

Language Policy and Language Ideologies in Mexico: Three Case Studies

Política lingüística e ideologías lingüísticas en México: tres estudios de caso

ABSTRACT: This article examines the relationship between language policy and language ideologies in Mexico, drawing on ethnographic research of three case studies conducted in Tepic, Nayarit. The study explores how national and global ideologies shape linguistic practices, identity, and social stratification, particularly for linguistic minorities such as indigenous people, returning migrants, and hearing-impaired. Grounded in sociolinguistic and ethnographic frameworks, the study highlights how neoliberal and nationalist ideologies influence perceptions of linguistic legitimacy, while everyday family practices challenge and reconfigure these dominant ideologies. Findings suggest that language policy in Mexico remains deeply tied to colonial and monolingual legacies, despite its recognition of linguistic diversity. The study contributes to the broader discussion of linguistic justice, multilingualism, and social inclusion, offering implications for equitable language planning and policy-making in multilingual societies.

KEYWORDS: language ideologies, language policy, multilingualism, Mexico, ethnography, linguistic justice.

RESUMEN: Este artículo examina la relación entre la política lingüística y las ideologías lingüísticas en México mediante una investigación etnográfica que incluye tres estudios de caso realizados en Tepic, Nayarit. El estudio explora cómo las ideologías globales y nacionales construyen prácticas lingüísticas, identidad y estratificación social, particularmente para las minorías lingüísticas, como las personas indígenas, migrantes de retorno y personas sordas. Con base en marcos sociolingüísticos y etnográficos, el estudio resalta cómo las ideologías neoliberales y nacionalistas influyen en las percepciones de legitimación lingüística, mientras que las prácticas diarias de las familias desafían y reconfiguran estas ideologías dominantes. Los resultados sugieren que la política lingüística en México sigue profundamente atada a su legado colonial y monolingüe, a pesar del reconocimiento de su diversidad lingüística. El estudio contribuye a ampliar la discusión sobre jus-

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ticia lingüística, multilingüismo e inclusión social, presentando algunas de las implicaciones para una planeación y una política lingüísticas más equitativas en sociedades multilingües.

PALABRAS CLAVE: ideologías lingüísticas, política lingüística, multilingüismo, México, etnografía, justicia lingüística.

1. Introduction

Over the past four decades, we have witnessed major geopolitical changes worldwide, accompanied by the rapid development of communication technology (Parkin, 2018; Vertovec, 2007, p. 6), which has intensified processes of globalization. Globalization is understood as the increasing interconnection of the world, in which changes in one location produce consequences elsewhere (Blommaert, 2020; Giddens, 1990). One significant outcome of these processes is the intensification of social, ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity, or ‘superdiversity’ (Blommaert, 2013, 2020; Vertovec, 2007, 2010, 2011), which has profoundly shaped the study of language and society and driven renewed attention to multilingualism and multilingual speakers. This ‘multilingual turn’ (May, 2014) has raised critical questions about the dominance of monolingualism in language studies and about state-managed language and culture policies, which are grounded in assumptions and conceptions of language known as language ideologies. Present at micro, meso, and macro levels, these ideologies determine how individuals and societies respond to language practices, language uses, and language speakers.

In the context of state-managed language policies, the most common ideology is “one language one nation”, where speaking a language other than the ‘national’ one creates a problem of otherness (Bauman et al., 2003; Blommaert, 1999; Kroskrity, 2000; Shohamy, 2006). Language policy and planning in Mexico offers a clear illustration of this dynamic. After independence from Spain, Spanish was recognized and legitimated as the primary marker of national identity (Villavicencio, 2010, pp. 726-727). Indigenous peoples, and all those excluded from the one-language-one-nation hegemony, were systematically oppressed. However, in 2001, after more than 170 years, Mexico was recognized in its Constitution as a pluricultural and multilingual country (Secretaría de Gobernación, 2001). Two years later, the General Law of Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Communities formally recognized indigenous languages spoken in Mexican territory as ‘national’ languages (Cámara de Diputados H. Congreso de la Unión, 2003).

These legislative changes represented a significant shift in the discourse surrounding linguistic rights. Yet, despite this official recognition of Mexico’s multilingual and pluricultural nature, linguistic inequality persists — revealing a deep tension between ideology, policy, and everyday practice. This raises a fundamental question: have these changes in Mexican language policy had a real impact on people’s lives?

