to see how Quichua may have served as a unifying emblem of Indigenous groups.

Regardless of whether "the Quichua language" serves an emblem of Indigenous organization in general, or of Quichua-speaking nations in particular, such

ideologies can be socially consequential. As Haboud (1998) writes, for many Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, being Quichua is synonymous with speaking Quichua. According to Hornberger & Coronel-Molina (2004), Quichua speakers often identify more as speakers of the language Quichua instead of as "Quichuas." As Hornberger (1988) notes, these ideologies often influence important political decisions. People's ideologies, then, and actions linked to them are never power-neutral. Some groups greatly value Quichua and the ability to speak it (King, 2001). Others, however, fall victim to the stigma associated with Quichua, and these ideologies affect individuals' desires for language study (Hornberger, 1988). Thus, linguistic ideologies affect not only whether people choose to speak Quichua, but also whether they desire for their children to be educated in Quichua. Spanish, it is often believed, allows for greater social mobility (Hornberger and Coronel-Molina, 2004). It is in this climate, then, through such stigma, that many Indigenous leaders have embraced Quichua as integral to movements for social justice. It has been, after all, the focus of much discrimination by majority populations. As Tollefson (2006) writes, language policy is one manifestation of how social inequality is produced and maintained. Methods aimed at reducing linguistic inequality, then, are parts of broader movements for social justice. As most of these movements have focused on Quichua (and not other Indigenous languages), Quichua has become a powerful emblem in the struggle for Indigenous rights.

Given these ideologies about linguistic varieties, one can easily see how political movements involve efforts to promote, nationalize, and even standardize Indigenous languages. As Hornberger (1994) writes, there are generally two approaches to language planning discussed in the language planning literature: policy planning that focuses on form, and cultivation planning that focuses on function. There are also three types of language planning, including status (on uses of linguistic varieties), acquisition (on language learners), and corpus planning (on tokens within presumably stable linguistic varieties.) Within this typology, the recent movement to make Quichua an official language of Ecuador falls largely on form and status planning. Haugen's (1983) work helps define status planning: namely, how a form is given a particular stature in society.

As Cooper (1989) notes, officialization is a "formal" allocation of a language to a particular function. Citing Stewart (1968), Cooper notes that others define officializing a language as designating it to "function as a legally appropriate language for all politically and culturally representative purposes on a nationwide basis" (p. 100). The act of making a linguistic variety official, by law, allows the constitution to specify the function of the given language. In the example of Quichua, linking an emblematic linguistic variety to domains outside of Indigenous communities would promote the language at a national level. As we will see with the recent Constitutional meetings, such far-reaching consequences of officialization were responsible, in part, for the movement's failure.

Additionally, though large scale social movements of language officialization may seem to be a product of only those powerful enough to be involved in governmental legislation, numerous individuals at many different levels of society contribute to policy decisions (Ricento & Hornberger, 1996). Social movements in general, and focuses on language policy in particular, involve various layers of actors, levels, and processes. It is within this larger social movement that ideologies about language in Ecuador, and efforts towards language policy, have emerged. To

focus on policy, then, is to focus on one part of a broader political movement of which many people are a part. While a linguistic variety often becomes an emblem of group struggle, many social processes lead to language movements. The recent failure of the move to declare Quichua an official language of Ecuador is a particularly useful case for such study. This case of language policy is entangled in, and results from, a broader nationalist Indigenous movement in Ecuador. Such history is useful as I now turn to consider how a vote on Quichua as an official language today is influenced by, as well as a comment on, social movements of the past.

Recent Social Movements in Ecuador Related to Quichua

Building on the foundation that took form in the 1980s, political representation of Indigenous groups has increased in congress since that time. Such results fall under the rubric promoted by CONAIE since the organization's founding: a focus on lobbying for a constitution that recognizes unity in diversity within a plurinational state, including the recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity (CONAIE, 1989). Through increases in representation in the government, and the successful mobilization of Indigenous groups, major gains have been made. The Constitution passed in 1998 included several important articles related to Indigenous rights:

Art. 1 (...) Spanish is the official language. Quichua, Shuar, and other ancestral languages are of official use for Indigenous peoples (...) [*El castellano es el idioma oficial. El quichua, el shuar y los demás idiomas ancestrales son de uso oficial para los pueblos indígenas (...).*]

