

ETHNIC IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE CHOICE IN FELIPE CARRILLO PUERTO

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Abstract: This paper focusses on the description of language choice of bilingual (Maya–Spanish) inhabitants of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo, Mexico. The results of a quantitative approach to the assessment of the informant's ethnic identity, designed to reveal the informant's affiliation to the Cult of the Talking Cross, were used as an independent variable in the domain-based description of their language choice.

It is shown, that the patterns of language choice across all given domains vary with the affiliation to the Cruzo'ob–Maya: the use of Spanish across all domains decreases as the ethnic affinity increases, whereas the use of Maya across all domains increases with increasing affinity. It is further demonstrated that for addressing the grandparent-generation as well as for addressing the children-generation ethnic identity seems not as important as for addressing the parent- and the own generation.

Taken together these results suggest that ethnic affinity plays an important role in processes of language shift and thus it highlights the importance of the quantitative assessment of ethnic affinity for studies of language choice.

Key:words: Ethnic affinity, language choice, Cruzo'ob–Maya

1. INTRODUCTION

In linguistics, the concept of “ethnicity” became a *sine qua non* in the early 1960s. Ever since, it has been used in conjunction with other social variables such as age, sex and social class to account for language variation, for example in works such as Labov's pioneering study at Martha's Vineyard (1963), and his seminal description of the *Social Stratification of English in New York City* (1966), to name but two. However, in sociolinguistic studies considering ethnicity as a factor in linguistic variation, accounting for the scalar nature of ethnicity, i.e. the simple fact that members of an ethnic group may have varying affinities towards the identificatory features of that group, is often neglected. But it is exactly these varying affinities that may account for differences in language use. The reason for this neglect is that these approaches are, according to general social science theory, “undertheorized (or untheorized)” (Hoffman & Walker forthc.:4).

The aims of the present paper are twofold: first, to demonstrate an empirical and quantifiable approach to assessing the “ethnic affinity” (i.e. the degree of ethnic identity) of a given population. And second, to use this data in order to describe the language choices of

this population in a given context. Thus, in the following paper, I propose an empirical approach to the question of ethnic identity and its relationship to the linguistic behavior of a particular population considering language choices among bilingual descendants of the Cruzo'ob–Maya in Felipe Carrillo Puerto, Quintana Roo, Mexico.

2. ETHNICITY, ETHNIC IDENTITY, AND ITS ASSESSMENT

Notwithstanding the ubiquitous use of the concept in descriptions of past and present societies (Gabbert 2006: 91f.) the term *ethnicity* has only quite recently been accepted as a term in its own right (Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 4). Furthermore, scholars working on societal and individual identity have repeatedly indicated that it still lacks a coherent definition (Phinney 1990; Roberts et al. 1999; Gabbert 2006; Fought 2006). In the present paper, “ethnicity” will be used in the sense of Gabbert’s proposed definition (2006: 90):

“it [ethnicity] refers to a phenomenon of social differentiation in which actors use cultural or phenotypical markers or symbols to distinguish themselves from others. It is a method of classifying people into categories that include individuals of both sexes and all age groups organized into different kin groups using a (socially constructed) common origin as its primary reference”.

Hillmann (2007: 201) further suggests that the term “ethnicity” describes the often emotionally–charged consciousness of human beings of being a part of a certain ethnic group. Ethnicity usually adheres to a belief in common ancestry, a sense of common kinship, common language, and ways of cultural expression and interests².

It is this reference to the “emotional consciousness” which is reflected by such definitions of “ethnic identity” as that given by Tajfel (1981, after Phinney 1990: 500). According to this definition, ethnic identity is “that part of an individual’s self–concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group [...] together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.”

In short, I will use the term “ethnic identity” as considered to refer to the emotionally–loaded sense of belonging to a certain ethnic group (or *ethnie*³), with its own defining features, and the use of those features, by members of the group and outsiders alike, to distinguish themselves from others on both an individual level, and collectively.

I will then juxtapose some defining features of an *ethnie* as proposed by several authors, to argue that the *Cruzo'ob–Maya* have a distinct ethnic identity.

2.1. SOCIAL SCIENCES

The importance of “ethnic identity” became a major issue for the social sciences during the 1960s, leading to an increasing number of descriptions of ethnic minorities as part of many different, mainly western, i.e. European and American, societies, as noted by Phinney (1992: 156f.). The national censuses of countries with a population with a strong migratory background, such as peninsular Malaysia (Hirschman 1987), and the United Kingdom (cf. ESRC and ONS⁴); or with a large indigenous population such as Australia (cf. ANS⁵), collect data relating to ethnic identity, based on more or less precise aspects of the population under investigation. Disciplines dealing with identity, such as (developmental and social) psychology, sociology, and also anthropology, have thus focused on such assessment. There are many differences in the theoretical frameworks underlying the vari-

ous definitions of ethnic identity, with no consensus on the definition (Phinney 1990: 500), which has resulted in the application of many and diverse methods for its assessment⁶.