This article synthesizes the findings of an ethnographic study that addresses three interrelated concerns. First, it examines which language ideologies have shaped — and continue to shape — Mexican language policy. Second, it explores how these ideologies and national language policy emerge from the relationship between language and broader

socio-historical, political, and economic conditions at a global scale. Third, it analyses how these ideologies and policies are reflected and reproduced in the ways Mexican society perceives and values different linguistic forms and language practices. While studies of language policy and language ideologies have often focused on official documents and public discourses, this work foregrounds the lived dimension of policy: the reproduction of ideological orientations through people's everyday valorization of language practices. To this end, the study focuses on the lives of three families in the city of Tepic, at least one member of each of whom has been identified as belonging to a linguistic minority in Mexico. By centering on individuals whose communicative repertoires are frequently regarded as deviant by the majority population, this work illuminates the concrete impact of language ideologies and policy on people's lives, and the ways in which language practices and perceptions, in turn, shape their social trajectories. The research is therefore guided by the following questions:

- What are the language ideologies found in participants' narratives that reflect public perceptions and valorization of their linguistic forms and language practices?
- How are the language ideologies found in participants' narratives — constructed through their individual trajectories and family language policies — linked to, and influenced by, Mexican language policy?

2. Theoretical Framework: Language ideologies, language policy and family language policy

As outlined in the introduction, language ideologies are present at micro, meso, and macro levels and determine how individuals and societies respond to language practices, language uses, and language speakers. In the Mexican context, the tension between official recognition of linguistic diversity and the persistence of linguistic inequality in everyday life points to the need for a deeper theoretical understanding of how language ideologies are constructed, how they inform language policy, and how they are reproduced in the domestic sphere through family language policy. This section develops the theoretical framework that underpins the study by examining these three interconnected concepts.

Language ideologies

Language ideologies are typically understood as conceptions of language, language varieties, language use, and their users, and are considered a fundamental part of communicative praxis and a key element in sociolinguistic research (Blommaert, 2005; Rosa & Burdick, 2017). One of the most referenced definitions comes from Silverstein (1979), who defines linguistic ideologies as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (p. 193). More recent work, however, has expanded this definition to include fewer conscious levels of

awareness, recognizing that any understanding of language is ideological (Blommaert, 2005; García et al., 2017; Rosa & Burdick, 2017; Woolard, 2020).

The development of the field of language ideologies has disrupted a range of presumptions about the nature of language, particularly the conception that linguistic forms are objective phenomena that should be studied apart from ideas about them (Rosa & Burdick, 2017). Language ideologies locate the meaningfulness of linguistic signs in relation to other signs in particular historical, political-economic, and sociocultural contexts, interrogating from what perspectives a given sign comes to take on particular value (Rosa & Burdick, 2017, p. 104). In this sense, language ideologies serve to illustrate how individuals and communities have come to understand language in the way they have, how language varieties are constructed and bounded, how these constructions interact with existing language policies, and how historical conditions have resulted in dominant ideologies that play a role in social differentiation and the construction of identities (García et al., 2017).

The relationship between language and power is central to the concept of language ideologies (del Valle & Meirinho-Guede, 2016). This relationship explains how some language ideologies are disseminated as unquestionable truths and used to produce and reproduce social and political models within institutionalized spaces. Three ideologies are particularly relevant to this study. First, the *one-language-one-nation ideology* refers to the belief that the use of a single language will facilitate the construction of an identity marker that brings unity and harmony to a nation-state (Piller, 2015, 2016). Second, linked to this, the *standard language ideology* refers to the idea of a homogeneous language based on the written form, considered superior to all other ways of speaking, imposed and maintained by dominant groups and institutions (Lippi-Green, 2004; Piller, 2015). A standard language ideology is used as a criterion for judging a person's linguistic resources as correct and acceptable, or incorrect and unacceptable (Lippi-Green, 2004; Paffey, 2014). Third, emerging from globalization processes, a *neoliberal language ideology* holds that English provides access to social, labor, and economic advantages in the global market (Piller & Cho, 2013). This ideology, along with the commodification of language, highlights the links between language and social activities and its active role in the construction of social order (Heller, 2010), influencing the assigned value of linguistic resources in the labor market as well as decisions of language policy and planning at different levels (Curdtt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020; Heller, 2003, 2010).

Language policy

Language policy is the mechanism through which political entities manage language and its uses in society (Johnson, 2013; Shohamy, 2006; Wright, 2016). It operates through both explicit instruments — such as laws, curricula, and language tests — and covert mechanisms — such as ideologies, myths, propaganda, and the language of public spaces (Schiffman, 1996; Shohamy, 2006). Drawing on Spolsky (2004)'s framework of beliefs, practice, and management as the three components of language policy, Shohamy (2006)

