

Chapter 10

Heterogeneity in linguistic practice, competence and ideology: Language and community on Easter Island

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Verbal communication can never be understood and explained outside of [its] connection with a concrete situation. . . Language acquires life and historically evolves precisely here, in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms, nor in the individual psyche of speakers.

(V. N. Vološinov 1986 [1973]: 95)

1. Introduction

Rapa Nui (Easter Island) is a multilingual, ethnolinguistic minority community that forms part of Chile but is located in a remote part of eastern Polynesia, five hours plane ride from mainland Chile. As in many other situations of ethnolinguistic minority groups, this community has been living through a process of language shift from the local indigenous language toward the dominant state language. Over the last four decades the shift from Rapa Nui to Spanish has gathered pace and most Rapa Nui children today are native Spanish speakers. Recently, however, the rise of a successful local indigenous political movement has led many Rapa Nui community members to critically reflect on interethnic relations and on the danger of losing their ancestral language. In this chapter, based on my ethnographic and linguistic field research conducted since 1991,¹ I examine the heterogeneous and changing nature of linguistic ideology,² competence, and practice in this speech community. In particular I analyze how ideologies of native language and linguistic syncretism and purism have variously shaped the past developments in, and descriptions of, the sociolinguistic situation on Rapa Nui and how they may influence the language revitalization efforts and motivate the future direction of change.

The Rapa Nui language has significantly been transformed in the context of colonial and postcolonial cultural and linguistic contact. Though language shift has advanced to the point where contemporary younger generations hold significantly diminished Rapa Nui competence, we can observe the simultaneous process of language maintenance. Important language ideologies and practices that have fostered this maintenance have been those of linguistic heterogeneity and syncretism. Linguistic syncretism involves bilingual “simultaneities” characterized by a range of interlingual phenomena – such as code-switching and interlingual transfers (Woolard 1998). Syncretism also describes the interactional norm and “discursive” (Giddens 1984) consciousness of the language users who allow and expect linguistic multiplicity and simultaneity and demonstrate great accommodation toward speakers of varying bilingual competence and preference.

However, local, state, and global ideologies of language have intersected to forge new frameworks which have led community members to reflect on and reformulate their understanding of, and attitudes toward, their language, linguistic heterogeneity, and the nature of language change. Though not far developed, nor yet a significant concern in a community which has on the whole accepted heterogeneity and syncretism, it is worth reflecting on some of the divergent notions about language that are expressed or embedded in their language practice, in particular purist language ideologies that may be taking root. Linguistic purism can be defined as an insistence on purity or correctness of linguistic forms, and, in the case of Rapa Nui, on separating languages from each other especially by avoiding Spanish influence or mixture in Rapa Nui. It is closely related to the ideology of standard language.

More generally, a prevalent notion of native language, which has been found in academic language teaching and descriptions, and colonial and postcolonial national policies, is (re)emerging in some of the more recent local understandings of language and its change. Native language is often thought to map onto the concept of a nation in ways that idealize a monolingual homogeneous people and pathologize multiculturalism or multilingualism (Hobsbawm 1990; Irvine and Gal 2000)³. Recent work on linguistic ideologies has identified certain dominant types of ideologies that have circulated across societies and have become central to nation-building projects and language and educational policies. These are the ideologies that authorize a national or standard language variety and depict “native” and monolingual speakerhood as more legitimate (e.g., Bauman and Briggs 2000; Crowley 2003; Irvine and Gal 2000; Phillipson 1992; Silverstein 1996). On Rapa Nui, related ideologies – those of linguistic purism and of native language – are developing with regard to the Rapa Nui language in the context of the history of decolonialization and more recently of the local political strug-

gle to reclaim ancestral land and gain increased decision making powers. These notions take the view that the Rapa Nui language exists as a pure form and is an essential component of the native culture, whose cultural autonomy justifies political autonomy. The ideologies of purist and native language on Rapa Nui are also connected to the concept of “native speakers” as both tend to presuppose and reify a homogeneous group of monolingual “native” speakers who “naturally” possess or acquire a complete, native competence in their language.

Language ideologies are often implicit, fragmentary, and contradictory, as they are embedded within discourses of various kinds – in everyday language use, in government policies, in discourses of the politics of ethnicity in the local community, and in more recent reflexive discussions about language articulated by Rapa Nui. In Section 2, I will discuss the history of Rapa Nui language and its descriptions. This will be done with an eye toward uncovering ideologies of native language in earlier academic characterizations of the language and Chilean assimilationist policies as well as the ideology of linguistic syncretism that has motivated the changes in more recent local linguistic practices. Some of the linguistic practices motivated by the language ideologies of native language and emerging linguistic purism can be potentially harmful to the project of language revitalization. Section 4 offers discussions of local notions of language and community initiatives in language maintenance. By analyzing the role of ideology in the making of national and local language policies and in academic and local understandings of the nature of language diversity and change, I aim to explore and comment on the challenges of language revitalization for the community. As is the case for the factors involved in language shift (see Gal 1979; Jaffe 1999), reversing the effects of language shift and revitalizing a previously dominated language is an enormously difficult task, requiring a high level of conscious efforts on the part of the speech community to modify and restore the sociolinguistic vitality of the language, by making it again a language of the everyday life of living relationships in situations where intergenerational transmission has been weakened.

All speech communities are characterized by heterogeneity in terms of the structural characteristics of linguistic varieties, of individual competences in multilingual and multidialectal repertoires, and of linguistic choices and behaviors. This is particularly so in situations of postcolonial multilingual communities under rapid social change and language shift to dominant languages. The contemporary sociolinguistic situation of the Rapa Nui community is characterized by the heterogeneity and the dynamic relationship between linguistic structure, competence, use, and ideology. Rapa Nui and Spanish – each with their own internal variations – were two separate sets of linguistic systems, which over the trajectory of their history have come to be in contact with each

other in complex ways, producing not only a great deal of interlingual phenomena in linguistic practice but also varying degrees of competences and multiple speech varieties which to this day speakers develop and maintain in their speech repertoire. During the last few decades of the nineteenth century, the Rapa Nui language began to undergo a significant transformation due to abrupt and extensive social changes (see Section 2 for further discussion). This included contact with Spanish as well as other languages such as Tahitian and English. By the early twentieth century, Rapa Nui culture and language had already been profoundly transformed and contemporary Rapa Nui language is significantly different from what would have been spoken a little over a century ago. From the perspective of many of the Rapa Nui speakers today, however, the *existence* of an historically older form of Rapa Nui – especially as spoken prior to the extensive language contact – and its association with the Rapa Nui people, their territory, and history continue to form an important basis for the contemporary Rapa Nui community's linguistic ideology.

Increasing exposure and knowledge of a wider range of Chilean and non-Chilean varieties of Spanish, as well as of international languages such as English and French, and other indigenous languages such as Maori and Hawaiian (Polynesian languages) and Mapudungun (spoken by Mapuche, the largest ethnolinguistic minority group of Chile) constitute important factors in changing local language ideology and practice amongst the Rapa Nui over the twentieth century especially in recent years. As a result of the history of contact between Rapa Nui and Spanish, the following three linguistic varieties have emerged and can be discerned: (*Modern*) *Rapa Nui*, *Chilean Spanish*, and *Rapa Nui Spanish*. They in turn are used to construct Chilean and Rapa Nui ways of speaking Spanish and syncretic ways of speaking Rapa Nui. These varieties and speech styles should not be taken as internally homogeneous, separate, or static systems of signification and communication, because they have not only overlapped but also changed under contact with each other (e.g., through interlingual transfers and code-switching) and more rapidly so than in many other speech communities. As discussed below, these speech varieties are changing quite rapidly due to changes in socio-cultural and political contexts as well as in linguistic consciousness and ideologies.