Art. 83 The Indigenous communities form a part of the unique and indivisible Ecuadorian state. [*Los pueblos indígenas (...) forman parte del Estado ecuatoriano, único e indivisible.*]

Art. 191 The authorities of the Indigenous peoples carry out functions of justice, applying norms and their own proceedings for the solution of internal conflict in conformity with their customs or customary law insofar as they are never in conflict with the Constitution and laws (of the Ecuadorian state). [*Las autoridades de los pueblos indígenas ejercerán funciones de justicia, aplicando normas y procedimientos propios para la solución de conflictos internos de conformidad con sus costumbres o derecho consuetudinario, siempre que no sean contrarios a la Constitución y las leyes (...).*] ("Los indígenas buscan," 2008, my translation).

Thus, within the 1998 Constitution, one can see acknowledgement of other languages and limited recognition of Indigenous groups and legal norms. Significantly, though, this Constitution still linked Indigenous languages like Quichua and Shuar to use only for Indigenous peoples. These languages are recognized only in relation to the groups that are believed to speak them. Furthermore, this Constitution recognizes that Indigenous communities exist, but falls short of granting them any additional recognition or rights. The 1998 Constitution will be an important basis for assessing whether the 2008 Constitutional changes are substantial in comparison.

Since 1998 Indigenous and social groups have continued to progress. In 2001, there were more than 400 Indigenous representatives in various provinces of the

country, with many working at the municipal level and on city councils (Acosta, 2001). In the national government, political parties like that of Pachakutik have gained office, and candidates for office are often highly involved with CONAIE (King and Haboud, 2007). Through increasing political support, several recognitions of Indigenous rights occurred during the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s: ratification of the International Labor Organization convention number 169, which protected collective rights of Indigenous peoples throughout the world; recognition of the National Indigenous Health Directorate in support of Indigenous healing practices; and changing the name of the Ministry of Education and Culture to the Ministry of Education and Cultures in recognition of the multiculturalism in the state (King and Haboud, 2007, p. 71).

Furthermore, any discussion of political movements related to linguistic varieties in Ecuador would be incomplete without consideration of the election of President Rafael Correa in 2006. Democratically elected in a period of political turmoil, Correa became the eighth president of Ecuador in just ten years. From the beginning, he acknowledged his support of Indigenous groups. Correa has publicly announced in Indigenous villages that the government should be “para los indios,” or “for Indians” (King and Haboud, 2007). He has attended Indigenous ceremonies, such as one establishing a local Indigenous intercultural committee. This event welcomed renowned Indigenous rights leaders like Rigoberta Menchú and Evo Morales. Ecuadorian Indigenous leader Segundo Neptalí Ulcuango Ayala, who is 88 years old, describes the significance of Correa’s visit:

“For the first time in the history of this commune, a President of the Republic recognizes the labor of an Indigenous woman and her revolutionary struggle for earth, water, roads, and life. That is the flag of the Indigenous movement. We ask that the government administers the country in favor of everyone, and especially of those traditionally marginalized. [*Por primera vez en la historia de esta comuna, un Presidente de la República reconoce la labor de una mujer indígena y su lucha revolucionaria por la tierra, el agua, la vialidad y la vida. Es la bandera del movimiento indígena. Pedimos al Gobierno que administre el país en favor de todos y, especialmente, de los marginados de siempre.*]” (El Comercio, 8/10/2009, my translation).

In fact, President Correa himself was responsible for beginning the development of the new Constitution. After his election, he called for a referendum to elect a Constitutive Assembly that would be charged with writing a new constitution. On April 15, 2007, the referendum passed with the support of over 80 percent of the population. That September, elections were held for those who would serve on the Assembly. PAIS Alliance, Correa’s political party, won the majority of the 130 seats (Villavicencio, 2008). Within this backdrop, individuals met to produce a particular legislative text artifact.