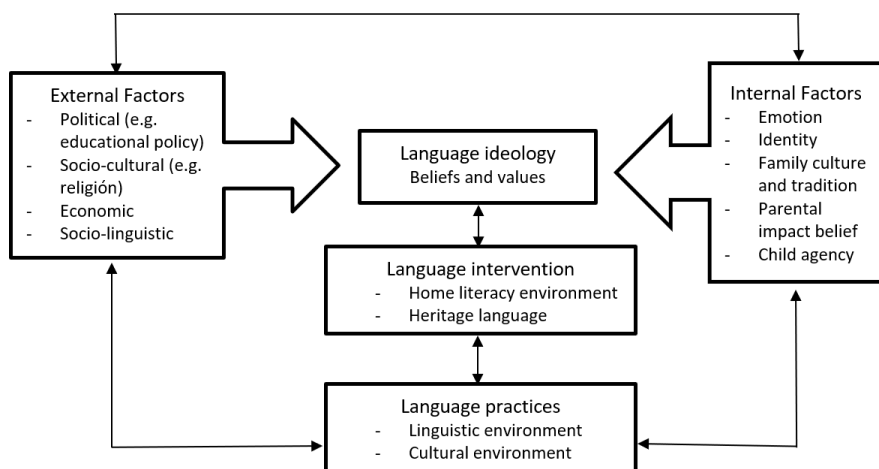
argues that these mechanisms lie between ideology and practice in a bidirectional flow: ideology affects language practice through these mechanisms, and at the same time it is through these mechanisms that language practice can affect ideology. Crucially, language policy and language ideologies are mutually constitutive: ideologies inform policy decisions, and policies in turn reproduce and reinforce ideological orientations in everyday practice (Shohamy, 2006). In this sense, when language policymakers insist on controlling language behavior, they are promoting an ideology that sees language as a system that can be controlled (Pennycook, 2017).

Language policy can be classified in various ways: *top-down* or *bottom-up* according to its origin; *explicit* or *implicit*, *overt* or *covert* according to whether it is officially documented; and *de jure* or *de facto* according to whether it emerges from law or from practice (Johnson, 2013; Schiffman, 1996; Shohamy, 2006). These types are not mutually exclusive and can overlap in different directions. What is common across all types is that language policy serves to provide structure and order to nations while ensuring that ideologies of uniformity, cohesion, and control are maintained (Shohamy, 2006). However, language policy operates not only at the national level — it is also present in any domain where an authority seeks to modify the language practices or beliefs of its participants, including schools, workplaces, and families (Pennycook, 2017; Spolsky, 2009).

Family language policy

Family language policy (FLP) is defined as explicit and overt planning regarding language use within the home among family members (King et al., 2008, p. 907), but it also encompasses implicit and covert processes that privilege certain language and literacy practices over others (Fogle, 2013). As a field of research, family language policy explores the relations between private domains and public spheres to determine the impacts of social, economic, and political forces on family language practices and identify the language ideologies that inform decisions in these contexts (Curdts-Christiansen & Huang, 2020; Pennycook, 2017). Drawing on Curdts-Christiansen and Huang's (2020) dynamic model of family language policy, this study understands family language policy as constituted by three interrelated components — language ideology, language intervention, and language practices — shaped by both external factors (political, socio-cultural, economic, and sociolinguistic environments) and internal factors (emotion, identity, family culture and tradition, parental beliefs, and child agency). Similar to Shohamy's (2006) model of ideology-mechanism-practice, the relationship between these components is bidirectional: language ideologies aim to influence language practices through language intervention, and, at the same time, language practices can affect language ideologies through the same mechanisms (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Dynamic model of family language policy (Curdtt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020, p. 176)



Family language policy has been mostly studied in migrant families (Curdtt-Christiansen, 2009, 2014; King et al., 2008), but more recent studies have expanded the field to diverse and transnational family contexts (Hirsch & Lee, 2018; Hua & Wei, 2016; Nelson et al., 2023; Nelson et al., 2022; Smith-Christmas et al., 2019). These studies have shown that language practices in the family are continuously reconfigured in response to cultural and linguistic environments and are also shaped by the experiences of each individual family member, allowing for greater child agency in family language policy depending on the context (Nelson et al., 2022). In conclusion, family language policy, like nation-state language policies, is guided by language ideologies shaped by external and internal forces, and the ideologies at the core of family language policy compete with those that emerge from other social domains and from mainstream society at the macro level.

3. Contextual framework: Mexican language policy

The theoretical framework outlined above provides the analytical tools to examine how language ideologies are constructed, institutionalized through policy mechanisms, and reproduced in everyday language practices. To understand how these processes have operated specifically in the Mexican context, it is necessary to situate them within the socio-historical trajectory of Mexican language policy.