Nevertheless, there are points of consensus, at least in developmental and social psychology (Phinney 1992; Robertson et al. 1997), that ethnic identity (in Tajfel 1981) definition as given above) consists of several components, what those components are, and how they can be assessed. An accurate analysis of previous research on ethnic identity (Phinney 1990) was used to develop the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (MEIM) (Phinney 1992) which has since been refined (Robertson et al. 1997). Departing from the definition of ethnicity as “objective group membership as determined by the parents' ethnic heritage” (Phinney *ibid.*:158) – a definition that differs substantially from the one used here – the MEIM basically measures two factors⁷. These are *ethnic identity search*, made up of *self-identification*, i.e. reflection on and self-labeling of the own ethnic group; and *ethnic behaviors and practices*, including active participation in collective and individual group-specific practices, such as social activities with members of one's group, and participation in cultural traditions. The second factor is *affirmation, belonging, and commitment*, meaning “..the strength and valence of ethnic identity [...] represented by [...] items that assess attachment, pride and good feelings about the person's ethnicity” (Roberts et al. 1997: 303). Since its development in the early 1990s, the MEIM has been used in many investigations of ethnic identity, and has consistently proved to be highly reliable⁸.

However, when studying individual ethnic groups in particular settings and times, it seems valuable to focus on "ethnic behaviors and practices" alone (Phinney 1992: 159), although the approach then lacks comparability with other studies. Accordingly, in the present study, the assessment of ethnic identity relies primarily on religious factors.

In Linguistics, especially Sociolinguistics, the MEIM, as a methodological tool for assessing ethnic identity, has – to my knowledge – not been applied so far nor has it been explicitly addressed in the literature on the interrelationship of language and ethnicity. Fought (2004: 445) does, however, call for the use of methods derived from the social sciences, where “the social category of ethnicity has been the object of study in its own right”.

2.2. SOCIOLINGUISTICS AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTICS

In Sociolinguistics and Anthropological Linguistics, the study of ethnicity and language has been approached in several different ways. Anthropological Linguistics, for example, tries to describe the construction of identities – ethnic, social, sexual or other – based on “linguistic evidence – such as life stories, narratives, interviews, humor, oral traditions, literary practices, and [...] media discourses” (Bucholtz & Hall 2004: 369). Fought (2006: 19ff.) gives several examples of constructions of ethnic identity through linguistic features ranging from heritage languages to supra-segmental features and discourse markers, seen as indexical of a person's ethnic identity. In bilingual communities, the choice of a particular language over another is what Duranti (1997: 18) calls “indexicality“ and defines it thus: “it [the language choice] may index one's ethnicity or a particular political stance towards the relation between language and ethnicity.“

What Fought (2006: 24) calls “local and extra-local orientation” plays a crucial role in Labov's aforementioned study of Martha's Vineyard (1963), where the use of centralized diphthongs [ay] and [aw] predominates in the speech of the two ethnic groups. These two groups are then assigned a local “islander” identity. Here sociolinguistics comes into play,

in the attempt to account for language variation by correlating it with social variables such as age, sex, socio-economic status and ethnic identity as for example in the study of Martha's Vineyard, but also in Labov's study of a Philadelphia neighborhood (2001: 224), in which ethnicity is based on the speaker's parent's ethnicity – by which is obviously meant (racial) *descent*, and as such it is defined – or, in case they are of mixed ethnicity, it is assigned “on the basis of their personal history, associations, marriage, and self-identification” (Labov 2001: 246). Nevertheless, the distinctions are made only between single ethnic groups – Jews, Italians, African-Americans – and not within these groups, thus neglecting different degrees of “Italianess” or “Jewishness”.

In Rickford's (1985) case-study of two island-dwellers from one of the Sea Islands off the coast of Georgia, it has been shown that ethnicity might account for linguistic variation on the morpho-syntactical level. Ethnicity was understood here, in a somewhat basic way, as the distinction between a black and a white speaker.

Finally, in their study of language choice and code-switching in a bilingual Chinese community, Li et al. (1992) determined ethnic orientation (represented by an “ethnic index” (Li et al 1992 66) by means of the strength or number of network ties to members of the same ethnic groups, helping to explain some of the speakers' choices.

Only very recently has the objective of measuring ethnic identity – and the use of its outcomes as an independent variable in the study of linguistic behavior – been tackled in sociolinguistic research (Hoffman & Walker, *forthc.*; Otto 2009).

In their study of what they call “ethnolects” of different “ethnic” Toronto speech communities, Hoffman & Walker (*forthc.*) demonstrate, “that *differences in ethnic identity* provide an additional explanation for differences in linguistic behavior” (emphasis mine). This marks the central concern in both of the aforementioned studies: Though both studies differ considerably in the methods used and the linguistic level studied, they share the assumption that ethnic identity is not a binary feature but instead a scalar one, i.e. it may take continuous values for different members of a group which have different affinities to the group's identificatory features.

I will not address the Hoffman and Walker study in detail here; in the following I only outline the onset of their major project. Hoffman & Walker seek to show the role of varying (or changing between members of different generations) ethnic orientation in language variation. They first examine ethnic categorization in sociolinguistics, and show (Hoffman & Walker *forthc.*: 3f.) that the use of external criteria for ethnic differentiation (such as language, physical/racial characteristics, religion or lineal descent) in studies of language variation and change is understandable in the context of replicability, but are inadequate, they conclude (Hoffman & Walker *forthc.*: 4), “from the wider perspective of social science research”. Based on these assumptions, they construct a variable called “ethnic orientation” which they apply to the description of the “ethno-linguistic landscape” of Toronto with the aim “of determining the effects of informants' ethnic identity on their patterns of linguistic behavior” (Hoffman & Walker *forthc.*: 12). This ethnic orientation variable is based on a questionnaire comprising 35 questions with regard to the ethnic orientation of the subjects studied. The data gathered include: information about the subjects' ethnic (self) identification, language, language choice, cultural heritage, ethnic/linguistic practices of the informants' parents, attitudes towards the importance of ethnic culture and the experience/perception of discrimination (Hoffman & Walker *forthc.*: 11f.) The result is an “ethnic orientation index score” which appears to be highly reliable (Cronbach's Alpha = .905 (Hoffman & Walker *forthc.*: 12).

