

DESCRIBING THE LINGUISTIC
LANDSCAPE IN A TOURISTIC AND
MULTILINGUAL SPACE:
COMMODIFICATION AND
AUTHENTICATION OF LANGUAGE IN
OTAVALO, ECUADOR

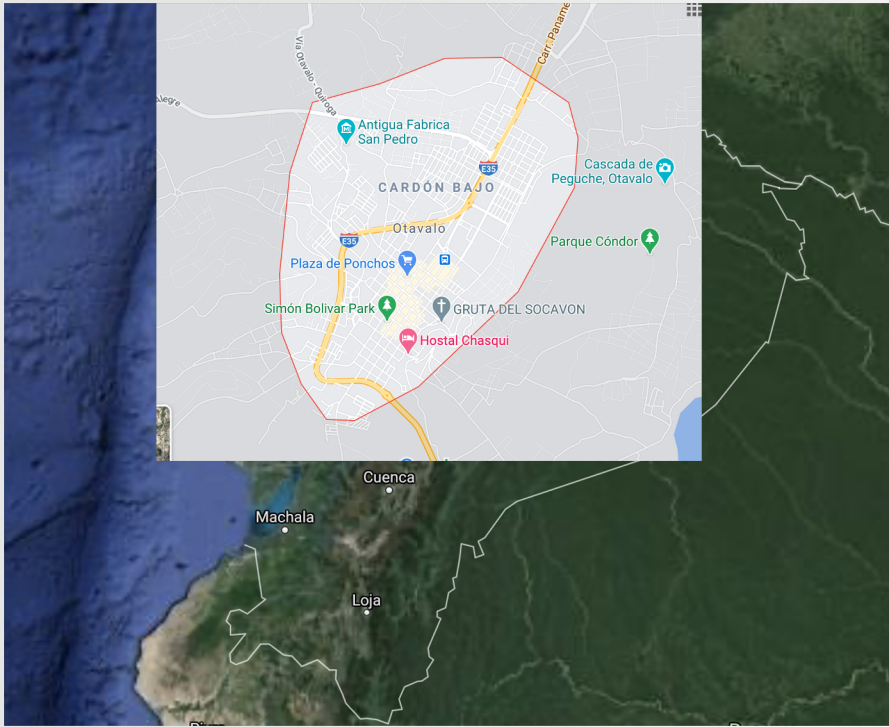
Daniela Narváez Burbano
Christian Puma Ninacuri

University of
Massachusetts
Amherst BE REVOLUTIONARY™



OUTLINE

1. The city of Otavalo: touristic destination and residence of Otavalo-Kichwa people.
2. Sociolinguistic situation of Spanish, Kichwa, and English in Ecuador
3. Theoretical background: sociolinguistics of globalization, authenticity, and commodification
4. Methodology
5. Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data
6. Significance of the results and their social implications.
7. Conclusions



- 39,354 inhabitants:
 67% → mestizos
 29% → indigenous (Kichwa)
 4% → other: white, montubios, African-Ecuadorian (Census, 2010; Fernández, 2011).





- How does the use of Kichwa and English in commercial signs are deployed for either identification, authentication and/or commodification?
- How does the use of these languages is perceived by passers-by including tourists and locals?

THE CITY OF OTAVALO

- Important tourist destination World-wide known handmade crafts → *Plaza de Ponchos*.
- Identity of the Kichwa-Otavalo peoples is linked to their economy → Kichwization of space (Conejo, 2005).
- Commercial names in the LL in Kichwa accompanied by information in English and Spanish



SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION OF SPANISH, KICHWA AND ENGLISH

- **Spanish**
 - Official language in Ecuador.
- **Kichwa**
 - Haboud (2004) → tourism is the domain where Kichwa has gained greatest visibility (proper names).
 - The use of Kichwa in the LL of Ecuador is not linked with the efforts of preserving the indigenous language but its use is linked to the economic practice (language commodification) (Litzenberg, 2018; Enríquez Duque, 2020; Zambrano et. al., 2020)