According to Terborg et al. (2007), the emergence of Mexican Language Policy can be divided into four stages: pre-Hispanic Mexico, the Colony, the Republic, and the present day. In the first stage, pre-Hispanic Mexico, the nation was linguistically dominated by the

Mexicas, and, as a result, their language, Nahuatl, or Mexica, was introduced as a *lingua franca*. In the second stage, the Colony, Castilianization was the main language policy, proclaimed by Royal decrees. Learning Spanish was identified with education and evangelization (Terborg et al., 2007). In the third stage, the Republic, after Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821, the need to build a new country arose. The new government leaders imposed a one-language-one-nation ideology, one that has persisted to the present, and Spanish became the most widely spoken language in the country (Terborg et al., 2007, p. 141). This ideology did not merely reflect demographic reality; it actively marginalized the languages that did not fit the imagined national identity. In the present-day stage, Spanish is the *de facto* official language in Mexico and the first language of 90% of the Mexican population (Terborg et al., 2007, p. 122). The development of the current Mexican language policy, which recognizes indigenous languages, Spanish, and Mexican Sign Language as national languages, has resulted from diverse national and international protests and social mobilization efforts over the years (Morris, 2007). However, although this framework represents a formal acknowledgment of linguistic diversity, government and institutions have not been successful in moving beyond the policy conceptualization stage (Figueroa, 2012; Morris, 2007).

Alongside the unresolved tension around the Mexican indigenous languages situation, there have also been great efforts to establish English as a second language in Mexico through the Mexican educational system, mostly in response to globalization processes (Herrera, 2022; Secretaría de Educación Pública [SEP], 2017) and Mexico's neoliberal agenda (Puón Castro, 2021). The English-language teaching program PNIEB (*Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica*) was launched in 2009. The program established English instruction from Kindergarten to High School in all schools across the country. Nowadays, the program continues under the name of PRONI (*Programa Nacional de Inglés*). Through the implementation of these English programs, Mexican governments have sought to make English-language learning more accessible to all Mexicans. However, rather than challenging the hierarchical valuation of languages, this promotion of English reproduces the same underlying logic: certain languages are assigned prestige and institutional resources while others are not.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, ethnographic approach to explore the interplay between Mexican language policy and everyday linguistic practices. Three families in Tepic, Nayarit, participated in this research: an Indigenous family, a family with a hearing-impaired member, and a family of returning migrants. Data were collected through interviews, participant observation, and narrative analysis, with a focus on how participants articulate and negotiate their linguistic identities. The analysis was conducted through a combination of narrative and content analysis (Riessman, 1993, 2008; Mayring, 2014).

While the primary data for this study derive from participants' narratives, the analysis of Mexican language policy draws on the review of key legal and institutional documents — including the General Law of Linguistic Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2003), national education curricula, and public policy statements on bilingual and intercultural education — discussed in the literature review. These documents provided the contextual framework against which participants' narratives were interpreted, allowing the study to trace how ideological orientations embedded in official policy are taken up, negotiated, or resisted in everyday language practices.

Participants

Families were selected through purposive sampling, based on the criterion that at least one member identified as belonging to a group whose language practices are commonly regarded as linguistically marginal or non-normative in the Mexican context, as an Indigenous language speaker, a person with hearing impairment, or a returning migrant. Access to the families was gained through personal contacts within the city of Tepic, Nayarit.

The Pérez¹ family is a family of six members: Adrián, the father; Rosa, the mother; Paulina, the first daughter and first child; Miguel, the first son and second child; Ángel, the second son and third child; and Estela, the second daughter and fourth child. All the family members identify themselves as indigenous. They belong to the Wixárika group, also known as Huichol. The parents are divorced. All the children are adults now. They do not live together, but they usually spend time together when they go from Tepic to their town of origin at the weekends, where they celebrate their indigenous rituals and traditions. All the family members claim to have language resources in Wixárika and Spanish.

The García family is a family of four: Pedro, the father; María, the mother; Oscar, the first son and first child; and Melisa, the daughter and second child. Oscar is hearing impaired; he has a profound hearing loss from birth. He did not learn Mexican Sign Language in early childhood, nor did any of the family members, because Oscar received a cochlear implant, and it was expected that with it he would be able to listen and speak. However, Oscar's cochlear implant did not work. Some years later, Oscar and his mother took some Mexican Sign Language lessons when he was about 11 years old, but Oscar and María say they did not learn much. According to the mother, the whole family can communicate with Oscar using what they call "normal signs".

The Sánchez family is a family of seven members: José, the father; Mariana, the mother; Sofia, the first daughter and first child; Luis, the first son and second child; Ana, the second daughter and third child; Adriana, the third daughter and fourth child; and finally, Alejandra, who is Mariana's niece. Alejandra was left under the care of her grandmother when she was around two years old, and their parents went to live in the U.S. Each of their parents started a new life and a new family in the U.S. in different places. She just main-

1 All the names and family names I used to refer to my participants are pseudonyms to protect their identity.

tained contact with her mother, who rarely came to Mexico to visit her. When she was 18 years old, her mother took her to live with her in the U.S. She acquired some English-language resources, left her mother's home, got a job, and became a U.S. citizen. After about six years, she decided to move in with her aunt's family in Tepic to attend the University. Her aunt, her uncle, and her four cousins received her in their house, and she is considered another member of their family.