Drafting a New Constitution

In November 2007, the Assembly began to meet with the time constraint that the new Constitution be written within six months. Under this legislative climate, in the weeks leading up to July 20, 2008, the members from the Indigenous party

Pachakutik, as well some members of PAIS, negotiated making Quichua an official language of the country. Building on an era of increased political representation of Indigenous groups, pro-Indigenous representatives played important roles in the drafting of the new Constitution. Legislators had sketched out details of the amendment for weeks. On July 19th, Alexis Mera, the legal secretary of the President, had been working late on the final stages of the new proposals. His job was to verify whether all proposed changes were allowed and constitutional; the legality of any Constitutional change was imperative. The President arrived at the university to commence what became a five-hour meeting. After giving a congratulatory speech to the assembly members, he entered into discussion with them. A prominent supporter of the Quichua officialization movement, and member of his majority party PAIS, Monica Chuji, showed a paper with 68 signatures in support of the resolution to make Quichua an official language. Rolando Panchana, also an assemblyman from PAIS, emphasized the financial difficulties of enforcing the measure, as well as issues of practicality in its application (De madrugada, 2008,). Making Quichua an official language would involve teaching Quichua in all schools in the country, as well as issuing all public governmental information in both Quichua and Spanish. Such a change was obviously no small detail.

Thus, we arrive at the scene that began this paper. According to reports, some members of PAIS struck a deal with anti-officialization members of other parties: if the other members agreed to eliminate text recognizing same-sex unions as family, an issue some members of PAIS wanted stricken from the Constitution, those same representatives would agree to change their vote for making Quichua as an official language. And quickly, then, the motion failed. Emotions ensued. One representative of Pachakutik, Gilberto Guamangate, remarked on how members of the coalition PAIS had been disingenuous: “We have been consistent, we gave our word of honor. The Indians never lie, but they (PAIS) lied to us [*Hemos sido consecuentes, dimos la palabra de honor, los indios jamás mentimos, pero ellos (PAIS) nos mintieron*] (El quichua negado, 2008, my translation).

An article in the Guayaquil newspaper El Universo notes that it was the resistance of some members of PAIS to making Quichua an official language that kept the Assembly in session until the wee hours of the morning (“De madrugada”, 2008). In the end, the 21 representatives that changed their vote eliminated the possibility of making Quichua an official language. As members of Pachakutik burst out of the room, the opposition applauded. Other supporters blamed the President’s legal secretary, Alexis Mera, for constantly manipulating the text of the reform (“De madrugada”, *ibid*). One representative from the party RED, Martha Roldós, accused the pro-officialization PAIS members, some of whom also left the room in protest, of “desecrating democracy” (*irrespetando la democracia*) (“De madrugada,” *ibid*”).

After recovering from the heated rejection of that fateful Sunday, the President of the Assembly, Fernando Cordero, considered how members could alternatively consider Quichua as a second language of Ecuador (“Las copias,” 2008). The divisive, pointed exchange had left members so bitter that the situation would need to be remedied. Members of Pachakutik, PAIS, and the political alliance of the Popular Democratic Movement (*Movimiento Popular Democrático*) were encouraged to resume talks. After continued debate, a conciliatory action was reached. Quichua could, in fact, still be an official language, but one of official intercultural relations.

At 3:00 am on Thursday, July 24, the revised amendment was passed with the votes of 88 members of the National Constituent Assembly. The text read as follows:

Art. 2 (...) Spanish is the official language of Ecuador; Spanish, Kichwa, and Shuar are official languages of intercultural relations.... [*El castellano es el idioma oficial del Ecuador; el castellano, el quichua y shuar son idiomas oficiales de relación intercultural...*]

Members of the assembly praised the resolution. In the words of the president of the Assembly: "It's indispensable that we reconcile ourselves with history, that we reconcile ourselves with our roots, and for so many reasons this is worth more than whatever divided vote that we have been able to have in previous days" [*Es indispensable que nosotros nos reconciliemos con la historia, nos reconciliemos con nuestras raíces... y por tanto esto vale más que cualquier votación dividida que hayamos podido tener en días anteriores*] ("Asamblea aprueba," 2008). Others, such as Marco Morillo, president of the Federation of Evangelical Indigenous People of Ecuador, expressed cautious optimism. This change, he noted, "gives in some ways some satisfaction and, certainly, advancement..., but we would have liked that it treated us with equal conditions." The president of CONAIE Marlon Santi also expressed his frustration. He admitted that it was a "step forward" [*un paso adelante*], but that it "doesn't satisfy [the goal] because it is intermediary" [*no satisface porque está intermedio*] ("De madrugada," 2008, my translation).