The approach taken by Otto (2009) differs, not only in terms of the linguistic level studied, as it focuses solely on language choice in a bilingual community. The community studied differs substantially from Hoffman and Walker's Toronto study in size as well as in its historical, social, and environmental constellations. Ultimately, the questions asked in the research were quite different, and the methods applied were adjusted accordingly. Here, following a short sketch of the socio-historical context, the research design, and some methodological issues, I present and discuss some of the results of that study.

3. ETHNIC IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE CHOICE IN FELIPE CARRILLO PUERTO

Some six decades of research on the post Caste War (1847–1901) Mayan communities in Quintana Roo focus almost entirely on the social, ethno-historical, and environmental (in its broadest sense) development of these groups. Both the beginning and the consequences of the Caste War (e.g. Reed 1964; Bricker 1977, 1989; Jones 1977), and the emerged revitalization movement – the Cult of the Talking Cross of the so-called Cruzo'ob-Maya – have been of interest to anthropologists (e.g. Zimmermann 1963; Jones 1974; Joseph 1985; Bricker 1989; Sullivan 1989) since the early publication of Villa Rojas (1945). More recent studies have focused on the socio-economical and socio-cultural consequences of the acculturation of this Maya subgroup (e.g. Gubler & Hostettler 1995; Hostettler 1993, 1996a, 1996b).

Additionally, there are several language- or culture-specific descriptions of *language maintenance and language shift* in the Maya area, including Kummer (1982); and, in greater detail, Pfeiler (1985, 1988, 1993) for northwest Yucatan, as well as Garzon et al. (1998), or Büscher-Grootehusmann (1999) for Guatemala. But taking into account the massive cultural change underway in the north-western part of Quintana Roo, the "Riviera Maya" between Cancun and Tulum, it is surprising that there has been no sociolinguistic research in Quintana Roo so far.

The research project described here⁹ is a description of the linguistic behavior of descendants of the former rebels nowadays living in the acculturated context of Felipe Carrillo Puerto. The questions raised in the project regard the description of language choice (in Fishman's (2000 [1965]) sense) in a given speech community in certain domains. But, as stated above, not only does it aim to sketch the bilingual situation among the descendants of the Cruzo'ob-Maya living in Felipe Carrillo Puerto, it also aims to outline a method of the assessment of ethnic identity, and the use of the outcome of this assessment as an independent variable in the sociolinguistic analysis of linguistic behavior.

3.1. THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In an early phase (1848) of the Caste War on the Yucatán Peninsula¹⁰, in which landworkers of various ethnic backgrounds had risen up against inhuman labor conditions under the *encomienda* system on Yucatán *haciendas*, the rebels retreated into the dense forests of east-central Quintana Roo. The emergence of the Cult of the Talking Cross marked the beginning of a revitalization movement, which aimed at the unification of the uprising rural laborers by means of a proper ethnic identity (cf. Otto 2009: 18), which resulted in the formation of the so-called Cruzo'ob-Maya¹¹, what has elsewhere been described as "ethno-genesis" (Hostettler 2000: 2f.).

During that time the Spanish variety spoken throughout Mesoamerica was rejected by the insurrectionists as “the language of the Mexican conquerors” (cf. Villas Rojas 1945: 48) and consequently *Maya t’aan* became the unifying language. The people of the emerging *ethnie* did not only isolate themselves geographically (in the forests of what later became Quintana Roo) and culturally (with an exclusive religious congregation) but also linguistically, from Mexico.

For economic reasons which cannot be further specified here, the Cruzo'ob had to make concessions to the Mexican government during the first half of the twentieth century, which led to increasing numbers of federal institutions for local administration, as well as the construction of schools and roads. Following internal divisions within several rival groups in the Cruzo'ob communities, nowadays there are four villages¹² known as sanctuaries, each one hosting one of the (former) talking crosses, which are guarded by the companies¹³ of the holy cross: *Tulum*, *Chumpón*, *Tixcacal Guardia* and *Chancah Veracruz*. Those villages are all located in the eastern part of the Yucatán Peninsula, in the federal state of Quintana Roo.

Since the 1930s and 1940s, many of the descendants of the former rebels moved to the province capital of the *Municipio Felipe Carrillo Puerto* of the same name, in order to find work there.

During the last two decades of the twentieth century, another center of tourism (along with those established along Mexico's Pacific coast – namely Puerto Vallarta and Acapulco during the 1970s) was established in Cancun and expanded rapidly to the south. Nowadays, it comprises the Caribbean coast from Cancun to Tulum with another center at Playa del Carmen, and is known as the “Riviera Maya”. Earlier in the twentieth century the heartlands of Quintana Roo south of Tulum – including the National Park Sian Ka'an up to the small town of Limones in the south and to the federal border of Quintana Roo with Yucatan and Campeche in the west – has been given the name “La Zona Maya”, referring to the land of the former Maya rebels.

Both the Tulum ruins, surely one of the most visited archaeological sites in Mexico, and Caribbean beaches well developed for tourism, have led to growing numbers of tourists (cf. FVW 2004: 66) on the one hand, and growing numbers of workers from other parts of the Yucatán Peninsula, Mexico and other countries during the last decade (cf. Por Esto! 23.11.2008)¹⁴.