The perspectives of these participants were used because their language practices are diverse within the family, not only in Spanish; it was considered that their experiences allow us to identify the language ideologies that surround them, as well as those they have constructed for themselves and their families through their life trajectory. Moreover, their life experiences in the Mexican context allow us to gain insights into the influence of Mexican language policy on their language experiences.

Data collection

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observation. The interviews used linguistic autobiographies (Pavlenko, 2007); participants were asked to narrate their life stories, and questions focused on the acquisition and development of their language resources, as well as their experiences with language across different spaces. Between two and four interview sessions were conducted with each family, with individual sessions lasting approximately 45 to 90 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent. Some interviews were conducted in a focus-group style with two families. All this helped to construct the biographical story of each individual and the whole family in both cases.

Gathering data took almost a year, from July 2021 to May 2022, because each interview depended on participants' time and availability.

The interviews were transcribed. The interviews were used to construct individual linguistic trajectories and family backgrounds. The narratives from the interviews form the basis for identifying and analyzing language ideologies and the influence of language policy on participants' life trajectories and the construction of their own language ideologies. The data from observation and note-taking were also used to examine interrelations among the individual linguistic trajectories, the narratives, and the context of the study.

Reflexivity and positionality

As the researcher conducting the interviews, transcriptions, and translations, I adopted a positionality that was flexible and collaborative, rather than fixed to a single epistemological stance. Data collection was not constrained by a strict protocol or format, as participants chose the interview location and format. This flexibility allowed me to respond to specific circumstances and issues as they arose during fieldwork. For instance, family interviews conducted in a focus-group style were not originally planned but emerged as an opportunity presented by participants, which I adapted to. This flexibility proved espe-

cially valuable when interviewing the hearing-impaired participant, whose sister acted as an interpreter during the session. Taking this collaborative positionality also allowed me to approach the research from a less biased stance: by using a biographical approach that foregrounded participants' own perspectives and experiences with language, I avoided positioning myself strictly as an outsider or insider to any of the communities represented, and instead committed to a reflective and open engagement with participants' accounts throughout data collection and analysis.

Ethical considerations

All participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the study, and were informed of their right to withdraw at any point. To protect participants' identities, all names used in this article are pseudonyms, and identifying details unrelated to the research focus have been omitted or altered.

Data analysis

Narratives were used to examine and explore participants' life trajectories. Then, to analyze the data, narrative analysis (De Fina, 2009, 2021; De Fina & Georgakopolou, 2008; Pavlenko, 2008) and qualitative content analysis (Selvi, 2019) were used.

Once all transcriptions were finished, they were checked for consistency, and NVIVO was used to store them and identify the emergence of language ideologies in the narratives. All interviews were in Spanish, so all transcriptions and analysis were in Spanish. Excerpts from the narratives that reference language, conceptions of language, language varieties, language use, and their users were selected and categorized under the code of language ideologies. First, 53 excerpts were categorized under this code. Then, qualitative content analysis (Selvi, 2019) was used to categorize these excerpts according to their similarities and differences, the context in the overall story, and the literature review about language ideologies. This process combined inductive and deductive reasoning: while the initial identification of excerpts was data-driven, the categorization of excerpts into specific language ideologies was informed by existing typologies in the literature (the one language-one nation ideology, a standard language ideology, and a neoliberal language ideology), which were then refined through careful examination and constant comparison with the data (Selvi, 2019). After rereading and analyzing the data, 46 core excerpts referencing language ideologies were identified; the remaining 7 excerpts were excluded because they were redundant with other selected excerpts or insufficiently explicit in their references to language ideologies. Other codes to classify narrative excerpts under categories and themes that do not directly refer to language were also created. They referred to the other main themes of the research: globalization and language policy.

Data collection and analysis resulted in the construction of each participant's individual linguistic trajectory, the description of the family history and background, and the coding of participants' narratives under three main topics: language and globalization,

language ideologies and language policy. To interpret these results, the excerpts of the narratives referring to language ideologies were analyzed in relation to their links with other codes and to the narratives as a whole. These findings were then connected to the participants' linguistic trajectories and their families' histories and backgrounds. Some narrative excerpts are presented in the study to illustrate how the language ideologies emerge in participants' narratives. For this article, all the excerpts are presented in the English translation. I did all translations and tried to keep all information and meaning to not lose meaning. Sometimes, some information needed to understand the excerpt is added in parentheses.

The study's findings are presented and discussed with reference to the literature review and the contextual framework in the following section.