As these speech varieties constitute resources for linguistic practices, we can analyze the construction and meaning of these speech varieties by examining language users' discourse strategies, for example (1) how speakers mix or juxtapose these speech varieties in conversational interactions with varying degrees of contrastive boundaries between them to establish meaning-making strategies (i.e., conversational code-switching, interference or interlingual transfer) and (2) how speakers choose particular varieties to match particular situations,

keeping the speech varieties apart and constructing boundaries between them (e.g., code choice in diglossic or multiglossic arrangement). Section 3 will offer such an analysis of the heterogeneity in, and dynamic relationship among, linguistic practice, competence, and structure, exemplified with transcripts made from audio-recorded interactions.

2. Characterizing Rapa Nui language and its change

2.1. Language contact and notions of language decadence and contamination

In one of the first published appraisals of the language situation on Rapa Nui, Alfred Métraux, the anthropologist of the 1934 Franco-Belgium Expedition to Easter Island, wrote bleakly of the future of the native language:

[T]he modern language of Easter Island is changing . . . The natives are fully aware of the decadence of their language . . . Now Spanish is becoming more common, and, since the founding of a school at Hangaroa by the Chilean government, its use will undoubtedly increase. Most natives are receptive to foreign languages. It is almost inevitable that the Easter Island language will disappear entirely. (1940: 32–33)

A number of subsequent observers also characterized the Rapa Nui language as being moribund, altered, and intruded upon by the foreign languages with which it had come into contact. In the early 1990s for example, linguists Veronica Du Feu and Steven Fischer wrote that “today’s (Rapa Nui) language suffers severely under massive multilingual intrusion with concomitant loss of native competence approaching extinction . . . and finds itself in a continuously accelerating process of contamination and, more ominously, disuse” (1993: 165)⁴. In their well-cited work on language extinction and preservation, Nettle and Romaine represent the “fate” of Easter Island as a prime example of dramatic environmental and cultural destruction and imply that the language is beyond rescue, writing that “(a)ll that remains of the once vibrant Rapanui culture that flourished there is a wasteland of grass and hundreds of enormous human stone statues . . . , staring silently across a landscape of extinct volcanoes” (2000: 197). More recently, writings by evolutionary biologist Jared Diamond (1995, 2004) have also contributed towards popularizing Easter Island in the public’s imagination as an example of ecological and cultural self-destruction.

Although there are obvious elements of truth in each of these accounts, what tends to be missed or forgotten in such characterizations is the remarkable

survival and maintenance of Rapa Nui language given the extremely difficult history and circumstances of colonial contact. In fact, a little over a century ago, the Rapa Nui were quite literally nearly wiped out as people not by their own over-exploitation of resources but as a result of the arrival of outsiders. The island's population is estimated to have been over 4,000 in the early 1860s before "blackbirders" (slave raiders) visited the island to take away 1,000 ~ 1,500 islanders to work in Peru. Sadly, the few who were able to return brought new diseases which felled many more people in the decade to follow. In the 1870s, European Catholic missionaries and planters took or sent away more than half of the remaining few hundred islanders to Tahiti and other islands in Eastern Polynesia (some 3,600 km away) where many became indentured to work as plantation laborers. The end result of this sequence of tragic events is that most of the island's population was lost or dispersed to the point that only 110 remaining survivors could be found living on the island in the late 1870s (Anguita 1988; Maude 1981; McCall 1976; Routledge 1998 [1919]).

The population crash and missionization and other events during the 1860s and 1870s led to profound socio-cultural upheaval, discontinuity, and transformation, and to extensive linguistic change. Language contraction and a leveling or reduction of the language's internal variations associated with older Rapa Nui social, tribal, religio-political and occupational structures almost certainly happened. In addition, unprecedented cultural and language contact with eastern Polynesian languages (Tahitian and Mangarevan) and European languages also began to take place with the movement of people and knowledge associated with the activities of the Catholic mission and planters based in Tahiti (French Polynesia), as well as with Chile's annexation of the island in 1888. The extent of prior variations and the nature of changes in the early contact years remain unclear for lack of relevant historical documentation. Some aspects of "Old Rapa Nui" – a combination of regional and social dialects, and context-of-use based styles that (are believed to) have existed prior to the 1860s – have been maintained through traditional stories, poems, and songs. The largely undeciphered but internationally famous *rongorongo* script tablets have become important symbols of these earlier forms of Rapa Nui.⁵ Viewed within the context of these momentous events, the history of this community stands out much more as a remarkable case of language maintenance, cultural resistance, and adaptation in the face of daunting challenges than it does as a case of language and culture loss.

Soon after Chile annexed Easter Island in 1888, it leased the entire island to a Scottish-Chilean commercial venture – the Easter Island Exploitation Company – which operated the island as a company state and sheep ranch from 1895 to 1956 (Porteous 1973, 1981). The Rapa Nui's lands were usurped and all residents forcibly relocated and confined to the village of Hanga Roa (Hanga Roa) to

make room for the livestock (El Consejo de Jefes de Rapanui and Hotus 1988). Though Spanish became the official language for legal and economic transactions and most company overseers spoke Spanish, its official status had little immediate effect on patterns of daily language use on the island. The island's physical and social isolation and the local demographic dominance of the Rapa Nui contributed to preserving the community's integrity over the first half of the twentieth century even as the resettlement forced the Rapa Nui to abandon many traditional ways of life as Métraux observed. The Chilean government gradually increased its presence and control over its island colony, however, and began to promote policies of cultural and linguistic assimilation, leading the community on a path toward language shift. In 1915, the government established a civil registry and, together with the Catholic Church, encouraged the Rapa Nui to take Spanish names. Regular public school instruction in Spanish began in 1934, and the use of Rapa Nui in the classroom was discouraged and at times even prohibited until 1976 when Rapa Nui language instruction was allowed into the curriculum as one subject area.⁶ The institutional dominance of Chileans and Spanish in this period clearly contributed toward language shift.

As Thomason and Kauffman (1988) argue, the crucial factors in language change in contact situations are typically social rather than linguistic ones. Languages in contact are assigned social and emotional values and categorized in hierarchical order, which influences the direction and nature of linguistic and sociolinguistic changes. Many discussions of indigenous language are, furthermore, often based on certain assumptions – explicit or implicit – that there was an original pure, pre-contact language. Such discussions regularly assume idealized, homogeneous, and autonomous language-culture units and their practitioner communities with boundaries around them. A pure language form is supposed to be found in the knowledge of monolingual native speakers, but contaminated by the knowledge of other languages, just as a similarly pure form of native culture has been contaminated by contact with other cultures. Commonly used bio-chemical and pollution metaphors abound in descriptions of contact-induced language change such as “adulteration,” “intrusion,” and “extinction.” Loss or change of native languages in contact situations is often seen as signaling that much of the cultures and identities of the native (or what used to be the native) speaker community have been lost. Métraux was one of numerous anthropologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who, witnessing the changing indigenous societies of Oceania and elsewhere, saw contact with European colonial culture and language as leading to lamentable contamination that could only interfere with their understanding of precontact native cultures.