The spokesperson of the conflicted majority party PAIS, Rolando Panchana, announced the news on a radio station in Guayaquil. "The successful agreement does not mean that one has ceded to Indigenous pressures [*El acuerdo logrado no significa que se ha cedido frente a la presión indígena,*] he noted ("Rolando Panchana," 2008, my translation). Thus, he immediately qualified the passing of this amendment as standing up to Indigenous groups. Such a comment interdiscursively links to prior discourses of concern that had circulated in the media about quelling Indigenous pressures. These comments are illustrative of the passion surrounding this debate, both inside and outside of the assembly room. They also are reflective of the historical debates that have led to the amendment's passage. While some assembly members actively promoted Indigenous rights, others discursively conveyed their opposition to Indigenous political organization, allowing only a mitigated amendment. Thus, the amendment that emerged was produced within a particular co-text when it was signed. When encountered as a text artifact, one can clearly see how a choice in wording like "official language of intercultural communication" comments on the processes that produced the particular designation. A small lexical difference, such as the insertion of intercultural, shows how a given text points to the various discourses that led to its emergence. One can see, then, how particular linguistic choices in a text artifact are comments on their production. Though they seem disconnected from contexts of their production, they certainly are not. Further, the authorship of this particular text artifact mediates continued dialogue beyond its production, as is the case of the commentaries by various actors about its result.

How was such a reaction manifest by a President who was a self-proclaimed ally of Indigenous groups? After all, he had initiated the Constitutional reform.

For his part, the President's comments ignited uproar throughout the country. "When they [the Assembly members] presented me with the theme, I said that I was delighted," he remarked. "But then it developed that if one had made Quichua a second official language, one would have to have presidential decrees in Quichua and in Spanish, the same with laws and with formal education also.... We understand that in the Andean region where Quichua prevails, one should have to teach it. But how does it benefit a middle class boy from Machala that has to learn Quichua?" ("El Quichua es," 2008).

While the previous part of his remarks rejected Quichua as an official language for pragmatic reasons, his other comments were more inflammatory.

"This Constitution recognizes rights that have never before been recognized for Indigenous communities.... What was the cost of all of that- was it possible to implement it- was it desirable to implement it? According to the statistics of INEC, which I believe are low, that are underestimated, but 5% of the Ecuadorian population speaks an ancestral language. Because of that 5%, on the other 95% we were going to impose the learning of the Quichua language that, by the way, and many don't even know this, until four decades ago, wasn't even a written language. That [action] the mestizos have done. So, it [ambiguous, but assumed to refer to the Quichua officialization movement] is of these *novelerías* (imagination or deviations from reality), forgive me [*¿Cuál era el costo de todo aquello, era posible implementarlo, era deseable implementarlo? De acuerdo a las estadísticas del INEC, que creo que son bajas, están subestimadas; pero 5% de la población ecuatoriana habla una lengua ancestral. Por ese 5%, al otro 95% le íbamos a imponer el aprendizaje del idioma quichua que, dicho sea de paso, y muchos ni siquiera conocen esto, hasta hace cuatro décadas no era una lengua escrita, eso lo hacen los mestizos. Entonces, son de esas novelorías, perdóneme ...*] Because it was even impossible, through resources, through structure, etc., to apply that norm, and neither was it desirable to apply it. If that's why we're enemies of the Indigenous and those that propose this nonsense left and right, without reflecting on the repercussions, are their friends, what are we going to do. [*Porque incluso era imposible, por recursos, por estructura, etc., aplicar esa norma, y tampoco era deseable aplicarla. Si por eso somos enemigos de los indígenas y los que proponen estos disparates a diestra y siniestra, sin meditar en las repercusiones, en los costos, etc., son los amigos, qué le vamos a hacer*] ("Correa insiste," 2008, my translation).

The response by Indigenous groups to these comments was strong. The president of CONAIE, Marlon Santi, accused the president of being "fascist" and continuing the neoliberal policies that he had proclaimed to reject. Santi also emphasized that CONAIE would not allow the President to continue using Quichua for the greeting on his Saturday radio show ("Indígenas pedirán," 2008). Others in the community called for the President to never use their language again. One can see how, given Correa's proclaimed support for Indigenous rights, his insulting an emblem of Indigenous groups, as well as the thought processes behind making Quichua official, was quite offensive. Groups began to question the authenticity of his previous concern. Afterward, Correa denied that he called the movement a "novelería." He also emphasized his work on behalf of Indigenous groups, as well as placing the blame on ungrateful, oversensitive Indigenous organizations:

“CONAIE assumes new leadership and the first thing that it does is declare opposition to the government. They tell us about everything, and afterward ask why we don’t call them and don’t do positive discrimination. Look, we are the only ones that truly don’t discriminate against the Indigenous....” [*Asume una nueva dirigencia la Conaie y lo primero que hace es declararle la oposición al Gobiernoñ nos dice de todo después por qué no les llamamos y no hacemos discriminación positiva. Mire, nosotros somos los únicos que verdaderamente no discriminamos a los indígenas*] (“Correa insiste,” 2008, my translation).

