

Mestizo attitudes towards quichua and its speakers

Actitud de la población mestiza urbana de Quito hacia el quichua

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Chapter

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CHAPTER VI

MESTIZO ATTITUDES TOWARDS QUICHUA AND ITS SPEAKERS

Majorities that are deaf to their own injustice in the sphere of cultural democracy, are usually equally deaf to their injustices of the system. (Edwards 1993:56)

6.0 Introduction

The previous chapters have discussed a series of efforts to maintain Indian languages and recover Indian cultures in Ecuador, as in other multilingual Andean countries (i.e., Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala) during the last 15 years. Important developments have included new educational bilingual programs, greater access to mass media, and the opening of official spaces for the Indian population (CEPP 1992, 1993; Chiodi 1990). Nevertheless, the *mestizo* urban population has not had strong participation in such social changes. This lack of participation has intensified the tension between Indians and *mestizos*, especially on the part of the *mestizos* who see educational opportunities as a way of empowering the Indian population and endangering the permanent social structure of the country in which the Indian people and their language(s) have been considered second class. From the perspective of the dominant group, Indian people are associated with socioeconomic, educational, and cultural underdevelopment. Therefore, the Indian population is seen as one that needs to be civilized, and learning Spanish has been one of the tools to achieve civilization and national development. From such a view, learning the dominant language has been an educational goal on the part of the *mestizos* for the Indians, since Spanish fluency is seen as facilitating the integration of Indians into the mainstream.

While traditionally the focus of attention regarding linguistic and ethnic attitudes has been on the Indian population, this chapter discusses the Quichua-Spanish contact from the *mestizos*' viewpoint, and describes their knowledge of, and attitudes towards, Ecuador's multilingualism. The analysis is based on data from a survey developed in the capital city of Quito in 1992 (see Chapter III), and informal conversations carried out in the same city in 1996.

6.1 *Mestizo* Awareness of the Languages Spoken in Ecuador

When asked which languages were spoken in the country, 100% (n= 60) of the informantsⁱ gave Spanish (Sp) as the country's language. 68% mentioned Quichua (Q) and 27% Foreign Languages (FL) such as English, French, Italian and German. 18% mentioned vernacular languages (V) to refer to other Indian languages spoken in Ecuador (i.e., Shuar, Achuar, Cofan, Secoya (see Figure 2)). 12% of the informants gave vague answers (O) such as: "languages from the jungle", "languages of the Indians", "other dialects", "derived languages"(Table 6.1 and Figure 6.1).

Table 6.1 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador.

Languages	%
Sp	100
Q	68
FL	27
V	18
O	12

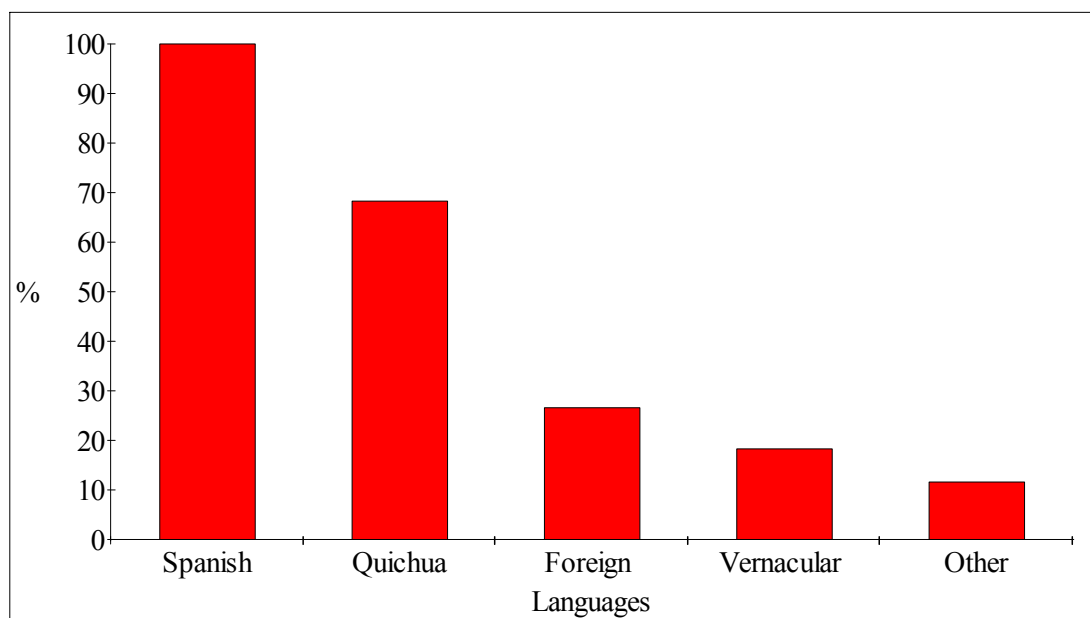


Figure 6.1 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador.

Even if the informants were aware that other languages are spoken in the country, it seems that they did not have any detailed knowledge about the multilingual character of Ecuador. For instance, the informants spontaneously gave the Indian languages the status of ‘dialects without grammar.’ For others, there was no difference between Quichua, ‘other languages’ and ‘languages of the Indians.’ *Mestizos* have a very difficult time pinpointing where these languages are spoken or how many speakers there are.

For the majority of the informants, Indian languages and Indian people are not considered as part of modern Ecuadorian identity, but as a symbol of the past. In this respect it is interesting to point out the contrast between Ecuadorian *mestizos*’ view of Ecuador, which does not admit Indians as the basis of the country’s identity, and the typical foreigner’s view of Ecuador as an Indian country.

6.1.1 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador by Gender

Although 100% of both men (n= 32) and women (n= 28) mentioned that Spanish is the first language of the country, 72% of the men and 64% of the women also mentioned Quichua. What was perhaps unexpected was that a high percentage of the women (43%) mentioned foreign languages. Women considered foreign languages to be more important than any Indian languages, because it is through foreign languages that new job opportunities are offered. While only 11% of the women

mentioned vernacular languages, men displayed a higher percentage (25%). During the interviews some women said they had not interest in talking about the Indian languages or the Indian situation in general (Table 6.2 and Figure 6.2).

Table 6.2 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador (by Gender) (%).