More recently, in the last decade or so with the heightened worldwide awareness of language endangerment, rhetoric of endangerment has been advanced by

language activists and academics, contributing to the practice of essentializing, individualizing, and objectifying languages and speech communities. Although their motives are different, these forms of rhetoric can have the effects of separating languages from language use and users in general, potentially hampering the very objective of language revitalization that they seek to promote (Errington 2003; Hill et al. 2002).

2.2. Language hierarchy and (d)evaluation

Although the Rapa Nui proved Métraux partly wrong by continuing to speak Rapa Nui in the decades that followed his dire predictions, the opening of a regular air route and political decisions in the 1950s and 1960s pushed the island into a suddenly much greater socio-economic and political integration with the Chilean nation. This led to sharply accelerated community-wide language shift toward Spanish. In 1956, island's lease to the Easter Island Exploitation Company was terminated and Rapa Nui began to be administered under Chilean Navy rule. A non-violent political revolt by the Rapa Nui led Chile to finally grant the islanders citizen rights a decade later in 1966. With this development, the Rapa Nui were, for the first time, granted rights to travel freely both within and outside of the island. The arrival of a new civil administration and the opening of regular air travel in the mid- to late 1960s expanded economic opportunities and improved lives for most Rapa Nui. The tourism industry has been expanding steadily ever since (H. Fischer 2001 [1999]; S. R. Fischer 2005; McCall 1994 [1980]; Porteous 1981). However, the political victory toward decolonization soon led to a new form of internal colonization with a large influx of Continental Chilean public functionaries accompanied by their family members to work in newly established institutions such as the municipal government, the courthouse, and as part of an expanded police and military presence. It had the immediate effect of further establishing Spanish as the dominant and prestigious language of the public domain. New radio, and later TV, transmissions were carried out nearly exclusively in Spanish. Paternalist and assimilationist attitudes were prevalent among Continental policymakers and residents, and these conditioned interethnic relations. In this period, the Rapa Nui language was further devalued by its speakers vis-à-vis Spanish and increasingly restricted to private, in-group and family domains, contributing to community-wide language shift to Spanish.

Bilingualism developed rapidly among the Rapa Nui over this period partly because they came to value Spanish highly not only as a resource for economic and social advancement but also as a resource with which to construct

their modern identity and gain political participation under the prevailing asymmetrical and ethnically stratified social conditions. Initially a sociolinguistic hierarchy, or what I elsewhere describe as a situation of “colonial diglossia”, developed, with a diglossia-like functional compartmentalization of languages between Spanish and Rapa Nui (Makihara 2004). This linguistic hierarchy mirrored and reinforced the social hierarchies imposed by the Continental Chileans, who at the time held privileged access to political and economic resources. Rising numbers of Continental migrants and intermarriages after the 1960s contributed to the deeper penetration of Spanish into family domains. Rapid acculturation toward the Chilean national culture among the Rapa Nui and integration of the community into the national political economy was also clearly reflected in changes in the socialization of children. An important factor in language shift and loss is the negative attitude that speakers often adopt toward their own language, which leads to imbalanced acquisition and use patterns between declining and spreading languages in the communities. Eager to participate in the national society and economy, the Rapa Nui encouraged language shift even as they strove for greater political and economic rights, and a serious intergenerational gap in bilingual competence developed starting in the late 1960s and 1970s, with a growing proportion of non-fluent speakers of Rapa Nui amongst the young.

According to studies conducted at the local public elementary school by Robert Weber and Nancy Thiesen de Weber (1990), two resident linguists from SIL International (formerly known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics), the fraction of children who are Rapa Nui dominant or are at least bilingual in Rapa Nui decreased sharply from 77 percent in 1977 to 25 percent in 1989. Among 652 students who were enrolled in Kindergarten through 7th grade in 1997, none could be considered Rapa Nui dominant, and only 49 students (7.5 percent) were considered balanced bilingual (Thiesen de Weber and Weber 1998).

My ethnographic and linguistic observations on Rapa Nui began in the early 1990s, the beginning of a period of new political activism and social changes rooted in longstanding grievances but catalyzed in part by the end of Chile’s dictatorship and the political democratization and decentralization projects that followed. In the years since then, the Rapa Nui people have significantly reshaped the political landscape of the island and the island’s relationship with the nation-state. They have done this by strategically mobilizing their kin-based networks and forming allegiances with Chilean and international political and non-governmental organizations to lobby and negotiate for increased local decision-making autonomy, land rights, and greater control over the heritage tourism industry and employment in local government offices. In this, the knowledge of Spanish proved important. The implementation of Chile’s Indigenous Law⁷

in 1994, a significant step toward reconciliation between the state and the indigenous peoples, gave further impetus for local debates over the future of the Rapa Nui community. A local cultural revival movement and the struggle for increased autonomy and control over their native lands have led to critical reflections about the assimilation process, especially the loss of cultural and linguistic heritage, and the community has begun to make efforts toward the revitalization of local culture and language.

As recently as the 1980s, Rapa Nui seemed to be going the way of other ethnic minority languages such as the Dyrbal in Australia (Schmidt 1985) and Gaelic in Scotland (Dorian 1981).⁸ Colonial diglossic arrangements had contributed to the devaluation of Rapa Nui, language shift to Spanish, and the confinement of Rapa Nui to fewer domains of use. Over time, however, the Rapa Nui began to break out of this pattern. First, they had expanded their speech style repertoire by developing Rapa Nui ways of speaking Spanish and, more recently, syncretic Rapa Nui speech styles. Instead of retaining Spanish as a medium of communication solely with outsiders and within institutional domains which had been dominated by Continental Chileans, the Rapa Nui redefined the social value of Spanish by incorporating its use into interactions among themselves. But rather than abandoning their original language or restricting it to ever smaller private spheres of interaction, bilingual Rapa Nui adults developed these syncretic speech styles. The new syncretic ways of speaking today characterize much of daily linguistic practice among the Rapa Nui. The Rapa Nui have clearly come to value and use syncretic Rapa Nui and choose to mark their Spanish to perform their modern Rapa Nui identity and indicate solidarity. With syncretic speech styles the Rapa Nui have also expanded the domains of Rapa Nui use to institutional domains such as political and public arenas which had previously been dominated by Spanish.

3. Heterogeneity in linguistic competence, practice, and structure

3.1. Changing patterns of bilingual competences and code choice

As the Rapa Nui gradually learned Spanish over the course of the twentieth century, they began to develop second-language competence. At first, competence in Spanish did not replace competence in Rapa Nui for the Spanish learners. Instead increasing numbers of Rapa Nui speakers gained knowledge of another language, and added it to their linguistic repertoire. Initially, the varieties of

Spanish spoken by Rapa Nui speakers were filled with second-language learners' errors and interference features from their first language, Rapa Nui, and this constituted the basis for the emergence of Rapa Nui Spanish. As Spanish spread more widely and rapidly during the 1960s, the range of differences in their Spanish competence has considerably narrowed, and virtually all Rapa Nui speakers became bilingual in Spanish and Rapa Nui. Chilean Spanish is a set of varieties of Spanish as spoken on Continental Chile, particularly in the Santiago–Valparaíso–Viña del Mar area. Representative speakers of Chilean Spanish on the island are Continental visitors to the island or Continental residents, who at present make up over a third of the island's population of about 3,800. Standard as well as colloquial styles of Chilean Spanish are also propagated in classrooms and by radio and television programs. Many Rapa Nui have been well exposed to Chilean Spanish both on and off the island, and many of them speak it fluently. At the same time, however, the range of differences in Rapa Nui competence has widened very considerably as increasing numbers of children have grown up speaking Spanish and not speaking Rapa Nui. Furthermore, Spanish began to replace Rapa Nui not only in the competence of younger generations but also in social functions or domains of use for the wider population.