It is telling that in attempting to bolster his own Indigenous credentials, Correa had to highlight the shortcomings of the broader Ecuadorian population in regards to their discrimination towards the Indigenous. Such comments, made by the representative of the state about official Indigenous organizations, convey tensions that are often felt between the state and Indigenous groups. Such conflict is indicative of how Indigenous nation-formation occurred and sometimes continues as a reaction to the state. Furthermore, such comments not only include linguistic signs (e.g. words), but through word choice, their use is a comment on other historical events. Statements about CONAIE do not just acknowledge governmental distrust, but the very fact that Correa uses these particular words and examples acknowledges the history that has led up to this event. By foregrounding CONAIE, a new director opposed to the government, and “positive discrimination,” Correa encourages others to consider that CONAIE is the one causing problems for him and his government, regardless of what he does.

In this particular movement around Quichua officialization, then, we can see how numerous individuals, representing various sectors, affect decisions related to political policy more generally, and language policy in particular. Text artifacts obviously point to the co-texts of their production. One can easily see how they also mediate additional communication, as leaders from CONAIE engage in meta-commentary about resultant linguistic policies, texts which the President later re-contextualizes. In turn, others continue to recontextualize his ideas, such as talk about *novelerías*. Thus, the policies mediate continued speech chains in the future.

Though the cited narratives focus on the individuals most directly involved in negotiations, such as the Constitutional Assembly, the President, and leaders of Indigenous groups, it should be clear from the history of Ecuador that such actors have been strongly influenced overtime by grassroots movements. Hornberger (1997) defines language planning from the “bottom-up” as that where Indigenous communities themselves drive and support language planning efforts (p. 357). As a historical overview of Indigenous groups in Ecuador has shown, however, as well as a focus on the elected representatives in this particular assembly, political organization of Indigenous communities has yielded increased influence in politics. Since members of Indigenous communities are now political representatives, those traditionally considered “bottom-up” actors are also in positions commonly considered to be “top-down.” Thus, top-down/bottom-up metaphorical distinctions become fuzzier. Perhaps such blending is an important testament of advances in Indigenous rights in recent years.

I have shown how “the Quichua language,” as an emblem of Indigenous groups, has become entangled in political maneuvering by many parties. As we have seen, actors have foregrounded a static, representative language in discourses about constitutional change. However, another component of the new Constitution is

noteworthy for ideologies about nations. I previously mentioned how Indigenous groups frequently identify as “nations,” and that certain rights may be awarded through the legal recognition of nations by the state. Another product of the 2008 Constitution is the recognition of Ecuador as a plurinational state, a designation that acknowledges the cultural diversity related to Indigenous groups. The paucity of newspaper articles about the discussion behind these policies seems to indicate that the process was much less fractious than attempting to officialize Quichua. In this case, it seems that much of the concern about this legislation was expressed after it was written. There are some important articles about nationalism in the new Constitution:

Art. 6 (...) The Ecuadorian nationality is a political juridical linking of the people with the state, without prejudice towards their belonging to any of the Indigenous nationalities that coexist in plurinational Ecuador. [*La nacionalidad ecuatoriana es el vínculo jurídico político de las personas con el Estado, sin perjuicio de su pertenencia a alguna de las nacionalidades indígenas que coexisten en el Ecuador plurinacional.*]

Art. 171 The authorities of the Indigenous communities, peoples, and nationalities will exercise jurisdictional duties based upon their ancestral traditions and their own law inside of their own territorial range....The state will guarantee that the decisions of the Indigenous jurisdiction are respected.... [*Las autoridades de las comunidades, pueblos y nacionalidades indígenas ejercerán funciones jurisdiccionales, con base en sus tradiciones ancestrales y su derecho propio, dentro de su ámbito territorial (...). El Estado garantizará que las decisiones de la jurisdicción indígena sean respetadas (...).*]

Art. 242 Autonomous metropolitan districts, the province of Galapagos, and the Indigenous and pluricultural territorial circumscriptions will be special arrangements. [(...) *Los distritos metropolitanos autónomos, la provincia de Galápagos y las circunscripciones territoriales indígenas y pluriculturales serán regímenes especiales.*]

Through defining Ecuador as plurinational, the state legally recognizes Indigenous groups and its history of diversity. It recognizes them as distinct nationalities within a broader Ecuadorian nationality. As I have shown, earlier planning by the state attempted to mask such differences. Thus, the state is officially recognizing the ideologies about nations that Indigenous groups have expounded for some time.