Languages	Men	Women
Sp	100	100
Q	72	64
FL	3	43
V	25	11
O	18	4

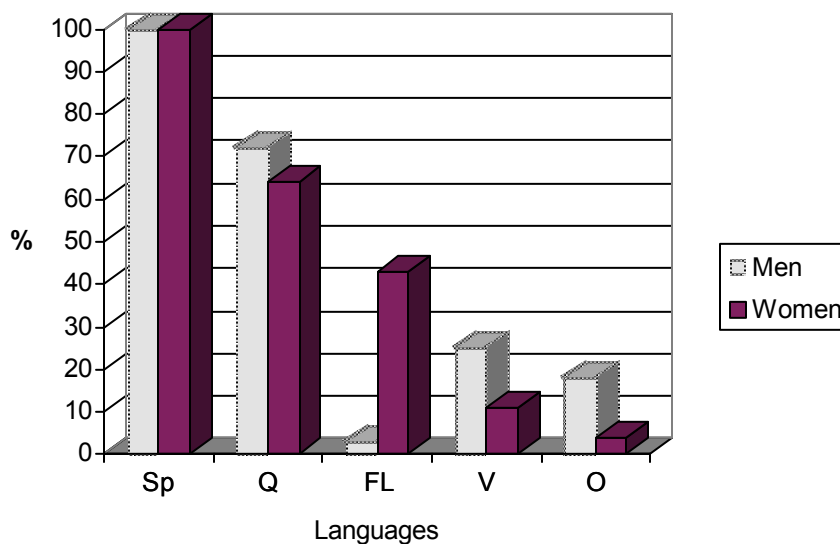


Figure 6.2 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador (by Gender).

6.1.2 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador by Age

In response to the same question “What languages are spoken in Ecuador,” it is surprising to see that 100% of the informants under age 20 mentioned Quichua. This group explained that their familiarity with the national linguistic situation of the country comes from their study of social sciences, the continuous presence of Indian leaders in the cities (e.g., national congress, national Indian confederation) and their recent participation in university programs. In addition, the younger speakers have visited Indian *comunidades*, seen the Indian migrants in the city, read books and novels about the Indian population and, during the last five years, seen the news and public writings about the Indian population. However, during informal conversations carried out in 1996 with university students in Quito (ages 19 to 27), it was clear that they only had a general knowledge of the Indian languages, and did not know specifically how many Indian languages were spoken in Ecuador or where the ethnic groups were located.

Table 6.3 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador (by Age) (%).

<i>Languages</i>	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60
Spanish	100	100	100	100	100	100
Quichua	100	71	67	57	40	67
Foreign Lg	60	29	22	14	0	33
Vernacular	20	25	11	0	0	33
Other	0	7	11	29	20	16

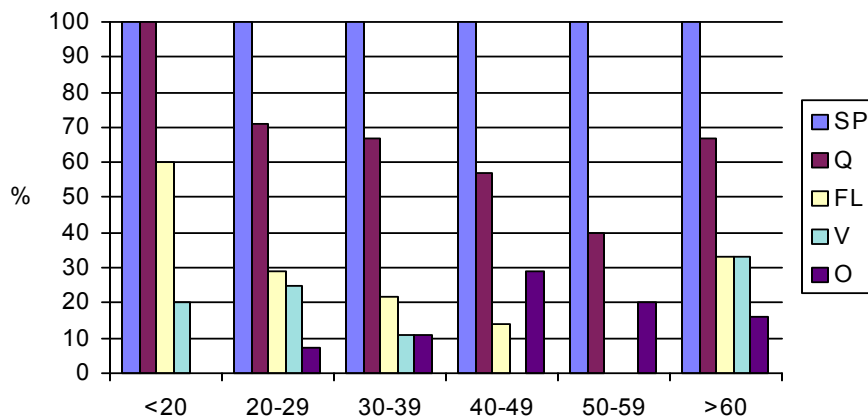


Figure 6.3 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador (by Age).

The youngest age group also had the highest awareness of foreign languages (namely, English), probably because of the requirements of the Ecuadorian educational system and the introduction of modern technology and international mass media programs in the country. The 40-49 and 50-59 age-groups seem the least aware of multilingualism in the country. They displayed the lowest ratings about the use of Quichua (57% and 40% respectively), and did not mention the use of foreign languages and vernacular languages.

Within the oldest age group (60>) 67% recognizes the use of Quichua and 33% mentions foreign and vernacular languages. Some of the informants in this age-group believe that foreign languages help develop the country, while vernacular languages are a problem for a poor small country like Ecuador. This belief reveals the stereotypical idea that Quichua is not a language and that other vernacular languages are only Quichua dialects, with no grammar and no writing system.

6.1.3 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador by Occupation

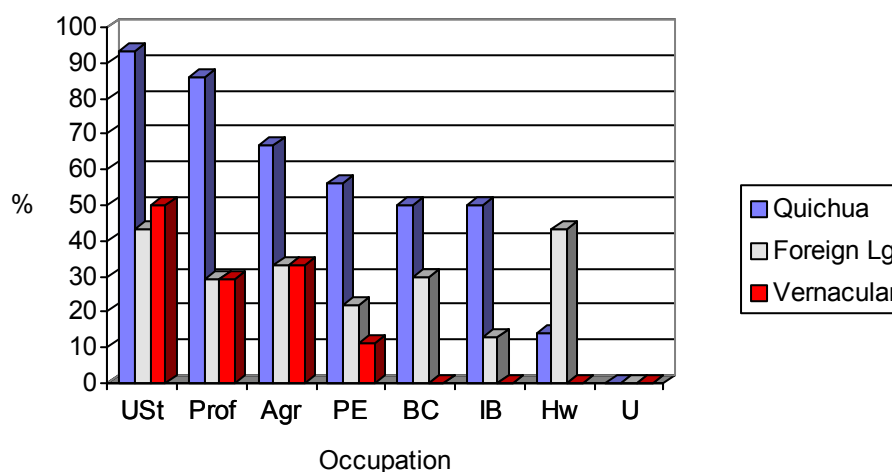
The relation between the informants' occupation and their linguistic awareness is displayed in Table 6.4 and Figure 6.4.

The highest rates of awareness of Quichua was found among university students (93%) and professionals (86%). Being involved in academia appears to expose the individual to more information about the national situation.

Table 6.4 *Mestizo* Awareness of Languages Spoken in Ecuador (by Occupation).

Languages	Ust n= 14	Prof n= 17	Agr n= 3	PE n= 9	BC n= 10	IB n= 8	Hw n= 7	U 2
Spanish	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Quichua	93	86	67	56	50	50	14	0
Foreign Lg	43	29	33	22	30	13	43	0
Vernacular	50	29	33	11	0	0	0	0
Other	0	43	33	11	40	12	0	0

USt= University Students; Prof=Professionals; Agr= Agricultural workers; PE=Public employees,ⁱⁱ BC=Blue collars; IB=Informal business; Hw=Housewives; U=Unemployed

Figure 6.4 *Mestizo* Awareness of Quichua, Vernacular Languages and Foreign Languages Spoken in Ecuador (by Occupation).

The lowest awareness of Quichua (14%) is displayed by housewives, who instead tend to be more aware of the presence of foreign languages, especially English.