The changing pattern of bilingual competences has been the leaven for the transformation of local speech varieties and styles, and in particular for Rapa Nui ways of speaking Spanish and syncretic ways of speaking Rapa Nui. Rapa Nui Spanish originated with second language acquisition strategies of native Rapa Nui speakers in the development of bilingualism on the island, and is characterized by Rapa Nui interferences at prosodic, phonological, morphosyntactic, and other linguistic levels (Makihara 2005). Social and interactional factors and other aspects of the communicative event such as setting, participants, and genre all influence the repertoire of lects that the speakers maintain and manage. Competent Rapa Nui speakers do not necessarily use more Rapa Nui in their daily interactions with other Rapa Nui speakers. Nor does Chilean Spanish necessarily dominate in the speech of those Rapa Nui who are competent in Chilean Spanish. Moreover, Rapa Nui Spanish has been maintained as part of the community's communicative repertoire well beyond what would have been necessitated by a lack of competence in Chilean Spanish. The Rapa Nui have largely come to speak Chilean Spanish quite fluently, yet they also continue to use Rapa Nui Spanish in many contexts. How Spanish is used, taken up, and changed by Rapa Nui community members constitutes what might be considered creative "appropriation" (Pennycook 2001) of the language of a dominant group. They not only use this variety along with Rapa Nui in conversations among themselves but may emphasize their Rapa Nui accents, use non-standard (Rapa Nui) Spanish features, or switch in and out of Rapa Nui, when speaking Spanish with

monolingual Spanish speakers – residents, visitors, and government officials – to underline Rapa Nui identity, or authenticity, to construct ethnic boundaries or to mark certain stances, as will be discussed later. Thus a person's degree of proficiency is only one factor determining the use of various speech varieties. Correlation between competence in multiple speech varieties and frequency of use is not direct but rather is mediated by other social, psychological, and interactional factors. Speakers move along multidimensional syncretic and heterogeneous continua of sorts, managing their linguistic repertoires according to particular interactional contexts as well as speech acts.

Linguistic syncretism has become normalized as a dominant practice in everyday interactions among the Rapa Nui (Makihara 2004; see Baker in this volume for a similar case).⁹ Furthermore, syncretic Rapa Nui has spread from private to public fora in the context of indigenous political movement. This has happened in the context of a massive political participation by the Rapa Nui community members, not as the result of conscious and concerted efforts, or started as part of an overt political agenda. Though, as discussed in the following section, some expressions of purism and other notions stemming from the ideology of native language which has worked against linguistic heterogeneity can be observed, the community has thus far continued a preference for linguistic syncretism and heterogeneity as a dominant, unmarked local ideology of language.

The expansion of syncretic speech domains constitutes the Rapa Nui's reclaiming of contexts where outsiders and Spanish have previously exerted their authority. Today Rapa Nui is used in previously Spanish-oriented public domains such as the municipality and the governor's office. With the activities encouraged by the local Rapa Nui political organizations, and facilitated by Chile's new recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, increasingly more Rapa Nui are participating in the local political domain. By participating in the local political movement the Rapa Nui are creating new fora for asserting themselves: public meetings, protests, strikes, boycotts, takeover of public buildings, etc. (see below for a transcript from one such speech event). Thus new kinds of speech events have been created and extended to include Rapa Nui as a legitimate language choice in the public domain, remaking Modern Rapa Nui language into a public language.

3.2. Syncretic ways of speaking Rapa Nui and Rapa Nui ways of speaking Spanish

A given discourse can be characterized as being more Rapa Nui or more Spanish. Code choice, code-switching, and interlingual transfers provide resources

for meaning making and communication. Such characterizations are not only done by investigators but also by the speakers and other participants of the interactional context in which such a discourse occurs, and varying degrees of metalinguistic activities would depend on specific institutional and interactional factors and in particular on the indexical saliency of linguistic choice set against the expected behaviors confirming to the working of the linguistic dispositions. Contrary to common belief, code-switching and interlingual transfers (or interferences) often involve a high degree of multilingual competence and strategic semiotic choices to create various forms of multiplicity, hybridity, and simultaneity (Woolard 1998). Code-switching and interlingual transfers have been important in the emerging generative grammar analysis of the structural and cognitive processes involved in bilingual discourse (Myers-Scotton 1993a, 1993b; Silva-Corvalán 1995). For our focus, these multilingual practices are important for understanding how new multilingual speech styles are constructed, maintained, or transformed in social contexts of language use, mediating the transformation of larger social relations and structures.

Heterogeneity in Rapa Nui and Spanish bilingual linguistic practices results not only from speakers' differing degree of dominance in Rapa Nui or Spanish, but also from the individual speakers' linguistic choices and discourse strategies involving varying degrees of code-mixing. Rapa Nui speakers exploit a range of varieties of Spanish and Rapa Nui and may use a variety of interlingual and non-standard forms to represent themselves to achieve desired interpretations on the part of addressees or audience. With a high level of bilingual competence many Rapa Nui speakers deploy this linguistic resource in constructing syncretic speech and interactions.

Text (1)¹⁰: Syncretic Rapa Nui speech and interaction

Kosē:	<u>No combiene</u> mo tātou. 'O ira, <u>más urgente</u> mo tātou mo te Rapa Nui te me'e mo <u>modifica</u> o te <u>letra C.</u>	1	Kosē:	<i>It is <u>not convenient</u> for us (inclusive). That is why it is <u>more urgent</u> for us (incl.) for the Rapa Nui to <u>modify the section C.</u></i>
...			...	
Governor:	<i>He me'e ho'i a tātou e ta'e me'e nei pe ira porque kai ai 'ā te <u>acuerdo</u> o kōrua ananake, <u>porque son dos posiciones</u> <u>distintas.</u></i>	2	Governor:	<i>The thing is, we don't do this <u>because</u> there is no <u>agreement</u> among you all, <u>because there are two</u> <u>distinct positions.</u></i>

- | | | | | |
|-----------|---|-----|-----------|---|
| Kosē: | <u>Ya. Mo ta'e ai o te acuerdo, qué pasa?</u> | 3 | Kosē: | <u>O.K. If there is no agreement, what happens?</u> |
| Governor: | <u>Bueno, tendría que comunicar al gobierno que no hay acuerdo no más...</u> | 4 | Governor: | <u>Well, we'd have to report to the government that there is no agreement. That's all...</u> |
| Kosē: | <u>He aha ta'a consulta ena ka aña ena?</u> | 5 | Kosē: | <u>What will you consult?</u> |
| Governor: | <u>Porque yo creo que ustedes tienen su posición.</u> | 6 | Governor: | <u>Because I think that you have your position.</u> |
| ... | | ... | | |
| Governor: | ... 'O ira <u>hay que recurrir, a cualquier medio Hay que recurrir, tiene que mana'u tātou i te formula pa'i.</u> | 7 | Governor: | ... <u>That is why it is necessary to resort, to whatever means. It is necessary to resort, (we) have to think of the formula. (10/17/94)</u> |