5. Findings and Discussion

All participants' conceptions of language cluster around three main language ideologies that have also been identified in diverse societies: the *one-language-one-nation ideology*, a *standard-language ideology*, and a *neoliberal language ideology*. As the following sections show, these ideologies operate through education, media, and everyday discourse, shaping how people value or devalue linguistic practices.

The one language-one nation ideology

The one-language-one-nation ideology refers to the belief that the use of a single language helps construct an identity marker that brings unity and harmony to nations (Piller, 2015, 2016). The one-language-one-nation ideology emerged in participants' narratives when they talked about the acquisition and use of Spanish linguistic resources.

As described before, Spanish is the *de facto* official language in Mexico, but a legal framework recognizes Mexican indigenous languages and Mexican Sign Language as national languages. As part of this legal framework, the Mexican Federal Ministry of Education manages indigenous schools that aim to preserve indigenous languages nationwide. However, the Pérez family's narratives confirm that these indigenous schools continue the castilianization of indigenous people. In the Pérez family, all family members acquired linguistic resources in Wixárika in early childhood, and then they acquired linguistic resources in Spanish at school at different ages.

Excerpt: 1 Participant: Rosa Family: Pérez

"I went to school when I was twelve years old, eleven, twelve, for the first time my father allow me to go... and well., I definitely did not understand anything of Spanish, even the first year that I studied, well, supposedly I did not pass the year, because I did not speak [Spanish], I hardly remember I finished the year knowing and pronouncing around three words in Spanish, speaking Spanish seemed impossible for me, I didn't understand anything to the teacher, yes, I copied everything he put on the board, I had good callig-

raphy, but I couldn't read, I couldn't pronounce, I couldn't chat; until my second year, I felt more confident with my classmates, well...I would join them to play, this helped me to learn more Spanish."

When Adrián and Rosa had their children, they taught them the Wixárika language. All the Pérez family children say they learned Wixárika with their parents, and all of them remember using Wixárika language to communicate with each other in early childhood. Nevertheless, all the Pérez family children also comment that Spanish was always present in their lives. Moreover, all Pérez family members describe school as playing an important role in the development of their Spanish linguistic resources.

Excerpt: 3 Participant: Miguel Family: Pérez
"I learned Spanish... well, practically since kindergarten, I remember that in kindergarten I already... I already, well, I remember a little, I was already fluent in Spanish, that is, I already spoke Spanish, in the town where my father is from, the place is almost a monolingual wixárika community, so many children did not speak Spanish, but in kindergarten we were taught in Spanish... we were taught, at that time mmh... it was like umhh... well it was make it necessary, right? , Spanish, so we were taught Spanish from a very young age."

Moreover, when the Pérez family moved to Tepic, an urban context, they began to use their linguistic resources in Spanish more frequently. All their daily activities were in Spanish, and the family started to use more Spanish at home.

More evidence of the reproduction of the one-language-one-nation ideology emerges in the narratives of the García family. In the García family, after Oscar was diagnosed as hearing-impaired and was selected to receive a cochlear implant, doctors asked Oscar's parents, María and Pedro, not to allow Oscar to learn sign language because, they claimed, he would learn to hear and to speak in Spanish after he got his cochlear implant.

Excerpt: 11 Participant: María Family: García
"It was Dr. P² (last name), an otolaryngologist from the Mexican Social Security Institute, who told me 'you know what? Take him out of the Multiple Attention Centre (CAM), it is not convenient to have him in the CAM, because there are many children with Down syndrome and with other disabilities, then, the child, instead of learning, what he does is only imitate the others. So, instead of wanting to make an effort to speak, he doesn't, I mean, they limit him to signs'."

2 The names of other people have been deleted to preserve the anonymity of the participants.

The narrative excerpt highlights the impact of oralism within the medical-rehabilitative paradigm and the impact of that paradigm on Oscar's life. The doctor's words "they limit him to signs" seem to be loaded with an absolutely negative ideological charge towards sign language, as if using signs to communicate is completely wrong, something that should not happen, because the "correct" practice is to communicate orally.

Since Oscar's cochlear implant did not work for him, when his parents took him out of special education school and denied him access to sign language on medical advice, Oscar was left without access to any recognized language, neither sign language nor spoken language. María, Oscar's mother, also says that even if Oscar could communicate in sign language, it would not be relevant, since almost nobody knows it, not even teachers at school.