Vernacular languages are also mentioned by students (50%) and professionals (29%). In spite of the apparent similarity between the answers given by students and professionals, students appear to have more precise information about ethnic languages. 43% of the professionals and 40% of the blue-collar workers gave vague answers ('Other'), such as "the language of the Indians," "the dialects of the jungle," "the dialects of Quichua."

The rest of the informants (Unemployed) only mentioned Spanish as the language of the country.

6.2 Predictions About Quichua for the Next Six Years

When asked "What do you do think is going to happen to Quichua during the next six years," the informants did not show much optimism regarding Quichua and the other Indian languages. 42% of the informants affirm that Quichua will disappear, 27% think that Quichua could be maintained, while 32% consider that the future of Quichua is uncertain (Table 6.5 and Figure 6.5).

Table 6.5 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Quichua Language.

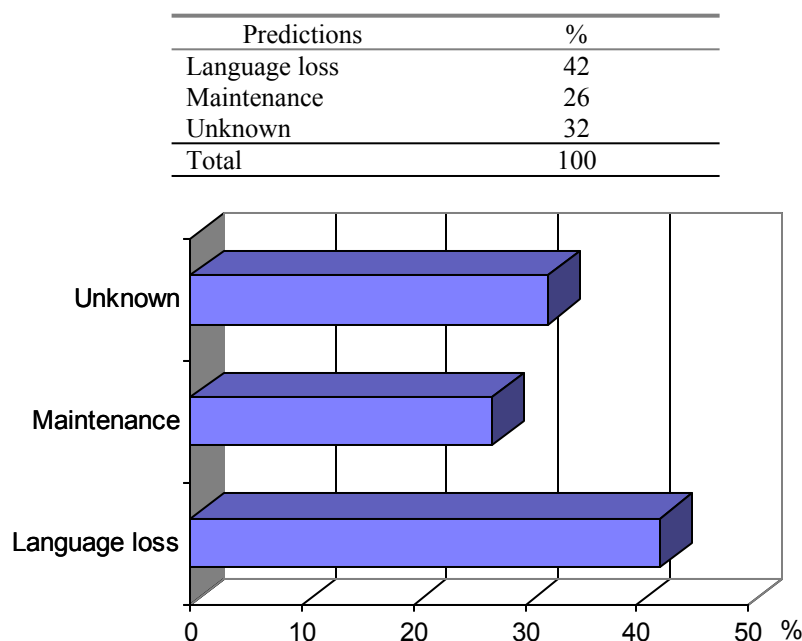


Figure 6.5 *Mestizo Predictions About the Quichua Language.*

Reasons given for the expected loss of Quichua were: (a) low status and prestige, (b) limited practical function, (c) lack of ethnolinguistic vitality. The inferior status assigned to the Indian population is also assigned to the language, as underlined in interview # 33:

Es el idioma de los indígenas no más, de los nativos [...] no sobresale, no se le usa afuera. (Int.#33)

[It is the language of the Indians only, of the native people [...] it is not outstanding, it is not spoken anywhere else.]

Some of the informants emphasized that Quichua does not offer any opportunities for work or to make any progress:

Es una lengua que no progresa y no tiene futuro [...] necesitan (los Indios) aprender castellano para sobrevivir. (Int. # 8)

[It is a language that has no progress and has no future [...] they (the Indians) need Spanish to survive.]

For some informants the Quichua speaking population is decreasing and for others is even rapidly moving towards disappearance:

Los quichuas se están olvidando su lengua [...] está desapareciendo [...], pronto va a ser lengua muerta. (Ints.#57, 6, 14)

[Quichua speakers are forgetting their language [...] it is disappearing [...], it will soon be a dead language.]

Although some *mestizos* perceive that Quichua may survive as the result of the efforts of some intellectuals and the Indian organizations, there is some ambivalence about the role of the *mestizo* population vis-à-vis Quichua maintenance. For most of the sampled population, language maintenance is mainly the responsibility of Indians, although some *mestizos* feel they ‘would help if they could’ (Int.# 19) and that the government should be responsible for it (Ints.#51 and 19).

An important percentage (32%) is uncertain about the immediate future of Quichua, mainly because of the perceived contradiction between the demographic size of the Indian ethnicity and the decrease in use of the language:

Ni idea. Puede desaparecer porque no creo que mucha gente habla ya, pero todavía hay muchos indios en este país. (Int.# 5)

[I have no idea. It could disappear, but there are still a lot of Indians in this country.]

or because of their sense of the unpredictable future of the country itself, especially in the political arena:

La verdad no sé [...] en este país cualquier cosa puede pasar de la forma más impredecible. (Int.#26)

[The truth is that I don’t know [...] anything can happen in this country in the most unpredictable way.]

6.2.1 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Quichua Language by Gender

The analysis of the above answers by gender displays interesting differences. Men were more prone to predict language maintenance than women (38% and 25% respectively), although they did so without much more conviction than predicting loss (31%) or indecision (31%). Meanwhile, women predicted loss with more assurance than men (61% and 31%, respectively) (Table 6.6 and Figure 6.6).

Table 6.6 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Quichua Language (by Gender) (%).

Predictions	Men	Women
Language loss	31	61
Maintenance	38	25
Unknown	31	14

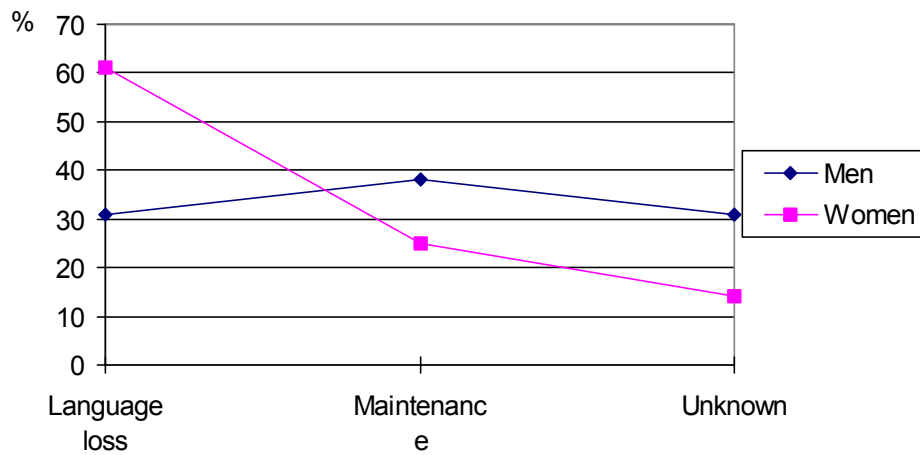


Figure 6.6 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Quichua Language (by Gender).

In the women's opinion, it will be very difficult for Quichua to survive under the continuous pressure of Spanish, partly due to the fact that Quichua is not a profitable language. They think it would be more economically advantageous for the Quichua speakers and the country to have a unified language (Spanish). Only 25% of the women considered the possibility of language maintenance in the more isolated communities (Table 6.6), while insisting that English is the language of the future.