Text (1) is taken from a transcript of an audio-recording of a community meeting to discuss the Indigenous Law. About twenty participants attended this meeting called by the Rapa Nui governor and engaged in heated discussions about how to modify the law. This short transcript taken from a political meeting exemplifies the expansion of the use of syncretic Rapa Nui to a public forum as well as a fluidity with which speakers juxtapose Rapa Nui and Spanish elements via inter- and intra-sentential code-switching and interference (transfer or juxtaposition across different levels of linguistic organization such as phonology and morphology). Many of the structural characteristics of Spanish intra-sentential switches in Rapa Nui can be attributed to adaptations of Spanish elements to the Rapa Nui grammatical structure; that is switched elements are subjected to Rapa Nui grammar (morphology and syntax). While many are political and legal terms which can be considered as having varying degree of novelty or establishedness as borrowings, other juxtapositions also reflect degrees of creativity in expressions which are made available by pooling linguistic resources from two grammatical structures and styles of speech. At the level of pragmatics, code-switching and interference/transfer may have various discourse and interactional functions within a particular conversational context. These functions include specifying an addressee, indicating reported speech, interjecting, reiterating, qualifying, personalizing, or objectifying the message (Gumperz 1982). For example, the Governor's choice of Spanish in utterances 4 and 6 may be con-

sidered as “contextualization cues” signaling a stance of a governor’s position as a representative of the Chilean government, in contrast to his other utterances and many by the Rapa Nui political activists, which are mixture of Rapa Nui and Spanish. Taken together these bilingual simultaneities index modern Rapa Nui ethnic identity and democratic political participation (Makihara 2007). For some examples of more clearly conscious code choice of Rapa Nui, Spanish, and Rapa Nui Spanish by speakers, see Makihara (2007: 55, 58–59 Texts 1 and 2) and Makihara (2005: 740 Text 2).

It is of course hard, if not impossible, to determine the motivation behind many linguistic choices or to determine to what extent such choices are conscious and strategic. This is largely because linguistic choices are shaped by a combination of always-in-making but already-operating linguistic dispositions of the speakers and their more or less spontaneous strategic acts, which may lead to reconfirmation or revision of such dispositions. Individual linguistic practices and the linguistic structures reflected in them are the result of a history of speakers’ own and others’ past performances (Bakhtin 1981; Vološinov 1986 [1973]). Elements forming linguistic variation are often put into practice in concrete social interactions based on and, in turn, also fostering a certain amount of awareness regarding the potential indexical power that variations create. The knowledge of interlingual forms such as prosodic, phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, and pragmatic features makes up an important part of the tacit, practical knowledge, or communicative competence that the bilingual Rapa Nui have developed and deploy in interactions, making these forms available for children to learn.

To add to the speech repertoire in use on Rapa Nui and the largely syncretic language practices, a new type of Rapa Nui Spanish has been emerging among predominantly Spanish-speaking Rapa Nui children and young people. It is used by these youngsters and children particularly in syncretic interactions with other Rapa Nui people, allowing them to perform their ethnic identity.¹¹ This new variety of Rapa Nui Spanish is characterized by lexical transfers from Rapa Nui, whereas the older variety of Rapa Nui Spanish is characterized by syntactic and phonological transfers from Rapa Nui. Thus, these two subvarieties of Rapa Nui Spanish are structurally different and their structural differences are largely explainable in terms of the nature of unbalanced bilingual competences. Symbolically, however, they both index Rapa Nui-ness or non-standardness while speaking Spanish. Furthermore, I have observed occasions on which older Rapa Nui speakers – those who can speak Chilean Spanish, the older form of Rapa Nui Spanish, and Rapa Nui – use this new subvariety of Rapa Nui Spanish. They use this variety along with other speech varieties in interactions with dominantly Spanish-speaking Rapa Nui children in informal extended family interactions.

Such adoption constitutes an explicit positive evaluation, acknowledging its unique linguistic characteristics, its social meaning, and the children's authorship (Makihara 2005). This points to the maintenance and diversification of Rapa Nui Spanish. As the newer variety of Rapa Nui Spanish influences and is influenced by the older variety of Rapa Nui Spanish and other speech varieties in use on the island, these speech varieties become further interconnected in feedback relations through verbal interactions. Persistence of Rapa Nui ways of speaking Spanish as well as normalization of linguistically syncretic interactions both point to the liveliness of the Rapa Nui language and identity. The modern ways of speaking involve communicative styles in which the individual speakers draw on knowledge from a range of speech varieties. They can be viewed as an indication of the Rapa Nui language's vitality and the adaptability of previously independent language systems that were brought into contact in concrete verbal communication.

4. Language ideologies and revitalization on Rapa Nui

In the context of recent indigenous political and cultural revival movements, the Rapa Nui are increasingly revaluating their ancestral language and re-organizing the island's communicative economy. Many Rapa Nui adults now recognize Rapa Nui's status as a legitimate language with equal standing and are now using it in public domains such as political meetings, and for interactions at local state institutional offices, places where Spanish once dominated and was privileged. Many Rapa Nui now publicly argue that the use of their language is a right and lament that their language is disappearing. In the last two decades, raised community awareness regarding the role of language as an important symbol of their ethnic identity has led to a number of initiatives toward language documentation/preservation and revitalization. Old and new notions of languages have also worked along with and against these initiatives and language maintenance and revitalization.

4.1. Community efforts at language preservation and documentation

The community first began directing their efforts to language preservation and documentation, codifying the language in forms of dictionaries and grammars. In the early 1990s, the local Council of Elders obtained funding from the government¹² to carry out what they called the "structuration" of the Rapa Nui language. A dozen elders gathered with Jesús Comte, a resident Spanish philol-

ogist, and began to compile a Rapa Nui grammar and dictionary. A grammar book in Spanish and a bilingual Spanish–Rapa Nui dictionary were published subsequently (Comisión para la Estructuración de la Lengua Rapanui 1996, 2000). The local school joined in the codification efforts with a publication of an illustrated multilingual dictionary (Spanish, French, English, Rapa Nui) (Hernández Sallés et al. 2001). These added to and updated existing wordlists and dictionaries compiled by outsiders dating back to the works of European explorers and missionaries (e.g., Englert 1938, 1978; Fuentes 1960; Martínez Y. 1913; Roussel 1908; Schuhmacher 1978) and grammatical descriptions (e.g., Chapin 1978; Du Feu 1985, 1996; Englert 1978; Fuentes 1960; Mulloy and Rapu 1977; N. Weber 1988; R. Weber 1988).

The Rapa Nui grammatical descriptions focus on depicting abstract language systems. As such they have remained largely inaccessible to most community members. Though dictionaries are relatively more accessible, earlier ones are outdated or do not adequately represent contemporary Rapa Nui which has experienced many changes over the past century, and most are also not very extensive in coverage and typically provide only one-word translations to and from Spanish (or English or French).¹³ These codification efforts – in making both dictionaries and grammars – are informed by an ideology of standard language, contributing to standardizing and essentializing “the” Rapa Nui language. Some of the criticisms expressed toward codification stem from uncertainty or hesitation felt in the community, which has not embarked on extensive efforts in this area until recently while detecting their potentially reductive consequences to the heterogeneity and dynamism which has characterized the Rapa Nui language situation. Some Rapa Nui have voiced criticisms of the recently published bilingual or multilingual dictionaries for fixing the meanings of Rapa Nui words to brief decontextualized glosses in other languages and vice versa, claiming that this has made their language appear “poor.” Beyond the symbolic impact on the community helping to raise pride in and recognition of Rapa Nui as a language, these codification efforts may contribute to “reversing language shift” (Fishman 1991) if they have an impact on the intergenerational transmission of the language.