SOCIOLINGUISTIC SITUATION OF SPANISH, KICHWA AND ENGLISH

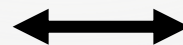
- **English (foreign language)**
 - As a result of globalization, English has spread around the world, and thus, it has been considered as a prestigious language (Lanza & Woldemariam, 2014, p.18) → LL around the world
 - Officially taught at private and public educational institutions (Ávila, 2010).
 - It has been used in the Linguistic Landscape of commercial and tourist signs as a representation of commercial capital on the Ecuadorian market (Alm, 2003; Ávila, 2010).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Tourism

- One of the world's largest international trades and a powerful site (or vehicle) for the mobility of money, people and culture.
- A major domain for the 'flows' of linguistic materials and other semiotic resources (Heller 2007; Pennycook 2012; Thurlow and Jaworski 2010a).
- Communities can sometimes experience tourism in different ways (Moriarty, 2014) → minority languages interaction with local and global languages, and the value of cultural and linguistic diversity (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Marten et al., 2012; Córdova-Hernández & Yataco, 2019).

**Symbolic and communicative
exercise of resistance**



economic capital

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Identification

Language can be seen as a dynamic repository of emergent acts of identity construction (Heller, et al., 2014).

Authentication

Language and identity, in tourism, can be mobilized from being cultural emblems to construct communities, building attractions, branding commercial products in order to attract tourists by building a “authentic” touristic space (Hellet et al 2014)

Commodification

It is as a sign of authenticity (Coupland 2003), useful as added value for niche markets and for distinguishing among standardized products that have saturated markets (Heller 2010: 102-103).