At the time of this study, including the growing numbers of migrants, the small town of *Felipe Carrillo Puerto* had 16,500 inhabitants out of 56,000 living in the *Municipio*¹⁵. More than 26,000 inhabitants of the Municipio stated that they spoke an indigenous language, and of this group, 16.9% said they did not to speak any Spanish at all in the last census. The remainder were bilingual. In relation to these numbers, it should be noted that no explanation is given about what makes a speaker bilingual in these censuses. Nor are the languages specified which fall under the designation “indigenous language”. Due to the relatively high number of immigrants from other parts of Mexico, other indigenous languages are spoken as well, but Yucatec Maya is still the most likely. But these numbers have to be taken *cum grano salis*, as Güémez Pineda (1994: 1) points out, due to the fact that official Mexican census data concerning the sociolinguistic reality are “incomplete, insufficiently formulated and represent the social reality in accordance with the dominant ideological system.”

3.2. THE ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE CRUZO'OB MAYA

The following table (Table 1) shows the defining features of an ethnic group or an *ethnie* as given by De Vos (1996), Hutchison & Smith (1996) and Gabbert (2006), which reveals some agreement as to what makes an *ethnie*. Applying those features to the group of the Cruzo'ob–Maya, it becomes obvious that they form an ethnic group in its own right.

Tab. 1: Components of ethnies/ethnic group

De Vos (1996)	Hutchison/Smith (1996)	Gabbert (2006)
"ethnic group"	"ethnie"	"ethnie" or "ethnic group"*
a set of traditions not shared by others	elements of common culture	distinctive cultural criteria and symbols
"folk" religious beliefs and practices	religious beliefs	beliefs
language	language	language
sense of historical continuity	shared historical memories of heroes and events	history
common ancestry or place of origin	common origin in time and place, sense of fictive kinship	–
–	customs	norms
–	link with homeland	–
–	sense of solidarity	–

* Both groupings have the given defining features in common but are further differentiated (see Gabbert 2006: 94f. for a detailed discussion)

The basic assumption underlying all these definitions is that ethnic groups bear a “set of traditions not shared by others” (De Vos 1996), in other words “elements of a common culture” (Hutchison & Smith 1996), or “distinctive cultural criteria and symbols” (Gabbert 2006). There is at least partly strong agreement as to what these “elements” are: First, the authors agree that (“folk”) religious beliefs are essential to an ethnic group. Thus, the Cult of the Talking Cross itself is the major religious feature of the Cruzo'ob–Maya, with the attendance of ceremonies at the *iglesia tradicional*, the praying of Roman Catholic sermons in Yucatec Maya (such as the Lord's Prayer, the *Ka Yum*), and the knowledge of the *almat'aan*, the sacred revelations of the Holy Cross presented by the priests to the community (which in ancient times were spoken by the cross itself, i.e. by a ventriloquist. This is why it is called the Cult of the Talking Cross, cf. Reed 1971: 136ff.).

The rejection of Spanish, as shown above, was associated with advocating the exclusive use of *mayat'aan*, the language of the majority of the rural laborers. This constitutes the second major component in the construction of the *ethnie*.

History, "a sense of historical continuity," or "shared historical memories of heroes and events" make up the third major component. In the case of the Cruzo'ob, even nowadays the memories of the Caste War and the following transition phase, which are referred to as the time of the *ésklabitud* and the *libertad* respectively, are topics often brought up in the narrations of the Cruzo'ob–Maya.

Only Gabbert (2006) and Hutchison & Smith (1996) name "customs" or "norms" as a further component of *ethnie*. During interviews conducted with active members of the Cult of the Talking Cross, the wearing of the traditional white clothing, the *sak nook'*, was repeatedly cited as a feature of the "real" Cruzo'ob–Maya (or, better, the "real" *macehualo'ob*, the term used as a self-designation by the Cruzo'ob, which in turn is a term coined by historians and anthropologists (Bartolomé 2001: EN5). A further factor was membership in one of the "companies" of the Holy Cross. Nowadays, the function of such companies, aside from guarding the shrines of the holy crosses in the sanctuaries, is chiefly social (cf. Grube 1990).

Finally, De Vos (1996) and Hutchison & Smith (1996), agree upon a "common ancestry or place of origin" and a "common origin in time and space" or "sense of fictive kinship," respectively. This reference is not easy to establish, as the history of the Cruzo'ob–Maya is quite young, and it seems that only a more mythological origin or ancestry is acceptable here. However, the insurrectionists' reliance on their indigenous heritage, as for example in the "Proclamación de Juan de la Cruz" (in 1850, see Bricker 1989: 344ff. for a detailed account), the first speech of the cross, in which the indigeneous alliance against the Mexicans was evoked, seems to provide such a mythological connection to the past.

It becomes obvious that the emergence of Cruzo'ob–Maya generated an *ethnie* in its own right, which differs considerably from other Mayan groups of the Yucatan Peninsula. Accordingly, it seems justified to call this an ethnogenesis, based on the revitalization movement that brought into life the Cult of the Talking Cross.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

As stated above the aim of the present study is a domain-based description of the bilingual language situation found in Felipe Carrillo Puerto, regarding language choice. The present paper, however, will focus exclusively on the question whether and to what extent affinity to the Cruzo'ob Maya led to different patterns of language choice in different domains. Given the fact that rejecting Spanish was one of the defining components for the new ethnic group, it was of interest how this – historic – rejection now influences patterns of language choice by those informants who opted for acculturation, in the acculturated context of Felipe Carrillo Puerto.