6.2.2 Predictions About the Quichua Language by Age

From a generational perspective, the most striking figure is that of the youngest group. One hundred percent of them predict the loss of Quichua (Table 6.7 and Figure 6.7).

Table 6.7 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Quichua Language
(by Age) (%).

Predictions	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	>60
Language loss	100	47	45	14	60	17
Maintenance	0	36	9	57	40	50
Unknown	0	18	47	29	0	33

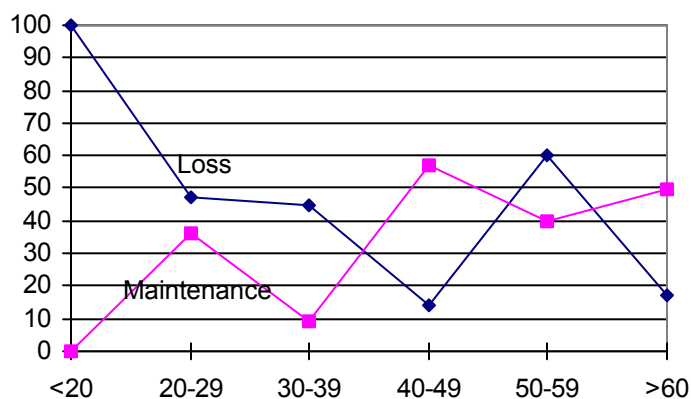


Figure 6.7 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Quichua Language (by Age).

In the opinion of the youngest informants, the country is undergoing such drastic social change, technological progress, and rapid modernization that the Indians are forced to migrate to the cities where their language is threatened by Spanish. Similarly to the Indian viewpoint (Chapter V), some of the informants characterized the cities (urban territories) as Spanish speaking, and the learning of Spanish as a successful way of survival even if it is at the expense of ethnic language. For the *mestizo* informants, ethnolinguistic loss is mainly seen as an individual loss which may facilitate the integration of the Indian population into the cities. Therefore, for the younger generations, shifting to Spanish is not viewed as a problem but as the solution to Indian subordination within a society where Spanish is dominant.

The second highest percentage (60%) predicting language loss is the 50-59 age-group. Some of these informants see the loss of Quichua as an opportunity for the Indian population to learn Spanish and to become part of the country's modernization process. They do feel the number of Quichua speakers has decreased since they were in their 20's.

A similar prediction is given by those informants who had experienced the *hacienda* system. According to them, the agrarian reform (1964, 1972)ⁱⁱⁱ has resulted in a general chaos in which the Indian people are becoming the victims of disorganization and poverty. An old farmer whose property (*hacienda*) had been reduced by the agrarian reform saw the end of such system as the end of Indian people:

Esta leche viene de la hacienda. Todavía queda algo, pero después de la Reforma Agraria todo se está acabando. La gente ya no celebra sus tradiciones como antes. Con nosotros podían mantener sus costumbres [...] si necesitaban algo ahí estábamos nosotros. Ellos tenían alguien a quien dirigirse, alguien que les guíe. Ahora solos no han de poder cuidar la tierra y los animales y han de acabar pidiendo limosna o robando. Es una tristeza. (FG 11.92)

[This milk comes from the farm. Something still remains, but after the Agrarian Reform everything is coming to an end. The people (Indians) do not celebrate their traditions as they used to. With us, they could keep their customs [...] if they needed something we were there. They had somebody to turn to, somebody to guide them. Now, alone they will not be able to take care of the land and the animals and they will end up (in the city) begging or stealing. It is very sad.]

Although with a different viewpoint, various Ecuadorian anthropologists^{iv} also believe that the agrarian reform has failed to give the Indians enough productive land to cultivate. In this sense, the agrarian reform is endangering not only the survival of the Quichua language but also that of their ethnic group:

Desgraciadamente la reforma agraria no sirvió para que los indígenas tuvieran más tierras, sino que más bien promovió el minifundio, la pérdida de productividad de la tierra por sobreexplotación, y la migración de los indígenas a la ciudad, con la consiguiente pérdida de muchas características culturales, especialmente del lenguaje.(JO. 08.96)

[Unfortunately the agrarian reform did not help the Indians to have more land, but rather promoted smallholdings, the loss of productivity of the land because of over-exploitation, and the Indian migration to the city, with the subsequent loss of many cultural characteristics, especially the language.]

Finally, we notice that 46% of the 30-39 age group informants did not give any specific answer. They comment on the difficulties of predicting any major changes given the unexpected changes they have seen in the Indian population during the last years:

Es difícil saber. Yo me acuerdo que hace no mucho tiempo parecía que había poca gente que hablaba Quichua, hasta lo Indios, sabe, pocos (Indios) no más seguían hablando, y después, así como de golpe, como que hubiera resucitado. En la radio y hasta en la televisión se oye. Oí que hay clases en la Universidad también. No sé que pensar, no ve ahora hay Indios en el Congreso, se imagina? Y empiezan hablando en quichua aunque no les entendemos; bueno no solo es eso, encima usan poncho. (FO.06.96)

[It is difficult to know. I remember that not long ago it seemed that very few people spoke Quichua, even the Indians, you know, only few Indians were still speaking it, and then suddenly it was like a resurrection. It (Quichua) is heard on the radio and even on television. I heard that there are classes at the university too, I don't know what to think, you see now there are Indians in the Congress, can you imagine? And they start by speaking Quichua even if we don't understand it; well it is not just that, you see, they are also wearing their poncho.]

It is because of the “unexpected Quichua revitalization” brought through mass media as a means of increasing bilingual programs that these informants prefer not to give any opinion about the immediate future of the language.

6.2.3 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Quichua Language by Occupation

As shown in Table 6.8, the highest percentage predicting language loss is found among students (65%). This is the group with the most precise knowledge of the sociolinguistic situation of the country. Public employees, who probably have direct contact with the less powerful sectors of the society, also display a high percentage (56%). During the interviews public employees showed little hope for maintenance of Indian languages for two main reasons: (a) the country's unbalanced social situation which relegates the Indian people to the lowest position on the social scale; and (b) the ongoing nationwide economic problems which aggravate the rural economic situation and motivate massive rural-urban migration.

Meanwhile, professionals are more confident that Quichua will survive, especially if the language is promoted within the public educational system and by the intellectual elite.

Table 6.8 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Future of Quichua
(by Occupation) (%).