4.2. Community efforts in language maintenance and revitalization

Two resident American linguists, in collaboration with Rapa Nui community members, compiled and published a set of textbooks for young learners of the Rapa Nui language (Programa Lengua Rapa Nui 1990).¹⁴ These textbooks emerged as a result of teacher training, collaboration with a number of the

Rapa Nui community members, and the gradual application of materials in Rapa Nui classes which had been approved for the local elementary school by the Chilean Ministry of Education in 1976. The materials are organized into six elementary school levels of instruction with conversations, stories, poems, and other pieces of texts with increasing numbers of vocabulary and sentence construction types, which are accompanied by notes on grammar and drills. The everyday Rapa Nui discourse is portrayed in these conversations, stories and poems which were written by a number of Rapa Nui community members trained by the American linguists to use an orthographic system similar to what is in use for Spanish. One outcome of the application of these materials has been an increase in literary activities by Rapa Nui writers, contributing to the further development of literacy in Rapa Nui among Rapa Nui speakers.¹⁵ This has also contributed to the development of more positive attitudes toward the Rapa Nui language in the community.

After its publication and application in Rapa Nui classrooms, the textbooks did, however, receive some objections from some community members. One commonly voiced criticism was the inclusion of Spanish borrowings in texts, which was viewed as constituting an intrusion upon the Rapa Nui language. Similar criticisms regarding Spanish loanwords and other modern Rapa Nui words were also later voiced after the publication of the aforementioned multilingual illustrated dictionary in 2001. Prior to the 1990 publications of the textbooks, the editors consulted with the wider community members but such types of objections were not given. This points to changes in local perceptions regarding the language boundary between Rapa Nui and Spanish and the recent emergence of linguistic purism.

Another area of criticism had to do with the adequacy of these textbooks for teaching the children who hold very little competence in Rapa Nui. As the editors themselves acknowledge, these textbooks were designed for and were best suited to teaching children who already spoke Rapa Nui as their first language. By the time the textbooks were published, the ratio of the school children who spoke Rapa Nui had decreased, and today the majority of the students at the local school are predominantly Spanish-speaking. Unlike the textbooks, the grammar of the Rapa Nui language published by the local Council of Elders (*Comisión para la Estructuración de la Lengua Rapanui* 1996) exercises linguistic purism by voiding Spanish borrowings, and conforms to other aspects of the tradition of foreign language grammar writing. It gives explanations in Spanish for each of twenty-six aspects of the Rapa Nui grammar, using decontextualized examples of Rapa Nui words and sentences accompanied by Spanish translations. This grammar may be used by much older students, but it does not replace or complement the textbooks in teaching children.

One of the most important tasks in reversing language shift is to create an environment where a critical mass of children and young people – many of whom are dominant Spanish speakers, and who hold degrees of passive or productive Rapa Nui knowledge – can learn and use their heritage language (see also Fishman 1991). To this end, in 2000, a group of enterprising Rapa Nui teachers – who are mostly women in their 20s through 50s – created a new Rapa Nui immersion school program, which has successively expanded to cover more children and reach a grade higher each year. The program currently enrolls over 100 students in Kindergarten through the 4th grade. Like other language school programs instituted in endangered language communities elsewhere, this program also received mixed responses and criticisms from other community members especially in its early years (Holm and Holm 1995; Hornberger 1988; Nevins 2004). The Rapa Nui teachers worked hard to gain acceptance from the community, and this acceptance can be attested by the growing inscription of children. Some of the criticisms addressed an inevitable area of innovation in school-based teaching of a language which had traditionally not been taught in school, or the using of “traditional language in non-traditional ways” (Hornberger and King 1996: 440). Some of the criticisms voiced were based on particular conceptions privileging monolingual native speakers. To some, traditional Rapa Nui ways of thinking are fundamental to knowledge of the Rapa Nui language and they expressed the concern that the teachers’ higher education training in Chile would have alienated them from their knowledge of the Rapa Nui language-in-culture. Interestingly, such views contrast with those held about other fields such as politics and business where Continental or foreign higher education and other experience are generally highly regarded. Such notions or culturally conservative ideologies in the area of language privilege native language monolingualism and purism and are the opposite of views held about other areas of cultural knowledge and identity such as graphic art, dancing and music where syncretism and creativity is celebrated.

Community-based TV and radio programs, events such as the annual cultural festival called *Tapati Rapa Nui* or ‘the Rapa Nui week,’ local musical and dance troupes, and other activities are providing expanded educational and recreational environments for Rapa Nui language learning and use, especially in family and extended family contexts. The language revitalization project is in great need of enrichment by these activities and the development of other types of sites and materials to motivate and foster Rapa Nui communicative competence among the Rapa Nui young people and children who are dominant speakers of Spanish. Conscious community-wide efforts are required in language revitalization and especially in creating or reinforcing home and community environments that are conducive for the younger generation to learn and reclaim their ancestral

language. School-based or literacy-based language revitalization must be complemented with other community level investments in changing the language socialization and use environment at home and in the community.

In contrast with other traditions such as art and music, which are more easily commodified, language requires collective participation for its reproduction. This presents difficulties for any language revitalization projects. It is not enough to have books or the display of language in museums or at shops, or to leave it to a few experts or specialists to carry forward a tradition. It needs to be used, appreciated, and allowed to flourish in the everyday social life of a community. The symbolic value of the Rapa Nui language has been raised significantly in the context of the local political indigenous movements even though these have focused primarily on the land issues. While the community has more recently begun to direct its attention to language issues, as discussed below its members express their perceptions about language, its change, and its relation to people in diverse ways. Ironically, some conceptions regarding language may inadvertently work against long-term language revitalization goals. Although their intentions may be to the contrary, several observers have noted how certain linguistic practices such as linguistic purism have led to situations that have ended up alienating language from its users or, worse, language abandonment in other communities.¹⁶

Though many parents and grandparents do acknowledge that their young children do not speak Rapa Nui, one commonly observed attitude is that the Rapa Nui language does not need to be explicitly taught and that children can eventually and “naturally” learn or pick up “their” language. Rindstedt and Aronsson describe a similar paradox in the ethnic revitalization in a Quechua–Spanish bilingual community in the highlands of Ecuador (Rindstedt and Aronsson 2002). The members of this community are highly aware of the centrality of Quechua language in their ethnic identity and are politically motivated to use it. They even claim that their children speak it. Despite their pro-Quechua ideology, however, they tend to address their children in Spanish, and children speak to each other and to adults in Spanish. Studies in other communities have also reported on the relatively wide-spread notion of language existence separated from usage. House, for example, discusses the traditional Navajo notion that “language will take care of itself” (House 2002: 53). This type of reasoning relies on the ideology of native speaker and language, leading people to accept the premise that knowledge of language and culture, along with one’s ethnic identity, as the commonly used metaphor puts it, is “in the blood.” Commonly expressed assessments of the Rapa Nui language that I have heard and recorded include statements such as the “Rapa Nui language exists, we just don’t use it” and “the children don’t speak Rapa Nui but it will come to them. They understand everything.” Such conceptions separate language (structure) from its

use, and lead speakers to overlook the importance of the language socialization environment in which language competence must be fostered.