The initial basic hypothesis was that the greater the affinity to the Cruzo'ob–Maya, the stronger the choice of Maya for communication. Conversely, the weaker the affinity to the Cruzo'ob, the stronger the tendency would be to choose Spanish.

For the original study¹⁶ some 46 bilingual citizens living in Felipe Carrillo Puerto were chosen by using the "snowball method". Despite the weaknesses surrounding representativeness, the method was used to select informants most likely to have had some relationship to the Cruzo'ob. Thus, the informants were to be bilingual, additionally be born and raised in Felipe Carrillo Puerto or in one of the surrounding villages, but their lives would center in the town. They were to be of Mayan descent, i.e. both of their parents should be Mayan and from the region, and they were to be baptized Roman Catholic. This resulted in the following numbers of informants (Tab. 2):

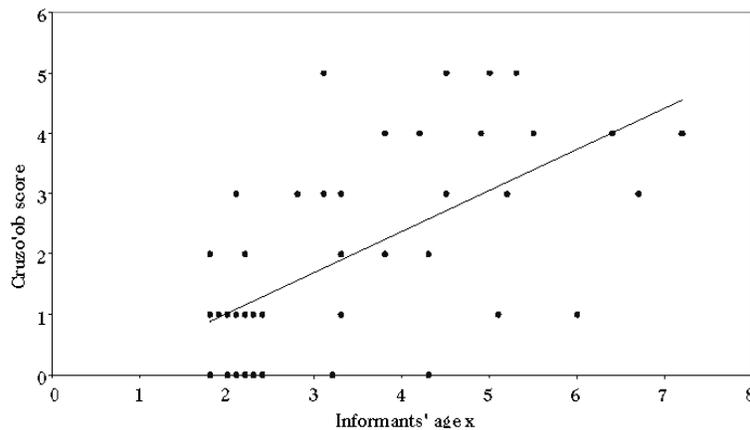
Tab. 2: Informants' age and sex

Sex \ Age	>45	≤45	≤23
male	9	12	8
female	2	5	10

The informants were interviewed and I copied their answers on site into a questionnaire which was used as a guideline for the interview. The three-part questionnaire was set up as follows: The first part gathered basic personal data. Aside from sex, age, civil status and so on, this section also included some questions about religious affiliation. These were important to assess the informants' affinity to the Cruzo'ob Maya, and thus their ethnic affinity. As shown above, there is agreement over three major components making up an ethnic group: religion or religious affiliation, language, and a shared history. The last two assumed equal among the informants selected, the remaining distinctive feature was religious affiliation. This provided the basis for determining the so-called Cruzo'ob score. Several components (five tokens by three types) were identified to indicate such an affiliation: participation in ceremonies in one of the traditional Catholic churches (i.e. in one of the four above-mentioned sanctuaries), knowledge of Catholic prayers in Maya (which was actually split into two items), and knowing the meaning of special vocabulary frequently (and exclusively) used in the traditional Catholic churches (two items). A short note in relation to these components: Participation in the ceremonies is widespread among the inhabitants of the region – in several interviews the informants said they visited one or sometimes two of the traditional churches for the major ceremonies (every 16 months in each sanctuary, cf. Hinz 2003) but had nothing else to do with the Cult of the Talking Cross. Accordingly, this feature *alone* – a reliable indicator of a relationship to the Cult of the Talking Cross *prima facie* – was obviously insufficient to determine such an affiliation. The next component "knowledge of Catholic prayers in Maya" was split up into two parts, namely "the knowledge of *one* Catholic prayer in Maya" and "knowledge of *more than one* Catholic prayer in Maya" – on the one hand to provide for the binarity of the items, on the other hand to double-value the score of a person who knows more than one prayer, which would not be possible without identificatory or religious intention as might be the case for those knowing just one prayer. Finally, the informants should explain the meaning of some expressions, which reportedly occur only in the context of the Cult of the Talking Cross: *almat'aan* and *serbiisyoj*¹⁷.

The sum of the score for these five criteria was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded – despite the small number of items – a reliability of $\alpha = 0.757$ ¹⁸.

Fig. 1: CSc x Informants' Age



The fig. 1 shows the distribution of the Cruzo'ob score by informants' age. It becomes obvious that the majority of CSc =1 can be allocated to informants around the age of twenty and slightly above, whereas the majority of informants of =45 rank at least at CSc 3.

Indicated by the trend line which represents a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.393$, the data show a modest positive correlation between the ethnic identity and the informants' age in this sample.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of questions about the linguistic behavior of the informants. The informants were asked to answer the questions about their language use in a set of 34 speech situations (SPS)¹⁹, which were provided to the informants by explicitly describing setting, topic and participants²⁰. Given these three factors, the informants answered which language they would use in the given SPS. They were given five options to chose from: *puro maya/puro español*, *mayormente maya/mayormente español* and *los dos*, the latter for such statements in which the informants named both languages. The question as to whether and to what extend *code-switching* was meant here was not further addressed, as this was considered as a project in its own right.

However, the 34 SPS were grouped into a total of seven domains of language use and correlated with the social data gathered beforehand. I will comment in some detail in the following section on the extent of the correlation with the ethnic affinity data from the *family* domain and the total evaluation of *all* domains.