<i>Predictions</i>	USt	Prof	Agr	PE	BC	IB	Hw	U
Loss	65	43	0	56	20	50	29	0
Maintenance	21	43	33	22	30	13	29	50
Unknown	14	14	67	22	50	38	42	50
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

USt=University Students; Prof=Professionals; Agr=Agricultural workers;
PE=Public employees, BC=Blue collars; IB=Informal business; Hw=housewives;
U=Unemployed

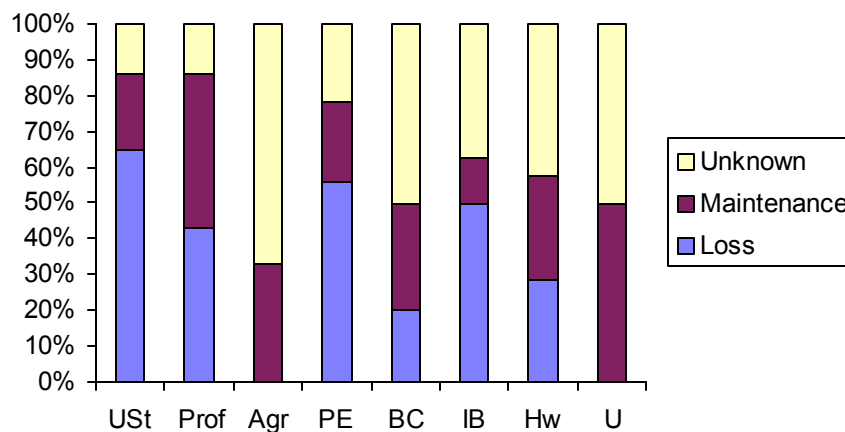


Figure 6.8 *Mestizo* Predictions About the Future of Quichua (by Occupation).

The occupational groups with higher rates of uncertainty about the immediate future of Quichua are agricultural workers (67%), blue collar workers (50%) and housewives (43%). The first group states that by their own experience, Quichua has survived so many changes that it is difficult to imagine what can happen in the near future. The other two groups showed no interest in predicting what the future of the language would be, probably reflecting their low awareness of the sociolinguistic situation.

In sum, *mestizos* generally are aware of the pressure Quichua is under due to migration; however, they consider it a natural process in the development of society.

6.3 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua

Related to the *Mestizos'* predictions but focusing now on individuals' desires, the next issue refers to the informants' desires for Quichua: "What would you like to happen to Quichua?" As shown in Table 6.9 and Figure 6.9, 32% of the informants gave no precise answers but rather general aesthetic statements referring to the traditional value assigned to the Indian language or its beauty: "Quichua is like a symbol of our past, we should keep it," "It would be nice (cute) if it could be maintained."

Table 6.9 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua.

Wishes	%
Aesthetic statements	32
Need for Awareness	25
Must be taught in schools	15
Unknown	15
Better teach Spanish	5
Gov't participation	5
Nothing	3
	100

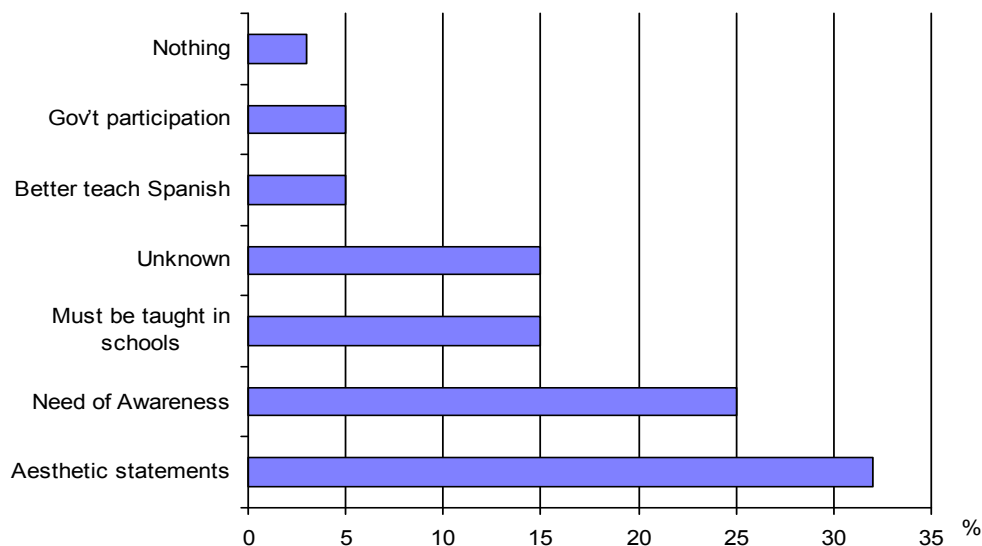


Figure 6.9 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua.

Some of the informants' responses were also characterized by incertitude (Int. #25) or paternalism (Int.#7 and #60):

No sé, posiblemente sería bueno no olvidarse, seguir practicando, hablar, pero ahora que bastantes indios se van a la ciudad y quieren hablar español; no estoy seguro. (Int. #25)

[I don't know, probably it would be good not to forget it, to continue practicing it, to speak it, but now many Indians are leaving for the cities and they want to learn Spanish; I am not sure.]

Yo les ayudaría a los indios si pudiera. (Int. #7)
[I would help the Indians if I could.]

Deberíamos ayudarles a los indios. (Int. #60)
[We should help the Indians.]

According to 25% of the informants, it is necessary to create social awareness toward the Ecuadorian multilingual and multicultural ethnicity because Quichua is part of the national heritage and the multilingual Ecuadorian identity (Int.#25):

Mucha gente no entiende que saber más del Quichua nos ayudará a tener una verdadera identidad, a encontrarnos. Sabríamos de donde venimos,

cual es nuestro bagage cultural, lo que significa ser ecuatoriano. (Int # 15)

[Many people don't understand that knowing more about Quichua will help us have a real identity, to find ourselves. We would know where we come from, what is our cultural background, what is the meaning of being Ecuadorian.] (emphasis mine)^v

These *mestizos* advocating social awareness believe that language survival is conditioned to the improvement of living conditions (Int.# 4 and 39):

La prioridad es mejorar la calidad de vida de las poblaciones indígenas y de los bloques minoritarios que se ven obligados a migrar y aprender la lengua dominante para poder sobrevivir [...] no podemos ni hablar de mantener la lengua o la cultura si no se alcanza primero condiciones de vida decentes para nuestras minorías. Solo si logramos vivir decentemente podremos empezar a valorar nuestras lenguas y nuestras culturas. (Ints. #4, 39)

[The priority is to improve the living conditions of the Indian population and the minorities who are forced to migrate and learn the dominant language in order to survive [...] we cannot even think about maintaining the (Indian) language or the culture if decent living conditions are not reached first for our minorities. Only if we succeed in living decently we will be able to start valuing our languages and cultures.]