4.3. How perceptions about language affect language revitalization

4.3.1. “Natural” acquisition of Rapa Nui and school-based Spanish learning

Though the numbers of children with Rapa Nui speaking competence have significantly declined, it is important to note that many predominantly Spanish-speaking children and youngsters have developed extensive passive knowledge of Rapa Nui especially through their exposure to Rapa Nui in intergenerational and extended family interactions where Rapa Nui is used (albeit in syncretic styles). Many are learners of Rapa Nui as a second language. Passive knowledge is an important resource for these children and youngsters as they learn and (re)claim their heritage language. However, passive knowledge cannot be assumed to grow into productive knowledge nor will it spring into actual performance given the situation favoring language shift, without changing children and youth’s learning and socialization environment. Language revitalization requires conscious efforts to revise widely held dispositions toward language use that had previously formed part and helped to sustain the “habitus” (Bourdieu 1990) of language use that led to language shift.

The expectation that (Rapa Nui) language will be naturally acquired by the Rapa Nui children does not seem to extend to Spanish. Many believe that Spanish must be taught explicitly at school. This view stems from the current generation of parents and grandparents who had to learn Spanish as a second language in Spanish-medium school contexts. Many also grew up seeing their own parents and other adults struggling with Spanish as a second language in contexts of asymmetrical power relations. With the recognition that Spanish was useful and necessary for effective participation in communal and national life, many parents rightfully put priority on their children’s acquisition of Spanish. The expectation of a “natural” acquisition of Rapa Nui is an expression of the conception of the Rapa Nui language as intricately bound together with family-centered activities and social relations. Though the increasing number of ethnically mixed families has been turning Spanish into a family language on the island, Spanish, on the other hand, was imposed on the Rapa Nui from outside through nationally based institutions such as school and local government. As islanders became aware of the diversity of Spanish language varieties and came to understand how they often matched up to socio-economic positions, they placed a premium on school-based learning as a way to acquire standard Chilean Spanish (“Castellano”) as a national language.

4.3.2. *Notions of subtractive bilingualism*

In my experience many Rapa Nui parents also hold a notion of subtractive bilingualism where the acquisition of Rapa Nui is considered to have a negative effect on children's acquisition of Spanish. This stems from a reasoned assessment about the pervasive effects of subtractive bilingualism that Spanish acquisition has had on Rapa Nui acquisition by Rapa Nui children in recent decades. This is a prevalent pattern that reflects the inequality between indigenous (or immigrant) languages and national languages in communities around the world (e.g., Haugen 1989; Portes and Drumbaut 1996; Von Gleich and Wölck 1994; Zentella 1997). It is also a notion that goes along with the view fostered among the ethnolinguistic minority group that in an environment with such unequal power relations and a history of discriminatory experiences, bilingualism or multilingualism involving a minority language can be onerous or problematic. This has motivated parents to use Spanish around their children in ways that have adversely affected the acquisition of Rapa Nui.

The aforementioned criticisms leveled at Rapa Nui teachers' qualifications for teaching the language can also be considered as deriving from a notion of subtractive bilingualism and the more encompassing notion of the best knowledge of native language as based upon an ideal scenario of monolingual native speakership. Combinations of these ideas – (a) that children will naturally pick up Rapa Nui, (b) that Spanish must be taught explicitly, and (c) that of subtractive bilingualism – intertwine to reinforce the idea that Rapa Nui does not need to, or should not, be taught, and explains in part why adults have not been consciously increasing their use of Rapa Nui when speaking to and around children even when they generally wish to maintain the Rapa Nui language. Even if they may reason that they should transmit their language to their children by speaking it around them, it also takes a significant and conscious effort to change their language use habits. Children, on their part, are retaining their preference for using Spanish to interact with others. This is largely motivated by their assessment and evaluation of their own communicative competence, as speaking Spanish, their dominant language, allows them to participate in conversational interactions on a firmer footing compared to trying to make themselves understood in Rapa Nui. The notion of competence should, however, be expanded to include being able to understand Rapa Nui (to varying degrees) and to use Rapa Nui Spanish, with which children are symbolically able to claim and perform their ethnic membership.

4.3.3. *Linguistic purism*

There are emerging purist linguistic practices and ideologies in this community which are also based on the particular conception of native language and speakers as developed in the context of colonialization, as discussed above, and are potentially harmful to the project of language revitalization. I have elsewhere discussed the rise of linguistic purism in political discourse, pointing to the ways that Rapa Nui political activists in particular have begun to use purist Rapa Nui, consciously avoiding Spanish mixtures, to further political agendas claiming Rapa Nui cultural and political autonomy (Makihara 2007). Such strategic uses of purist Rapa Nui in inter-ethnic political meetings serve well to advance political agendas when the application of purism is mainly limited to contexts where it enhances Rapa Nui claims over symbolic and material resources. However, purist linguistic ideology has also been developing in the community as a result of recent efforts to codify the language in dictionaries and grammars as well as a consequence of the successes of the local politics of ethnicity.

Purism may lead to language policing practices which could discourage the use of Rapa Nui by non-fluent speakers or learners of the language or instill linguistic insecurity amongst them. Schmidt (1985), for example, reported on the Jambun community of Australia, where the local ancestral language was being rapidly replaced by a local variety of English, Jambun English, which had come to serve as a marker of ethnic distinctiveness. Schmidt observed that elderly fluent Dyirbal speakers were constantly correcting younger people's Dyirbal speech, and argued that this was leading to a rapid loss of Dyirbal. Dixon reports that by the mid 1990s there were barely a half dozen Dyirbal speakers left (Dixon 1997: 105). Something like this could potentially happen in Rapa Nui if the loss of Rapa Nui advances and Rapa Nui Spanish emerges as a principal linguistic marker of ethnic identity for the younger generations, and this process could potentially be accelerated if language purism has the effect of creating further linguistic insecurities amongst the young.

Studies of language shift and maintenance have provided other discussions of the potential negative effects of conservative and purist attitudes to the maintenance of minority languages and furthermore the efforts to revitalize endangered languages (see Collins 1992 on the Tolowa people of northwestern California; Hill and Hill 1986 on the Mexicano communities of Mexico; Luykx 2004 on the Quechua communities of Bolivia; and Dorian 1994 for a comparative discussion). Although the situation on Rapa Nui is not as delicate as in many of these communities, and the rising influence of local indigenous political movements have on the whole generally tipped conditions to be more favorable for concerted language revitalization efforts, there does remain a danger that a strengthening

of linguistic purism attitudes in this community could have the consequence of undermining the existing embrace of linguistic syncretism and of fostering linguistic insecurity, which if developed further, could unintentionally silence and discourage young potential Rapa Nui speakers.