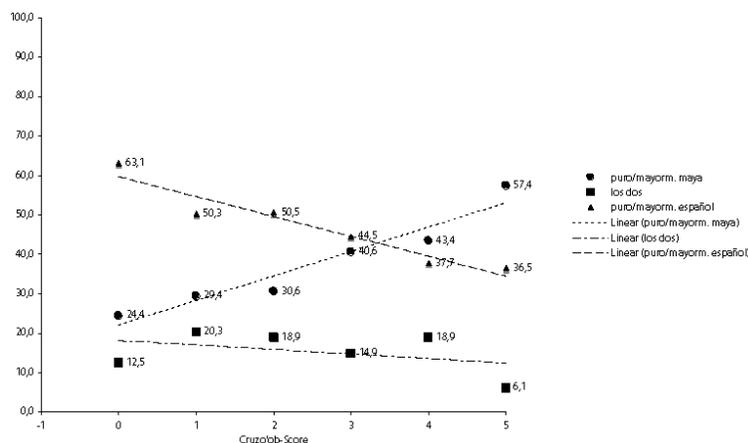
Finally, in a third section asked some questions about the informants' language attitudes, which are not further outlined here.

3.4. RESULTS

The following figure shows the mean percentages for the language choice acrosss all domains according to the informants' Cruzo'ob-Score.

It becomes obvious that slightly less than a quarter (24.4%) of the informants with virtually no affinity to the Cult of the Talking Cross (CSc 0) said they used Maya whereas almost two thirds (63.1%) of this group said they used *puro/mayormente español*²¹.

Fig. 2: Language choice across all domains for the five Cruzo'ob-Score-groups

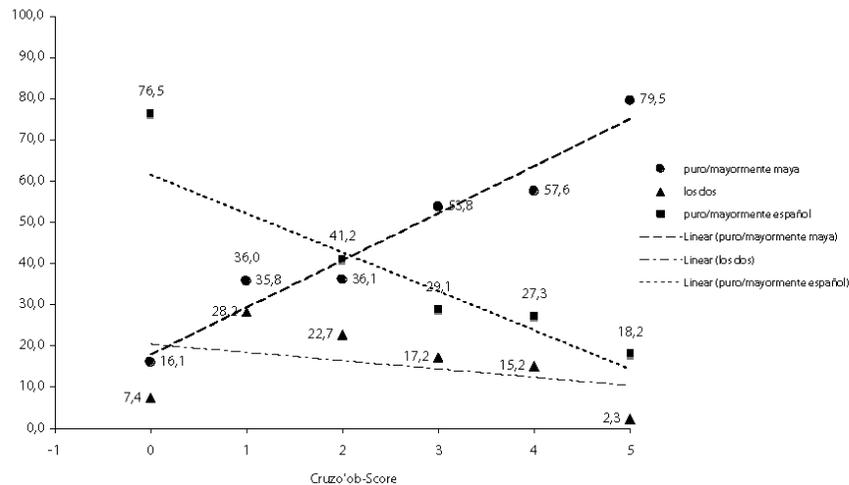


The use of Spanish across all domains decreases as ethnic affinity increases: Only around the half of the informants with a CSc 1 or 2 said they used Spanish, coming down to 44.5% for the CSc 3 informants. No more than 37.7% or 36.5% of the informants with the strongest affinity to the Cruzo'ob–Maya (CSc 4 and CSc 5, respectively) said they used Spanish. Thus, as the dashed trendline indicates, this supports the assumption of a negative correlation of ethnic affinity and the use of Spanish across all domains, showing a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.9203^{22}$. The reverse situation can be observed for the use of Maya: whereas CSc 1 and 2 informants are quite close in their use of Maya (29.4% and 30.6% respectively), the percentage for the CSc 3 informants almost resembles the results for the use of Spanish of the same group (40.6%), with the CSc 4 informants still quite close (43.4%). For the informants with the strongest affinity to the Cruzo'ob–Maya, the use of Maya increases considerably by approximately one third (57.4%). This trend is indicated by the dotted line showing an almost identical coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.927$.

Turning to the *family* domain, two results are of interest here. First I would like to comment on the overall language choice in this domain across all SPS.

The following figure shows the mean percentages of the different Cruzo'ob score groups for their language choices for communicating in the family domain.

Fig. 3: Language choice x ethnic affinity across all SPS in the family domain



Both trendlines²³ indicate an almost symmetrical pattern of language choice for the two languages in correlation to ethnic affinity, confirming the assumption made in the preceding section regarding language choice across all domains. The percentages for both of the Maya options increase steadily from 16.1% of the CSc 0 group of informants, up to 79.5% for the group with the strongest ethnic affinity, with a coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.948$, indicated by the dashed trend line.

While more than two thirds of the informants with only a minimal affinity to the Cruzo'ob–Maya chose *puro* or *mayormente español*, these values decrease steadily, down to

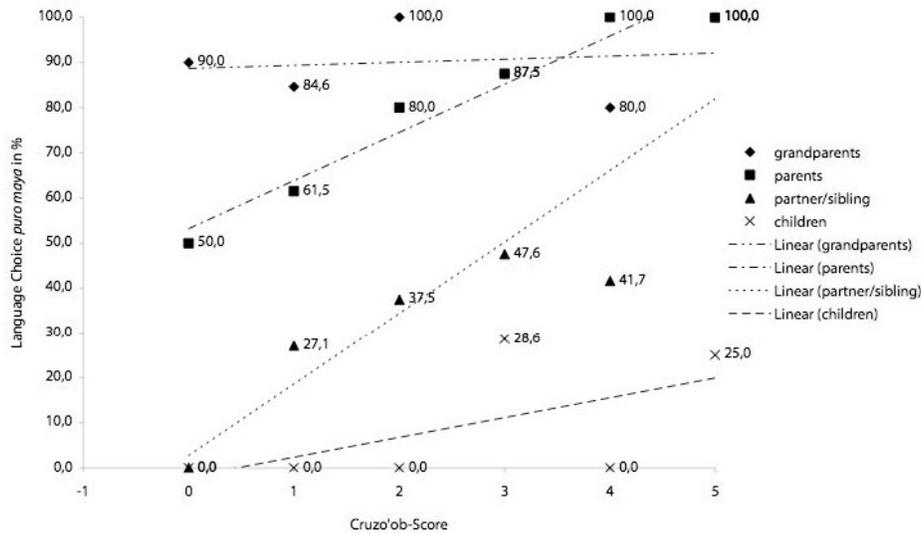
18.2% of the CSc 5 informants making this choice as indicated by the dotted trend line representing the coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.746$.