Some Indigenous leaders note how this amendment is another important step forward. Mónica Chuji, for example, one of the vocal PAIS assembly members in support of officializing Quichua, believes that this law no longer considers the Indigenous to be “mere cultural beings, but rather as political subjects, which implies their participation in making the decisions of the state and that their cultural...identities are respected” [*Pero ya no como meros entes culturales sino como sujetos lo que implica su participación en la toma de decisiones del Estado y que sus identidades culturales...sean respetadas*] (“Los indígenas buscan,” 2008, my translation). She also notes that this wording, however, does not authorize the return of land to anyone, which is a central concern of many land-owning white elites.

Other Indigenous leaders have different interpretations. Leader Raúl Ilaquiche appreciates the recognition but questions whether there are any tangible changes in the new Constitution: “There are not substantial changes that improve or

strengthen Indigenous rights," he notes [*No hay cambios sustanciales que mejoren o fortalezcan los derechos indígenas*] ("Los indígenas buscan," 2008, my translation). The recognition-centered as opposed to action-focused drafting of the Constitution, in this regard, stems in part from the fears of some opposition groups. Non-Indigenous citizens fear that even this less strongly worded amendment may erode national autonomy and the sovereignty of the state. However, as the newspaper *El Comercio* notes, it is unlikely that the legislation ensures any direct legal action. After all, as we saw with planning for the Quichua amendment, the President's legal representative had to approve the legal validity of all changes. Instead, this amendment acknowledges a group of people on the terms which they have promoted for themselves: as various nations. It is also possible that this recognition will begin dialog about future reforms.

The words of President Correa reflect how the statement could be considered a mere truism, one that only involves Ecuador acknowledging its population: "Plurinationalism means admitting that several different nationalities co-exist within the larger Ecuadorian state, which is obvious in this country and need not scare anyone" (Lucas, n.d., author's translation). However, given the historical struggle for Indigenous rights, on which the Congress and President have often been on the other side, the new Constitution seems all the more progressive. Because ideologies about "nations" and "languages" have been embraced by Indigenous groups, having these politicized emblems recognized by broader society may be a bigger success than one would immediately realize. Thus, the official recognition of the nation's plurinational languages is the recognition of ideologies that have been prominently espoused by Indigenous groups for many years. It is through a framework of ideologies about the nation-state and language that one can understand how this Constitution is particularly meaningful.

Conclusions

On September, 28, 2008, the Ecuadorian people officially approved the new Constitution in a vote. In a speech in Guayaquil, President Correa lauded the approval. "Today Ecuador has decided on a new nation. The old structures are defeated," he bellowed to a large group of cheering supporters (Partlow & Kuffner, 2008). International coverage of the event largely focused on changes in presidential term limits ushered in through the new Constitution, which would allow Correa to serve an additional four-year term in office. In these accounts, the push for Indigenous rights was largely eclipsed by comparisons of Correa to other South American leaders like Hugo Chávez and Evo Morales. By considering the history of Indigenous movements in Ecuador, and the prominence of nation- and language-linked ideologies within these movements, this paper has shown how the Constitution shows important recognition of decades of Indigenous struggle, especially through the linguistic signs that now appear on this piece of paper.

As such, one can understand this legislation, an acknowledgement of linguistic minorities, as a byproduct of a historical social movement. The moment enacting legislation extends far beyond that particular point in time. Social struggle has placed actors in certain positions, and has made certain themes (like "nation" and

“language”) legally salient. Political actors are knowledgeable of and affected by previous politics, and these individuals may have even been involved with them. Discourses, as well as text-artifacts like the Constitution itself, then, reflexively comment on previous movements and legislation through the fact that those particular words have been enacted. In other words, such texts are always comments on the processes of their production. The fact that an amendment emerges with the precise wordings that it does is an acknowledgement of the struggle that went into crafting it.