Uncertainty was the answer of 15% of the informants who said that they did not know what could be done to avoid languages loss. They think that nationwide, the situation of Quichua is difficult because of both (a) Quichua's lack of status and prestige, and (b) the influence of foreign languages and cultures, especially English. Such influence has captured the interest of *mestizos* and some Indians who see English as a means of attaining better living conditions.^{vi}

Esto no es más que una total americanización, todos queremos ser americanos, o sea 'gringos' y eso es un terrible obstáculo para diseminar las lenguas indígenas [...] si ha visto los letreros en las calles?, todo está en inglés [...] mucha gente ahora se hace la que habla como gringa. (Int. #47)

[This is nothing else than a total Americanization, we all want to become Americans, you know, 'gringos,' and this is an obstacle to spread the Indian languages [...] have you seen the signs on the street?, everything is in English [...] many people now pretend to speak like gringos.]

In the opinion of 5%, the maintenance of Indian languages and cultures would be possible only with official support for new educational and developing programs. A certain ambivalence is found in these statements. Some informants think that such governmental programs should be oriented to work exclusively with the Indian population, which is still isolated from the rest of the society and still want to speak Quichua (Int. #31). The Indian situation is perceived as a distant problem which involves small human groups (i.e., tribes) (Int. #41):

Me parece que (el Quichua) debería promoverse ahí en los lugares donde la gente habla esa lengua. (Int. #31)

[I think that Quichua should be promoted in those places where people speak that language.]

Me parece que el gobierno debería ayudarle mejor a esa lengua^{vii} para que la gente que no habla español pueda hablar de los problemas que tienen sus tribus. (Int. #41) (underline mine)

[I think that the government should help that language better in order for the people that do not speak Spanish to be able to talk about the problems their tribes have.]

Another 5% recommended applying the Spanish-only rule both to integrate the Indian population to the mainstream society and to avoid their empowerment as independent nations, which can increase the Indian-*mestizo* antagonism (Int. #18):

Me parece que (los Indios) necesitan aprender español porque si siguen usando su idioma van a seguir aislados de todos nosotros y el antagonismo con los mestizos no se va acabar nunca. Ahí en donde hay antagonismo con los mestizos los Indios dicen que quieren tener un estado independiente [...], ahí los conflictos van a aumentar, creo. (Int #18) (underline mine)

[I think they (the Indians) need to learn Spanish because if they continue using their language their society will be isolated from the rest of us and the antagonism with the *mestizos* will have no end. There, in those places where there is antagonism with the *mestizos*, the Indians say that they want to have a different State [...] the conflicts will increase, I think.]

With a passive attitude, 3% think that Quichua, as all the other Indigenous languages, is predestined to die, and that there is nothing that can be or should be done:

El Quichua, así como muchas otras lenguas indígenas tiene que seguir su curso natural y desaparecer [...] no creo que se puede hacer nada, ni que se deba hacer nada en contra del destino. (Int. #25)

[Quichua like many other Indian languages has to continue its natural destiny and disappear [...] there is nothing that can be done or should be done against what is to come.]

6.3.1 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua by Gender

As displayed in Table 6.10 and Figure 6.10, more men (36%) than women (28%) gave aesthetic answers. Some of the most frequent statements were: “The language is nice,” “It would be beautiful to keep it,” “It is important.”

Table 6.10 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua (by Gender) (%).

Wishes	Men	Women
Aesthetic statements	36	28
Work for Social Awareness	29	21
Should be taught in schools	18	13
Unknown	6	22
Better teach Spanish	7	3
Gov't participation	4	6
Nothing	0	6
	100	99

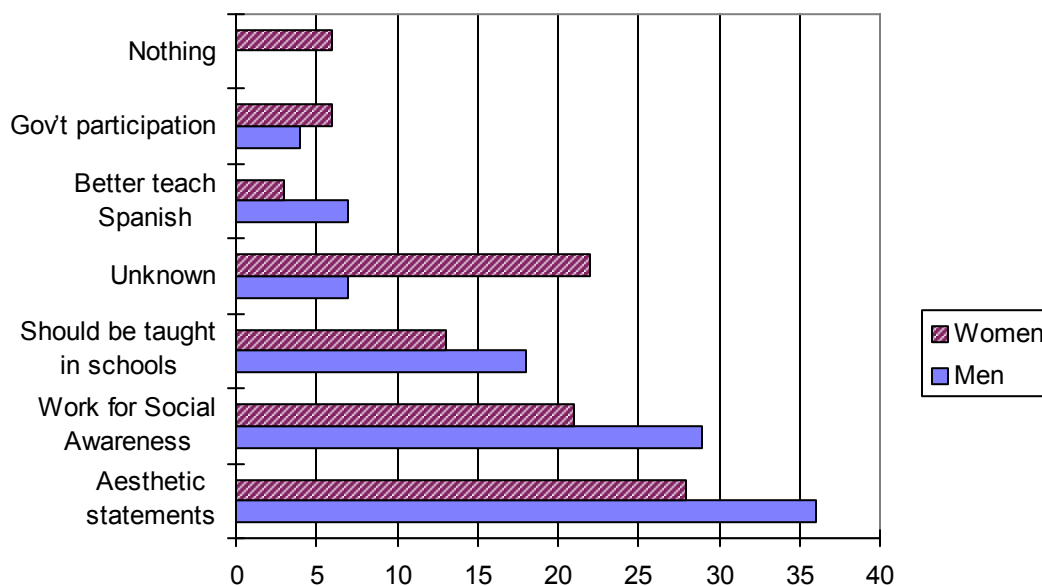


Figure 6.10 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua (by Gender).

A higher percentage of men (29%) than women (21%) advocate social awareness among the large *mestizo* population that does not know or does not understand the meaning and importance of Indian languages, while a higher percentage of women (22%) than men (6%) say not to know what to wish for Quichua.

6.3.2 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua by Age

The analysis of Table 6.11 and its corresponding figure (6.11), show that except for the 30-39 age-group, the highest percentages give aesthetic answers (i.e., "It would be beautiful to maintain the native language," "It is nice"). Such general responses are expected if we take into consideration the fact that most of the speakers had no specific knowledge about the Indian situation and only 10% of the total sample had more exact information about the number of Quichua speakers in the country.

Table 6.11 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua (by Age) (%).

Desires	<20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60>
Aesthetic statements	40	37	11	28	40	29
Work for Social Awareness	40	29	22	28	0	14
Should be taught in schools	20	19	11	28	0	0
Unknown	0	4	22	0	0	0
Better teach Spanish	0	11	22	0	20	43
Gov't participation	0	0	11	0	40	0
Nothing	0	0	0	15	0	14
	100	100	99	99	100	100

The second highest percentage highlights the importance of social awareness, especially within the younger group. Notice, for instance, that among the younger age-group (<20) 60% of the answers express the desire to preserve Quichua and to motivate social awareness. These rates are coherent with this group's perception about the danger faced by the Quichua language and the Quichua people. These young informants said they have been positively impacted by the Indian uprisings and the intellectuals' demands in favor of the Ecuadorian Indian population. Although these answers suggest a positive affect towards the Indian language, it is not consistent with the fact that the majority of the informants have no real knowledge of the Indian situation.