In the following, the language choice of *puro maya* within the family domain is divided according to the generation-specific language choice. The informants were asked to state the language of their choice for communicative acts with kin of different generations, namely children, partner and siblings²⁴, parents and grandparents.

As the figure shows, the choices for communicating with the different generations vary considerably for the four of them, whereas in respect to the ethnic affinity, the choices differ substantially for the sibling/partner and parent generation, slightly for the children generation and remains almost constant for the grandparent generation.

For SPS involving the grandparents, nearly all the informants said they used *puro maya*, in fact, as shown here, the percentages of the choice of *puro maya* remained constantly high between 80% and 100%, no matter what the ethnic affinity was. This is confirmed by a very low coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.024$) as indicated by the dashed double dotted trend line.

Fig. 4: Language choice puro maya x addressee's generation x ethnic affinity



For communicating with the children generation, informants with a Cruzo'ob score of no more than 2, as well as those graded CSc 4 did not chose Maya at all. However, little over a quarter (28.6%) of the CSc 3 informants did so, along with a quarter (25%) of the informants with the highest score (CSc 5), so the dashed trend line indicates a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.35$.

On the contrary, for communicating with the partner/sibling generation, ethnic affinity seems to play a crucial role in the choice of *puro maya*, as indicated by the dotted trend line showing a coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.8111$: Whereas none of the informants with CSc 0 chose *puro maya*, its use increases up to 47.6% for the CSc 3 informants, and decreases slightly to 41.7% for the CSc 4 informants. The group with the

strongest affinity to the Cruzo'ob–Maya chose 100% *puro maya* for communicating with its own generation.

An even larger number of informants stated that they use *puro maya* with their parental generation. Exactly half of the informants with no affinity (CSc 0) to the Cruzo'ob named *puro maya* as their choice in SPS involving their parents. This number increases steadily up to 100% for the informants with CSc 4 and CSc 5, resulting in a nearly perfect coefficient of determination of $R^2 = 0.9472$.

4. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The results for language choice across all domains and across all SPS within the family domain presented in the previous section seem to confirm the assumption that different degrees of ethnic identity may account for differences in the linguistic behavior of a certain group. Nevertheless, comparing the coefficients of determination for each of the Spanish language options in both results, the interrelation of ethnic identity and language choice does not seem to be particularly strong in the family domain when it comes to Spanish, whereas for choosing Maya in the family domain, informants' ethnic affinity seems to be a factor, as suggested by the increasing percentages of informants who chose one of the Maya options – virtually identical in both analyses. Altogether, the data show the effect of different degrees of ethnic affinity on language choice in a given context, indicating that the loss of affinity to the Cruzo'ob–Maya can – at least partly – explain the diminishing use of Maya in this sample.

However, a further insight into the interrelation of ethnic identity and language choice provides the results of the informants' choices of *puro maya* in the family domain for intergenerational communication. On the one hand, the overall use of Maya decreases from (addressee–)generation to (addressee–)generation no matter what the ethnic affinity of the speaker is, which becomes obvious when comparing the different values of the choice of *puro maya* for each CSc group – most probably indicating a language shift from Maya to Spanish.

However, Maya is the language most often used for communicating with grandparents for informants of all affinity stages – obviously there is no other option. As shown elsewhere (Otto 2009) even the youngest group of informants (≤ 23) almost entirely (88.9%) said they use Maya with the grandparent generation. For communicating with the children generation, ethnic affinity is of little importance and the level of *puro maya* chosen by the informants is quite low. Thus, if Maya is not the desired language for the children to grow up with, it is not chosen for communicating with this generation, unless the individual has a very strong ethnic affinity. Accordingly, but to a much stronger degree, ethnic affinity shapes the choice of *puro maya* for communicating with the parent and sibling/partner generation: When unconstrained – the assumed monolingualism for the grandparent generation or the desired monolingualism for the children generation is here taken as a constraint – ethnic identity is a factor in language choice in so far as a stronger affinity to the Cruzo'ob–Maya advocates the use of Maya for communicating with the parent generation as well as the person's own generation.

The aim of the study from which this paper draws its data was twofold: first to give an initial overview of the sociolinguistic situation regarding bilingual language choice (and language attitudes, cf. above) *in the special context of Felipe Carrillo Puerto*. In order to accomplish that goal, the informants' ethnic identity had to be assessed to account for its

influence on these choices. For this task the Cruzo'ob score was developed to indicate the varying degrees of the informants' ethnic identity, here described as *ethnic affinity*. The distribution of different degrees of affinity for the whole sample could be shown, where ethnic identity increased to a certain degree with the informants' age. These results were then used as an independent variable in describing the linguistic behavior in question, presumably confirming the assumption that the choice of Maya across all domains correlates positively with the increasing affinity to the Cruzo'ob–Maya.