In the Sánchez family, the one-language-one-nation ideology emerged when Alejandra talked about her lived experiences in the US. Alejandra explains she could not continue her studies when she arrived in the US because she did not know English. Similarly to Alejandra's experience in the U.S., there is a growing number of students in Mexico with scholar experiences in the U.S. who confront different challenges in the Mexican educational system, since Spanish is the language of instruction (see Herrera et al., 2021; Tacelosky, 2021; Zuñiga & Hamann, 2008; Zuñiga & Hamann, 2009; Zuñiga & Saucedo, 2019). Alejandra's experience in the United States and the experiences of other transnational students in Mexico confirm that the ideology of one language-one nation is present across countries and is reproduced through mechanisms such as educational policies.

A standard language ideology

The standard language ideology refers to the idea of a homogeneous language that is superior to other ways of speaking; it is based on written language and the language of upper social classes, and it is imposed and maintained by dominant groups and institutions (Lippi-Green, 2004; Piller, 2015). This ideology emerged at different points as my participants talked about the languages they and others know and use.

In the García family, María considers that Oscar does not know how to read and write in Spanish, and she believes the family's 'natural' signs are more valuable for Oscar than Mexican Sign Language, because these signs have allowed Oscar to socialize in wider society.

Excerpt: 14 Participant: María Family: García

"And, well, then, he finished Middle school, but I insist, he didn't learn to read and write in Spanish, because at the end the teachers only pass them from grade to grade, the support they receive at school is like that, I mean. Maybe he receives therapy, that has not helped and he did not like sign language classes, he didn't want to go anymore. So, because of it, because we are used to, everyone, we are used to our everyday signs, he can communicate, he doesn't have any problems to communicate with anybody, so, in fact, he knows people we don't even know, he has friends we even don't know."

María says Oscar does not know how to read and write Spanish because he does not follow standard Spanish rules when he writes, for example, in WhatsApp text messages. María also thinks this is because sign language does not follow the same grammar and syntax rules as Spanish. When I asked Oscar if he knows how to read and write in Spanish, according to his sister Melisa, who helped me to interpret the interview, he considers that he has limited literacy in Spanish. Melisa perceives this as because he cannot understand or use connectors and conjunctions in Spanish grammar.

The standard language ideology also informs beliefs about the existence of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ language (Lippi-Green, 2004). This belief emerges in the Pérez family, for example, when Paulina, the oldest daughter, talks about the Spanish used by her grandparents. Paulina’s grandparents did not attend school, so they did not acquire their linguistic resources in Spanish in this formal institution, and Paulina perceived that their Spanish was not correct. Moreover, different generations tend to use different linguistic forms. However, Paulina highlights that she could understand when her grandparents speak Spanish, and that this seems more valuable than speaking the language fluently and ‘correctly’.

In the Sánchez family, the standard language ideology emerges when Alejandra talks of her perceptions about her mother’s and brothers’ use of English and Spanish while she was living with them in the U.S. When she evaluates her mother’s and brothers’ linguistic forms and language practices, her evaluation is based on formal and informal genres, considering “formal language” is the one you learn at school.

Excerpt: 20	Participant: Alejandra	Family: Sánchez
“Yes, she can speak English (my mother), but broken (uses the word in English while talking in Spanish), but yes she, she could communicate. It was not a very fluent English, but it was a functional English. My brothers, yes they can speak Spanish, but we can say it is a Spanish not so formal, but an Spanish that is also very functional, and, good.”		

The perceptions of Paulina, Miguel and Alejandra about other people’s linguistic forms and language practices also give evidence of ‘the language subordination process’ (Lippi-Green, 2004). This process is promoted by institutions, like schools, where the superiority of a standard language is valorized, and all the other forms that are not considered standard are devalued. However, participants’ evaluation comes second when communication occurs in certain contexts.

The standard language ideology is also used to justify discrimination on the basis of language (Lippi-Green, 2004). In the Pérez family, for example, all members described discrimination experiences for being indigenous and for being identified as indigenous for using their linguistic resources in *Wixárika*. When Estela, the youngest daughter, was about 12 years old, she decided she would not use her indigenous language anymore; she did not want to be recognized as indigenous.

Excerpt: 24

Participant: Estela

Family: Pérez

“When I began Middle school, I said ‘oh, no, I don’t want anyone to know, in fact, I’m not even going to talk about it. I’m not even going to talk or let anyone know’ because it was very... I remember that on several occasions the girls (from school) even grabbed me - I mean, the girls grabbed me by the hair, outside the school and the boys too, they stoned me, I remember... so this eh, you are left with the trauma of saying, then what I say, the way I talk and how I talk or how I wear (that’s the reason they are mean to me).”

Even when all the Pérez family members talked about discrimination experiences for speaking their indigenous languages and being identified as indigenous, only Estela explicitly talked about her own decision to stop using Wixárika at some point in her life.