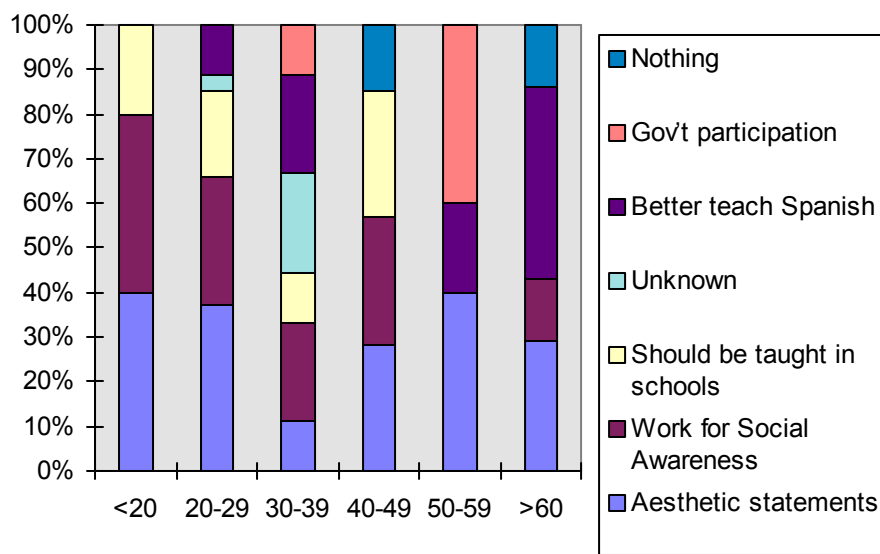


Figure 6.11 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua (by Age).

The two oldest age groups (50-59 and 60>) represent the stereotypical traditional Ecuadorian society that sees the Indian people as a negative influence in the country. It is coherent from their perspective to advocate the teaching of Spanish because, for them, it is part of the natural evolutionary progress that minority languages such as Quichua disappear.

6.3.3 *Mestizos'* Wishes for Quichua by Occupation

The distribution of desires by occupation is not clearly defined, as displayed in Table 6.12. Aesthetic answers were given by all the occupational groups except 'agricultural workers' and 'other.' The percentage of aesthetic answers is especially high among housewives and the students. Although the students are the informants who seemed to have some specific knowledge of the Indian situation, their desires were statements related to the past:

Quichua debería ser parte integrante efectiva del bagage cultural ecuatoriano. (Int. #28)

[Quichua should be effective part of the Ecuadorian cultural past.]

Social awareness is promoted mainly by professionals (43 %) and students (36%) (Table 6.12). Unfortunately, their statements are often related to helping the Indians (not the *mestizos*), to become aware of their own situation.

Table 6.12 *Mestizos' Wishes for Quichua (by Occupation) (%)*.

<i>Wishes</i>	USt	Prof	Agr	PE	BC	IB	Hw	U
Aesthetic statements	36	14	0	11	30	13	57	0
Work for Social Awareness	36	43	0	22	10	0	0	0
Should be taught in schools	21	29	29	22	20	25	29	50
Unknown	7	0	0	11	40	50	0	0
Better teach Spanish	0	0	14	11	0	0	14	0
Gov't participation	0	14	0	11	0	13	0	0
Nothing	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	50

USt= University Students; Prof=Professionals; Agr= Agricultural workers;
 PE=Public employees, BC=Blue collars; IB=Informal business; Hw=Housewives;
 U=Unemployed

All the occupational groups suggest that Quichua be taught in schools; however, they mostly limit such possibility to public and rural schools.

In sum, occupation is important for acquisition of, or at least exposure to, a more precise knowledge of the worldwide situation and probably for awareness of concrete facts (i.e., the ethnolinguistic danger faced by minorities). For instance, people who maintain contact with academia (university students and professionals) have better awareness and more knowledge about the Indian situations than the groups that are not related to intellectual centers (i.e., housewives). However, better knowledge or more accurate information does not necessarily imply better understanding of the contact situation. The above analyses suggest that

(1) In spite of the knowledge (apparent or real) that some informants seem to have (i.e., students, professionals), their desires are vague or rhetorical. Most of the answers were tinted by politically correct phrases or rhetorical answers.

(2) For some informants, destiny and predestination have marked a single linear path and final goal for Ecuadorian society: Spanishization and mestizoization. No possible directions for change are foreseen.

(3) All the occupational groups see formal education as the main means to solve social conflicts. This is coherent with various analyses that sociologists and educators have done regarding the role of formal education in Western society in which school has been seen as the main means of socialization (cf., Illich 1970, 1972, 1988).

(4) In general the sample informants do not conceive of themselves as really involved in the Indian situation. They recurrently talk about “teaching in their schools,” “helping that language,” “those people.” Thus, the responsibility for social balance is mainly assigned to the official levels, either formal education or the government.

Having noticed that the informants emphasized the possibility of teaching Quichua in schools, another goal was to find how concrete their desire was to give Quichua the status of a non-subordinated language. The informants were asked about the possibility that Quichua be taught in urban monolingual Spanish (public and or private) Ecuadorian schools. As seen in Table 6.13, only 33% approved of the use of Quichua in the school system, while 67% rejected it for two main reasons:

- (1) Quichua does not provide for technological advancement.
- (2) With Spanish it is possible for Indian groups to advance socially.

Table 6.13 Should Quichua Be Taught
in *Mestizo* Schools? (%)

Quichua in Schools	Yes	No
	33	67

Half of the informants who answered affirmatively explained that Quichua should only be taught as a second language and only 20% recognized the multiethnic Ecuadorian identity and talked about the link between the maintenance of Quichua and the finding of ‘national identity.’

Es conveniente conocer la lengua porque es parte de nuestra cultura, es el idioma natal, es nuestro idioma, es nuestra identidad, se lo debe enseñar para no olvidar las costumbres de nuestros antepasados, para conocernos más a nosotros mismos, es nuestra lengua materna. (Int. #32)

[It is convenient to know the language (Quichua), because it is part of our culture, it is the aboriginal language, it is our language, our identity. It should be taught in order not to forget the traditions of our elders, to learn more about ourselves. It is our native language.]

Finally, 15% considered teaching Quichua in schools to be a convenient tool for communicating with the Indian population, for the development of the rural areas, and for understanding Indian problems. A similar percentage, 15%, see the teaching of Quichua as something ‘important,’ ‘interesting’ and ‘nice.’