Furthermore, some data suggests that in the family domain, ethnic affinity plays a crucial role in language choice, where it is not shaped to a greater extent by other constraints such as the grandparents' Maya–monolingualism or the aim that the children should be monolingual in Spanish. It was thus possible to show that ethnic identity has to be regarded as an important factor in the language transmission within the family domain, the most important domain for the maintenance of an indigenous minority language, as Fishman repeatedly emphasizes (1991, 2001).

One concluding remark on future research: In virtually every situation where different *ethnies* come into contact in whatever constellation – be it indigenous groups that have become a minority due to immigration of other groups as investigated in the present study; or migrated indigenous minorities from other areas of a nation such as the *indígenas* migrating from all parts of Mexico to the *Riviera Maya*; internationally migrated ethnic minorities such as the *Mexicans* who have migrated (legally or not) to the US; and many other contact situations of this kind – a more detailed account of the interrelation of the different degrees of ethnic identity and the linguistic behavior is necessary. This is the case with any level of linguistic description, whether the level of language choice, a macro–sociolinguistic approach, as in the present study, or a micro–sociolinguistic approach, as undertaken by Hoffman & Walker (forthc.) in their recent investigation of phonological variants in Toronto. But, and this is the remaining methodological *desideratum*, in order to guarantee the data gained can be compared, some standardization is to be desired, not only in terms of the methods for eliciting linguistic data, but also in terms of the assessment of ethnic identity. The approach of Hoffman & Walker (forthc.) as well as the one shown in the present study – the assessment of ethnic affinity or ethnic orientation through several components, that make up the informants' identity which are then added up – seems a promising way forward. Accordingly, future research should also consider methods from the social sciences, such as the above mentioned MEIM applied in developmental psychology for assessing ethnic identity, in order to develop a standardized and thus replicable and comparable way of investigating the interrelation of ethnic identity and linguistic behavior.

NOTES

1. I'd like to thank Fritz Rauch (Univ. of Gießen), James Walker (York Univ., Toronto) and Allison Williams for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.
2. Translation mine: "Ethnizität (...) bezeichnet das oft emotional stark aufgeladene Bewusstsein von Menschen, einer bestimmten Ethnie anzugehören. Ethnizität beinhaltet in der Regel einen Glauben an eine gemeinsame Herkunft, ein übergreifendes Verwandtschaftsgefühl und Wir-Bewusstsein, gemeinsame Sprache, kulturelle Ausdrucksformen und Interessen."
3. Following Hutchison & Smith (1996: 4) the French term *ethnie* is alternately used to denote an „ethnic group“.

4. Office for National Statistics: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/default.asp>; see also the webpage of the Economic & Social Research Council under <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index.aspx> (last visited 01/2009).
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics: <http://www.abs.gov.au/> (all weblinks last visited 01/2009).
6. Cf. Phinney (1990) for a comprehensive review of reseach outlines, methods and results of many different approaches for the measurement of ethnic identity from 1972 on.
7. The latest version of the MEIM breaks it down to those two factors. The MEIM is freely accessible under www.calstatela.edu/academic/psych/html/phinney.htm (last visited 12/2008).
8. According to J. Phinney's homepage, cf. FN5.
9. The data presented are based on the author's Ph.D.-thesis (cf. Otto 2009).
10. For reasons that led to the Caste War as well as its outcomes cf. Reed (1964), for a detailed account of the religious and social movement see Brieker (1989) and Sullivan (1989).
11. The name *Cruzo'ob* is derived from span. *crúz* 'cross' and the *Mayat'ään*-morpheme indicating plural {-o'ob}.
12. In some official documents the name of a fifth village *Cruz Parlante* is mentioned (Otto 2009), though it remains unclear which location this name refers to, most probably a recently (re-) installed sanctuary at Felipe Carrillo Puerto is meant, cf. Hinz (2007).
13. For a full-fledged description of the organization of the companies of the holy cross, see Grube (1990).
14. <http://www.porestto.net/quintana-roo/8026-mayor-migracion-hacia-quintana-roo> (12/2008).
15. All numbers taken from INEGI (1999).
16. Generously funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD: D/3/34969).
17. Actually five expressions were given to the informants during the interviews: whereas two items (*jajal dios* and *ch'a chaak*) were used as distracting elements, the results for the expression *maasew'al* could not be evaluated (cf. Otto n.d.). Accordingly, only two expressions were evaluated.
18. Usually a threshold of reliability of .80 is given (Diekmann 2006: 220).
19. These were originally called somewhat clumsily *Sprachverwendungssituationen* (lit. „situations of language use“, Otto 2009). – I still think this describes best what they are: social situations with their defining components in which one or another language is used. In this sense a single domain of language use always consists of different speech situations.
20. Cf. Greenfield 1972 for detailed description and discussion of this method.
21. The use of both languages (in which constellation whatsoever, termed *los dos* here) was relatively stable for the informants of CSc between 1 and 4, ranging from 14.9% (CSc 3) to 20.3% (CSc 2). On the contrary, the percentages for informants with the weakest (CSc 0/12.5%) and the strongest affinity (CSc 5/6.1%) are – not surprisingly – quite low ($R^2 = 0.1595$).
22. Due to the outlined weaknesses these numbers were statistically not further computed.
23. The third trendline indicating the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.1532$) for *los dos*-responses resembles the results shown for the language choices across all domains in fig. 2.
24. Assuming for both the same generation as the informants'.

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