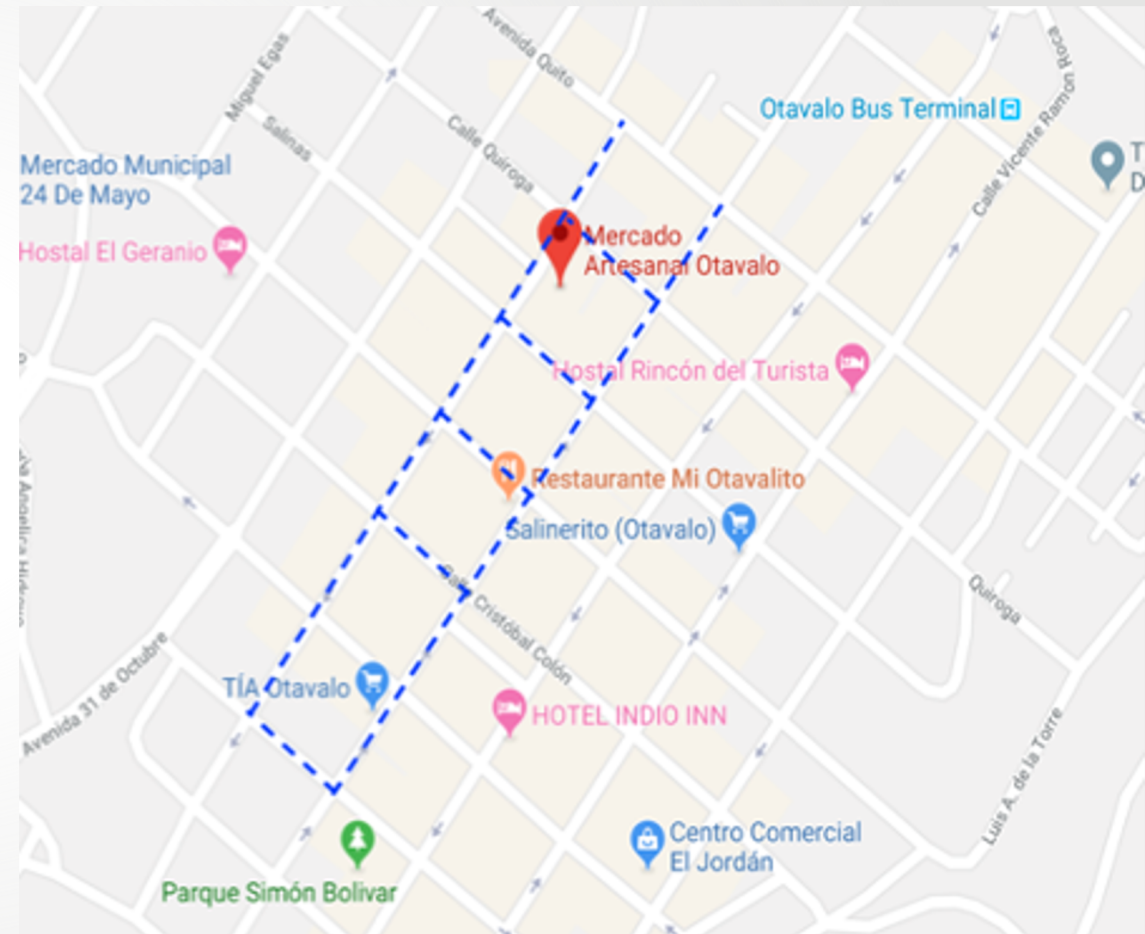


METHODOLOGY

Quantitative data

1. *Area of study* → Modesto Jaramillo Street and Antonio José de Sucre.
2. *Corpus*
 - Photographs (n=188)
 - Shops or business (n=209)
 - Signs (n=263)

(Cenoz & Gorter, 2006; Moriarty, 2014)



METHODOLOGY

Quantitative data

2) *Unit of analysis* → any piece of text within a spatially definable frame (Backhaus, 2006)



METHODOLOGY

Quantitative data:

3) *Coding scheme* (Ben-Rafael et. al., 2004; Cenoz & Gorter, 2006):

- Language(s) in the sign: Spanish, Kichwa, English.
- Type of sign: monolingual, bilingual, multilingual.
- Type of business (food, clothing, etc.)
- Language used for naming the business.



METHODOLOGY

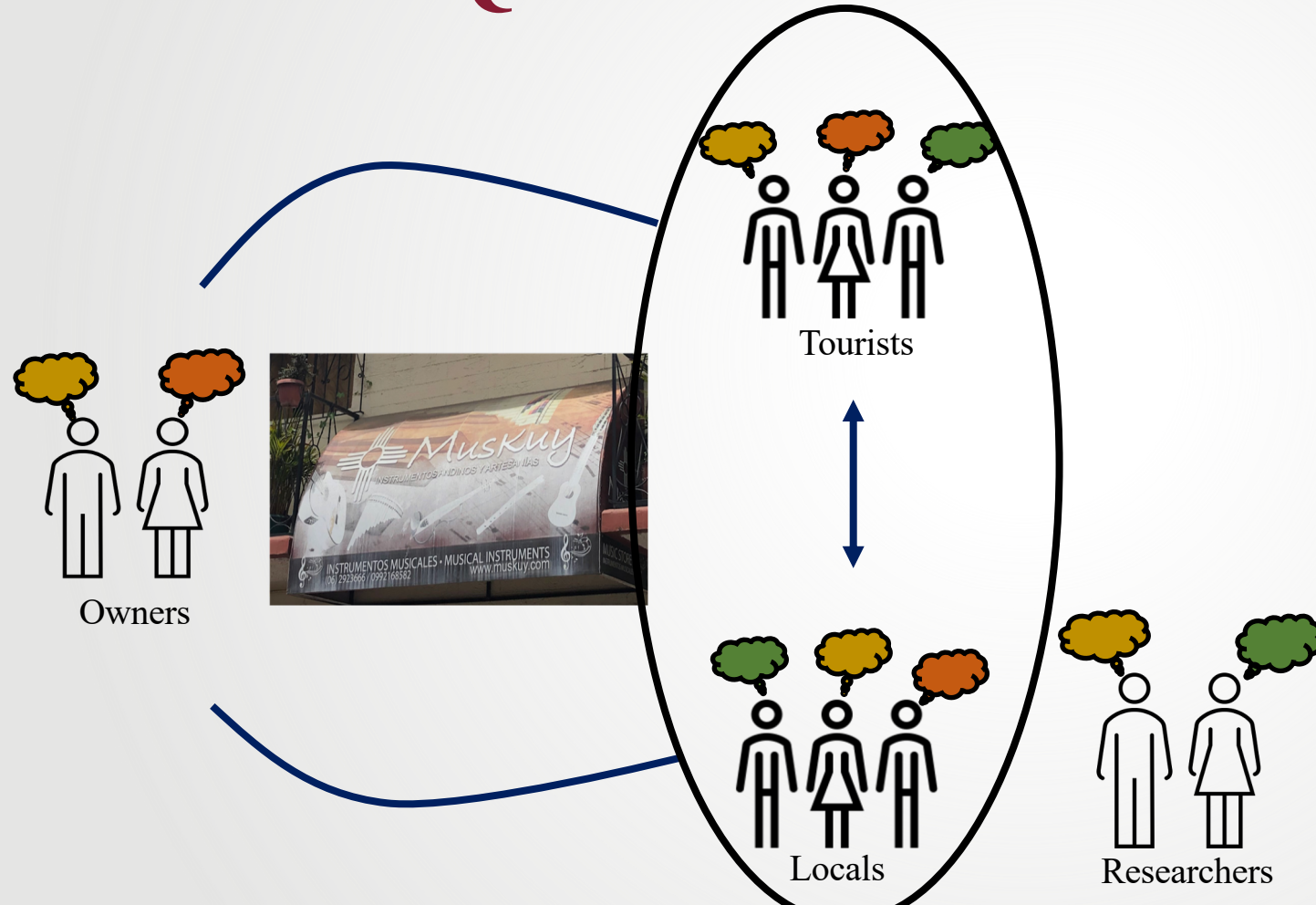
Qualitative data:

- Ethnographic field notes.
- Informal semi-directed conversations with stores' owners

What is the meaning of your business name?

- Online questionnaires (n=58): Otavalo residents and tourists

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE



Preguntas de opinión

¿Qué idiomas crees que se usan en los letreros de los locales de Otavalo (restaurantes, tiendas, hoteles, etc.)? *

Your answer

¿En qué lenguas crees que deberían estar escritos los letreros de Otavalo? ¿Por qué? *

Your answer

¿Por qué crees que los dueños de los locales/empresas utilizan el quichua en sus letreros? *

Your answer

¿Por qué crees que los dueños de los locales/empresas utilizan español en sus letreros? *

Your answer

¿Por qué crees que los dueños de los locales/empresas utilizan el inglés en sus letreros? *

Your answer

Si tuvieras tu negocio propio en Otavalo, ¿qué idioma(s) usarías en tus letreros o en el nombre de tu marca? ¿Por qué? *

Your answer

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

- Language(s) in the sign
- Type of sign
- Language used for naming the business
- Type of business

Table 1. Overview of Otavalo's LL: language(s) used and type of sign.

Signs	Monolingual			Bilingual			Multilingual	Total
	S	E	K	S-K	S-E	K-E	S-K-E	
N	148	26	0	34	43	3	9	263
%	56.3	9.9	0	13	16.3	1.1	3.4	100



Kichwa ←

English ←



Spanish

English

Kichwa



Kichwa

Spanish

English

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

- Language(s) in the sign
- Type of sign
- **Language used for naming the business**
- Type of business

Table 2. Overview of Otavalo's LL: language used for naming the shop.

Shop names	Monolingual			Bilingual			Total
Languages	S	E	K	S-K	S-E	K-E	
N	133	36	19	10	9	2	209
%	63.6	17.2	9.1	4.8	4.3	1	100