Despite all this, participants’ narratives also show they are aware that language is not homogeneous. When participants talk about the languages they know, they tend to describe what they can do in each language: speak, read, write, understand what someone says, or have a conversation in the language. Participants do not interpret language as something finite and rule-bound; they consider they know a language because they are able to understand or use the named language in diverse forms. This idea agrees with the recent paradigm in language studies that has coined the term linguistic repertoire to describe the set of resources a person knows and uses to communicate with others (Blommaert & Backus, 2013).

Neoliberal language ideology

The neoliberal language ideology has emerged from globalization processes and refers to the belief that English is a global language that provides access to social, labor, and economic advantages (Piller & Cho, 2013). This ideology emerges in my participants’ narratives when they talked about their interest in other languages.

In the Pérez family, Miguel, for example, when he talked about his future plans, he mentioned his interest in learning English. Miguel considers it necessary to learn English if you want to pursue a PhD, and he also mentions his interest in learning other indigenous languages.

In the García family, María and her daughter, Melisa, talked about the necessity of speaking English nowadays. María describes English as a universal language.

Excerpt: 34

Participant: María

Family: García

“[A]lthough well, English is now is called like universal, right?, because everywhere in the world is like...English, right?, it’s like something basic to know.”

In the Sánchez family, Alejandra says that speaking more than one language brings more opportunities based on her own experience with the English language.

These narratives provide evidence of English's role as the language of globalization within the neoliberal economic system, supporting the idea that English brings social and economic advantages that have influenced language policy and planning in nations (Ricento, 2012, 2015). This so-called neoliberal language policy has helped spread the English language around the world (Piller & Cho, 2013) and, as described in the contextual framework, the construction of Mexican language policy also provides evidence of the influence of this ideology.

Conclusions

Although there is a legal framework in place to protect linguistic rights in Mexico, Mexican education policies function as a mechanism that continues to promote Spanish as the *de facto* language and reproduces the one-language-one-nation, standard-language ideology, and neoliberal language ideologies. These ideas are supported by this study participants' narratives and the reconstruction of their trajectories and family language policy.

Even when families have different linguistic resources, external and internal factors increase the need to use Spanish in family interactions. As explained before, following Curdt-Christiansen and Huang's (2020) the model, external factors refer to the political, socio-cultural, economic, and socio-linguistic environment that surrounds the families and influences their acquisition and management of linguistic resources. For all the participant families, even though Spanish, 68 indigenous languages, and Mexican Sign Language are *de jure* languages in Mexico, recognized as national languages in Mexican law, these external factors are dominated by Spanish. On the other hand, internal factors (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020) refer to personal factors perceived as important and valuable in creating family ties, including emotion, identity, family culture and tradition, as well as parental impact beliefs and child agency. These factors influence the formation of family relations and the sense of closeness or belonging within the family. In the Pérez family, these internal factors are based on Wixárika and Spanish. Family members usually speak Spanish with each other, but when they practice their traditions, they use Wixárika. For the García family, the internal factors are based on Spanish, their own family sign language, and some Mexican Sign Language. Family members use a combination of language resources in Spanish, their own family sign language, and Mexican Sign Language to interact with each other at home. In the Sánchez family all members use Spanish to interact with each other and Spanish has been and continues being the home language between the generations in the family.

The inner core of FLP represents language ideologies, language intervention, and language practices. Language ideologies represent the beliefs and values that are going to determine the decisions of caregivers on language intervention, and language practices refer to language use in family's everyday life (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). For the three participant families we can observe the reproduction of the "one language-one nation", a "standard language" and a "neoliberal language" ideologies. There is also evi-

dence of some explicit actions made by the parents in terms of language intervention for the acquisition and use of different linguistic resources. In the García family, for example, there is a key role of the medical profession who diagnosed Oscar and prevented the family from learning Sign language, considering this will affect his oral language development if doctors were to find a cure for his hearing impairment. In consequence, Oscar is the one who must adapt himself to his environment, since the city or society do not bring him the facilities to do it.

In terms of the families' language practices, Spanish is dominant in all three. Even when some family members have language resources in other languages, external and internal factors encourage the use of Spanish in family interactions.

Since, family language policy is based on the perceptions of the family about social and national structures, the analysis of my participants' family language policy also gives evidence of how Mexican language policy is constructed under the nation-language ideology and a standard ideology, giving little place for diverse linguistic forms and language practices that are outside the accepted norms, or that are different to Spanish grammar and syntax structure taught at school. Moreover, Mexican education policies that promote foreign language teaching have privileged the English language because it is linked to economic and social benefits for people, as it is perceived as the language of globalization. This is reflected in my participants' narratives when they make reference to the neoliberal language ideology.

Finally, the study demonstrates that despite legislative advances recognizing linguistic diversity, Mexican language policy continues to reproduce colonial and neoliberal ideologies. Future research and policy development must address the ideological underpinnings of linguistic inequality and incorporate local voices into decision-making processes.

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