Further, while the co-text of production of text artifacts is often ignored, the document itself is crafted in anticipation of future responses to it. The result is that signs that point to a given event also entail social relations. One can easily see this through the responses of various actors that I have considered throughout the paper, such as the President, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Assembly members, and newspaper accounts, and how they recontextualize texts about official languages based on their own roles. Various texts point not only to the events that contributed to their creation, but also to role alignments in each recontextualization of them, and such reformulations yield important social information about the individuals themselves (Agha, 2005; Silverstein, 2005). These ideas are often reformulated again by other actors. Cooper (1989) offers a series of possible roles and motives that affect a particular policy, and he also calls attention to the effects of such a production. Based on these ideas, one can see how a particular policy not only communicates decrees, but also comments on the events of its unfolding. One such event occurs in anticipation of future recontextualizations in which texts mediate responses by others.

Some actors are more powerful than others in such productions. May (2001) writes of the necessity of foregrounding the nation-state in analysis of policies that affect linguistic minorities. It is the goal of this paper to foreground not only the nation-state, but also reactions to the nation-state. This approach considers how policies affecting linguistic minorities emerge through social processes. Through understanding leading figures in this movement, such as the President of Ecuador, the formation of Indigenous groups, and the backgrounds of elected representatives, one can see how agents of the state, as well as those representing reactions to the state, are involved in political movements. These actors comment on the results of legislative results based on what emerges, and the comments of particularly famous individuals are often disseminated across larger social domains. Thus, politicians can use these events for various political consequences, such as how Corea attempts to discursively construct CONAIE as standoffish with the government.

Tollefson (1991) supports these ideas: “the struggle to adopt minority languages within dominant [state] institutions such as education, the law, and government, as well as the struggle over language rights, constitute efforts to legitimize the minority group itself and to alter its relationship to the state” (p. 202). From this quote, one can see how quarrels over certain legal and educational measures involve a history of group struggle. Through social movements related to these themes, salient issues can emerge, which are important insights about how social change occurs in society.

In this particular example, ideologies about “nations” and “languages” have become especially important in the struggle for minority rights. In work on language

policy more generally, Blommaert (2006) writes how notions of nations themselves evolve from ideological processes. Nationalism, he writes, may not coincide with a state, but instead may emerge against notions about the state (p. 239). Ideologies like those related to nationalism can develop through group relations, and the case of Ecuador is a particularly salient case of how these ideologies are created and deployed. As Urciuoli (1995) has written, imagining a nation or group often involves imagining a linguistic variety that coincides with national boundaries. In Ecuador, ideologies about “nations” have been used by those more marginalized for self-identification and political organization. “The Quichua language” is often considered an emblem of Indigenous struggle in these projects. Thus, the acknowledgement of a “plurinational” state by the Constitution recognizes an important history of Indigenous struggle. Such an advance means that some initial goals of the foundation of CONAIE, like official recognition of nation-linked diversity, have been met.

The rejection of Quichua as an official language, then, may be a casualty of attempting to increase the domain of speakers of which Quichua is considered emblematic. Making Quichua an official language would recognize an emblem of Indigenous groups as, legally, an emblem of an entire nation. Such a subversion of discursive power, or status quo norms about languages of high prestige, may be part of why the movement ultimately failed. Considering Quichua an official language of intercultural relations, however, should not be discounted. Through examining the wording of previous constitutions, one can see how Quichua was officially considered an ancestral language only spoken within Indigenous groups. In the new Constitution, Quichua is acknowledged at the level intercultural communication. Others may speak Quichua to Indigenous groups, also acknowledging that groups interact. Interculturality acknowledges Indigenous groups and their interaction with dominant groups. Though there are many criticisms of interculturality (see Haboud, 1998; Krainer, 1996), an elevated stature of a major Indigenous emblem is certainly progress; such results have come about through years of Indigenous political organization. Furthermore, changing the wording of similar articles of the Constitution is itself reflexive, as it acknowledges the inadequacy of the previous norm.

The new Constitution of Ecuador, then, is an important step forward for Indigenous rights. Decades of progress have yielded increased political recognition of symbols traditionally at the forefront of the Indigenous rights movement, such as notions of “nations” and “languages.” Though this paper begins with a single moment in time, it aims to show how such a moment is only possible through the historical processes that yield it. In this sense, such legislative changes are meta-commentaries on the previous successes and shortcomings of Indigenous groups; they simultaneously reference them merely by occurring. In turn, they also mediate future responses. Hopefully, these successes will one day become the interdiscursive references of new advances.

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