Kichwa



English



Kichwa

English

Spanish

Kichwa



English

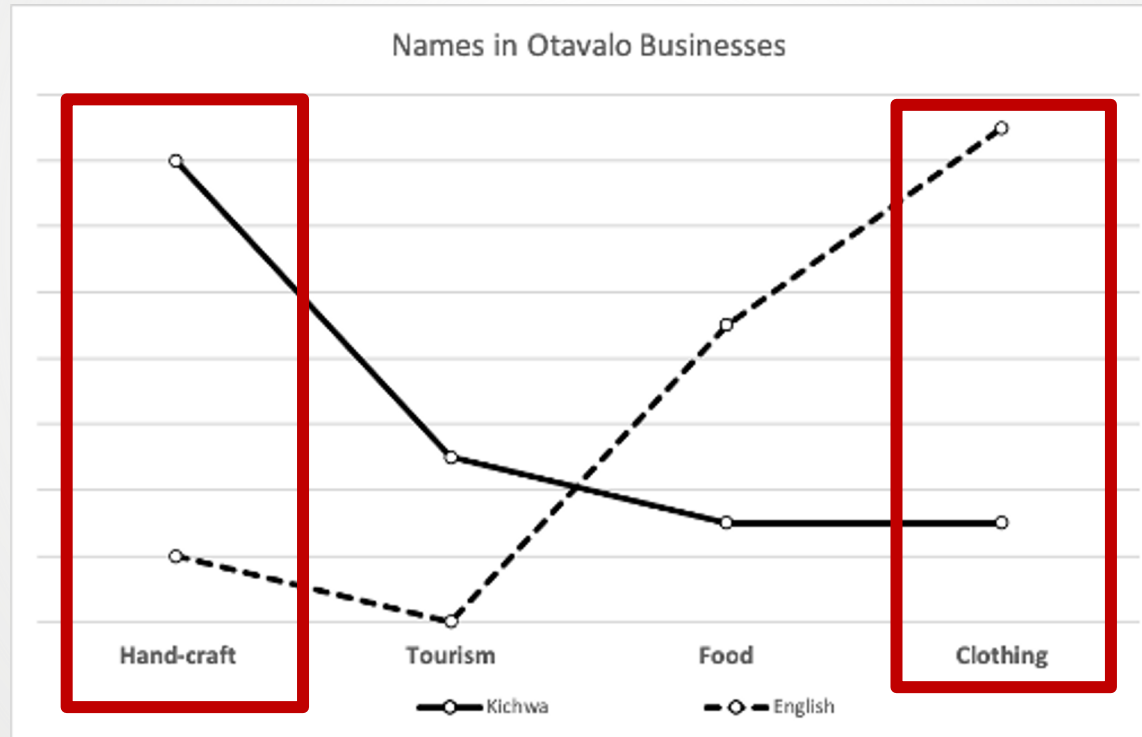
Spanish



ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Graphic 1. Overview of Otavalo's LL: type of business and language used

- Language(s) in the sign
- Type of sign
- Language used for naming the business
- **Type of business**



ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: SOCIAL ACTORS



- Why have you visited Otavalo?

'Tourism'

'A trip to the Lakes and the Plaza de los Ponchos'

'For the handcrafts and the people'

'Visit ponchos market'

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: SOCIAL ACTORS REGARDING SIGNS IN KICHWA



Tourists

IDENTITY

'They use the language of their culture'

'Because the owners are from Otavalo'

AUTHENTICITY

'Because it sells typical food from the area'

'For maintaining traditions and respecting the city of Otavalo'

COMMODITY

'Because they exploit the tourist attraction of Otavalo associated with indigenous traditions'

'It is related to their economic activity'

'It may be because he is from the same culture, he is indigenous or he just wants to attract attention to obtain clients'

'Because of identity and tourism'

'Identity and marketing'



ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION: SOCIAL ACTORS REGARDING SIGNS IN ENGLISH



IDENTITY

AUTHENTICITY

COMMODITY

A **prestigious** language in the world.

[Owners] want that **foreigners** or wealthy people visit that store.

It is used to attract English speakers or people who think that English is **sophisticated** when it is used in advertisements.

To call the attention because there are a lot of foreigners. It is used to give more **category**.

[The sign] targets foreigners or customers with a medium/high academic level.



CONCLUSIONS

- Otavalo is recognized as one of the most touristic places in Ecuador. Spanish is the most displayed language in the LL as it is the official language in Ecuador.
- Despite acknowledging the use of Kichwa as an identity marker, participants consider that this language is also used as a strategy to increase tourism and to commercialize products perceived as “authentic” to tourists.
- Regarding the presence of English, participants recognize this language as a prestigious marker of modernity and sophistication. Participants relate the use of English with a commercial strategy.

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**YUPAYCHANI / PAGUI
GRACIAS
THANK YOU**

QUESTIONS?