Although some of the informants stated the need to preserve the Indian language and to recover Ecuadorian ethnic roots by using Quichua for educational purposes, the truth is that many of those informants who seemed supportive of teaching Quichua (or teaching in Quichua) limited such possibility to the Indian schools and the Indian people, or to the public schools in the city. Quichua is still linked with Indianness and tradition, while Spanish and English are associated to modernism and progress. The fact is that minorities, their language(s) and their culture are valued and accepted only when they represent no risk to urban majorities.

6.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was mainly to learn about (1) the *mestizos*’ knowledge of the Ecuadorian sociolinguistic situation, especially Quichua-Spanish, (2) their attitude towards Quichua and its speakers, and (3) their sociolinguistic wishes.

(1) With respect to the awareness that the *mestizos* have about the multilingual situation, it has been shown that (a) Spanish is seen as the official language; (b) Quichua is the most important Indian language in the country; however, it is not obvious that Quichua is a language; (c) other Indian languages are considered less important than Quichua and are often perceived as Quichua dialects or “other Quichuas”; and (d) people know there are other foreign languages spoken in the country. The most frequently named foreign language is English, which is a new element threatening the Indian languages.

The informants' sociolinguistic awareness is influenced mainly by their occupation and exposure to the country's reality. The informants who are related to academia have a more precise knowledge about the sociolinguistic contact situation and the country's ethnic conflicts. The informants' occupation determines not only a different perception of reality, but also different desires and interest in the country's composition and evolution.

Indirectly, occupation influences the answers analyzed by gender. This is because in Ecuador, occupation is still tightly related to gender. Many of the university students and professionals are men, while only women are responsible for the house.

Indian participation in official institutions such as the national congress, national mass media, national Indian confederations has been helpful in creating informant awareness, although it has also surprised *mestizos* who do not conceive of the Indian population as capable of organizing and participating in political activities at the national level.

(2) The *mestizos'* attitude towards Quichua displays certain differences based on gender and age of the informants:

- (a) Women are in general more drastic in their answers than men. They state that Quichua is mostly confined to the Indian population, to remote areas and to those who do not want to progress. Therefore, it will disappear in a few years and there is no need to teach it in schools.
- (b) Men's attitude is more favorable to language maintenance although they probably show more paternalism towards the Quichua people.
- (c) In spite of the optimism shown by some of the younger men, language loss is expected by almost 50% of the informants.
- (d) For the population in general and the older men specifically, Quichua is mostly a national symbol, which should be replaced by Spanish "on behalf of the Indian population".

The positive attitude of the *mestizos* toward Quichua is rather symbolic, especially for those who have not had direct contact with it. In such cases Quichua is seen as a means of reviving old traditions and the past. Meanwhile, the *mestizos* who still see the Indian people as a depressed group with a tragic history believe that Quichua and its speakers hinder the development of the country.

Although there is an apparent positive feeling toward maintenance of the language, it is also clear that the *mestizo* population has no real commitment to the Indian situation, probably because language loss is seen only as individual loss which should facilitate the integration of the Indian people (individually) into the mainstream society (i.e., a gain).

(3) *Mestizos'* wishes are not clearly defined but rather diffused within rhetorical answers or incertitude. The future of Quichua is perceived of as another responsibility of the school system or the government.

This chapter has shown that there is no real understanding of what it means to be part of a multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic society. The Ecuadorian situation continues to be not only one of diglossic bilingualism (Ninyoles 1975), but of ethnocultural "diglossia" in which both *mestizos* and Indians live in permanent conflict.

Quichua is threatened not only by Spanish and the dominant *mestizo* society, but by modernity. The power of the English language and North American culture is turning out to be the goal of the young generations.

Indian and *Mestizo* Attitudes and Expectations: Recapitulation

At this point we are ready to answer the primary question posed in Chapters V and VI: How do Indians and *mestizos* live their languages? The analysis of both the Indian and the *mestizo* viewpoint toward Quichua shows the different perspectives each group has. Language is seen by the Indians as a marker of in-group identity which sets them apart from outsiders. Indians live their language throughout their ethnicity, and their ethnicity is maintained throughout their collectiveness. Language, territoriality and race are significant ethnic markers as long as the sense of community is maintained. Under such conditions, language loss is seen as community loss and language revitalization is meaningful if it involves group revitalization. Ethnic identity, from the Indian viewpoint, is not static but multidimensionally defined and redefined within a larger socioeconomic and sociopolitical system.

For *mestizos*, Quichua is a romantic symbol of the past and its loss is seen as Indian individual loss or the disappearance of a symbolic ancient heritage which could probably be honored in a museum. Within a more static, linear perspective the Indian people are expected to follow a defined path towards modernization (i.e., mestizoization).

The long-term Quichua-Spanish situation historically has not been conceived of as a situation of contact but rather as one of isolation in which each ethnic group seems to live within its own separate social space. One of the main characteristics of this conflicting contact is, in fact, social rupture. Neither the Indian groups nor the *mestizos* have found appropriate social strategies to live in the contact situation without conflict. However, intergroup communication has been unconsciously maintained and has shaped the languages in a very special way. In fact, Quichua and Spanish in the contact situation have arrived at a mutually enriching linguistic negotiation which probably responds to the people's communicative needs and social relations. Chapter VII discusses the effect of Quichua-Spanish contact on the Spanish of monolingual Spanish speakers of the Ecuadorian Highlands, who apparently have not had any contact with the Indian language.

Notes

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- ⁱ In this chapter I use the term ‘informant’ as opposed to ‘interviewees’ used in previous chapters because the interviews carried on with the *mestizo* population were shorter and more impersonally developed. The informants were usually approached on a street, the university campus, restaurants or bus stops. Meanwhile, the interviewees with the Indian population (Chapter IV and V) were developed during longer periods of time and were usually carried out in the speakers’ communities.
- ⁱⁱ This group includes a soldier who had served in the army during the conflicts between Ecuador and Peru (1982-1983). Because of his knowledge of the Amazonian region, he was aware that other languages besides Spanish were spoken in Ecuador.
- ⁱⁱⁱ For a discussion about the agrarian reform in Ecuador and the Latin American countries see, for instance, De Barsky (1984; 1991), De Janvry 1982 and 1991).
- ^{iv} I am indebted to Carla Guerrón and Juan Carlos Ocaña for their helpful e-mail comments on this topic (August 1996).
- ^v In spite of the apparent favorable attitude of the informant, notice that his intention is to learn “about” Quichua, not learn it.
- ^{vi} According to the Ecuadorian Board of Education, English is one of the required subjects in all the Ecuadorian secondary schools. Besides, English is also taught in private and public elementary schools. Because of the limited budget that the State generally assigns to public education, the students pay additional fees to hire English teachers. Often these teachers are neither fluent speakers of English nor have been trained to teach a foreign language.
- ^{vii} Notice the informant refers to the Quichua situation as a distant unknown problem (“that” language).