Given the challenges of language revitalization in endangered language contexts, successful projects must strike a balance between focusing community efforts on the reinstitutionalization of endangered languages such as the Rapa Nui language and fostering the liveliness and creativity of language in everyday life through tolerance and encouragement of heterogeneity in linguistic practices.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the Rapa Nui sociolinguistic situation provided here foregrounds the heterogeneous nature of competences and the highly fluid and changing linguistic practices in the Rapa Nui speech community. I have argued for a perspective that views linguistic structure, competence, use, and ideology as dynamically interrelated elements that cannot be analyzed in isolation from one another. This view, I believe, forces one to critically reexamine certain common notions of “competence” and “native language” that are embodied in both academic writings and language teaching as well as in local and national linguistic practices and ideologies. Ideologies of native language which view language as an autonomous entity presuppose and reify a homogeneous group of monolingual “native” speakers who naturally acquire a complete, native competence of their language. Views of this sort circulate in various ways in both academic and policy-making characterizations of Rapa Nui, and also in local views about language, its loss, and efforts to reverse the effects of language shift.

Empirically based studies of language use in social contexts such as this can offer grounds for a conceptual revision of the notion of language competence as a variable co-determined alongside language structure and practice. Language is constantly being reconstructed and transformed by its users, who are heterogeneous in their competences, practices, and ideologies. Chomsky’s original abstract notion of “competence” – as the knowledge of grammar attributed to an “ideal speaker-hearer” in a homogenous speech community that allows the speaker to construct infinite number of grammatical sentences – does not include the ability to deploy that competence in socioculturally adequate ways (Chomsky 1965: 4). Separately, the residual notion of “performance” has been critiqued for not capturing the socially constructed and rule-governed nature of many socio-cultural and interactional patterns of language usage (Hymes 1972). These narrow conceptions of linguistic competence fail to explain the heteroge-

neous and dynamic nature of language and speech communities. Furthermore, they also neglect the simultaneous and intertwined process of acquisition of “communicative competence” and sociocultural knowledge which take place through “language socialization,” and the significance of the role of speakers and social reality in the acquisition of and construction of language (Hymes 1972; Ochs and Schieffelin 1984). The notion of communicative competence includes the development of practical and meta-communicative knowledge of linguistic variation and associated language use situations. In multilingual situations, this extends to meta-communicative knowledge of expectations and evaluations about interlingual forms, similarities, and contrasts. Research findings suggest that certain meta-linguistic skills may be particularly well developed among children who are developing – often unevenly – bilingual communicative competence (Bialystok 1991; Hakuta and Diaz 1985). Given the environment in which to use multiple languages, children engage in particular mental activities, paying attention to language forms, searching for solutions to communication problems in the absence of adequate linguistic resources in one or more languages, and becoming conscious of their ability to manipulate language.

Competence is not only about children and other cultural novices increasingly acquiring sociocultural and linguistic knowledge. Common-place assumptions about the sharedness and uniformity of such knowledge must also be problematized. The notion of competence should also be understood and considered in relation to its social distribution and the power relationships which inevitably characterize all situations of language use and their evaluations. Bourdieu (1977, 1991) argues for a shift in the notion of competence which takes into account the sociolinguistic hierarchies embedded in the evaluation of effective communication. In this view, competence is seen not only as the knowledge of the *adequate* use of language such as when to say what and how in any given socio-cultural context but also an ability to command, or to be “listened to, believed and obeyed” by, a listener (Bourdieu 1977: 654; see also Bourdieu 1991: 66). As Blommaert et al. (2005) do, this view challenges the common emphasis on viewing competence as a property of individuals. The perspective I argue additionally places emphasis on the dynamic relationship among linguistic structure, competence, practice, and ideology and between the individual and the social (Vološinov 1986 [1973]). Language competence is always subject to social evaluation by being measured against a hierarchy of linguistic varieties, or perhaps better put, a hierarchy of speakers and social conditions of language use. This is because evaluation is not based on linguistic coherence but rather based on situation-sensitive evaluation of language varieties and linguistic choices and how they mesh with socially accepted and hierarchically organized categories of speakership, which are accorded differing degrees of authority based on lan-

guage ideologies at work. Such evaluations change over time, resulting in the reproduction or transformation of the communicative economy through linguistic practices and political change.

A broader conception of native speaker, competence, and native language is needed to accommodate the heterogeneous and dynamic nature of language in its sociocultural context. Recognizing the multiple aspects of communicative competence and the importance of the language socialization environment and language ideologies may prove more effective for understanding language communities and informing policies to support and encourage community-based endangered language revitalization efforts.

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Notes

1. I carried out three-and-a-half-years worth of ethnolinguistic fieldwork on Rapa Nui between 1991 and 2007 over a dozen stays ranging from one month to over a year.
2. Language ideologies (or linguistic ideologies) refer to “reflexive sensibilities” about languages and language use held by language users (Makihara and Schieffelin 2007: 4).
3. See also Doerr’s introduction to this volume.
4. Du Feu predicted further that Rapa Nui would not survive beyond the next two generations except in the island’s place names (1993: 173).
5. *Rongorongo* is the only indigenous script known to have been used in Oceania before the twentieth century. Today there are 25 known surviving wood tablets bearing *rongorongo* inscriptions scattered in museums and institutions around the world, and numerous researchers have been working to decipher them (see S. R. Fischer 1997).
6. For decades classes were conducted mainly by Chilean Roman Catholic catechists. In 1971 the Chilean Ministry of Education began to send its own teachers. The school has gradually expanded its levels, up to sixth grade in 1953, and twelfth by 1989. Today the municipal school has about one thousand students, although many students enroll in high schools on the mainland, aided either by governmental scholarships or funded by relatives.
7. This Law (Law 19.253) recognized indigenous ethnic groups (“ethnicities”, which according to an estimate is comprised of 1.3 millions, or about 10 percent of the

total population of Chile) for the first time in the country's history. It also allocated funding for improving the living conditions of these communities and created formal channels for these communities to be represented politically.

8. Other examples include Hungarian in Austria (Gal 1978, 1979), Corsican and Occitan in France (Eckert 1980; Jaffe 1999), and Arvanítika in Greece (Tsitsipis 1998).
9. The pattern of linguistic syncretic speech and interactions found on Rapa Nui is similar to what has been described in indigenous communities such as Mexicano (Nahuatl) speakers in Mexico (Hill and Hill 1986) and Urban Wolof speakers in Senegal (Swigart 1992) and diaspora communities such as Puerto Ricans in the United States (Urciuoli 1996; Zentella 1997); Italians in Germany (Auer 1984; Gal 1987). It contrasts with other communities in which bilingual and multilingual speakers of languages such as Hungarian in Austria (Gal 1979), Corsican and Occitan in France (Jaffe 1999; Eckert 1980); Arvanítika in Greece (Tsitsipis 1998), Gaelic in Scotland (Dorian 1981), and Dyirbal in Australia (Schmidt 1985) hold more developed notions of language boundaries and tend to separate their languages in discourse.
10. Rapa Nui elements are transcribed phonemically using a single closing quote ['] to represent the glottal stop, [ŋ] for a nasal velar, and a macron for a long vowel. Punctuation marks and capitalization have been added to make for easier reading. For elements in Spanish, a close-to-standard Spanish orthography is used except when pronunciation significantly diverges from standard Spanish. In addition, to make the contrast easily visible, elements in Rapa Nui are italicized and those in Spanish are underlined. Relatively well-assimilated Spanish borrowings are italicized and underlined. Translations are also italicized or underlined to reflect the original code choice at the morpheme level. Names are pseudonyms.
11. For a reported case of performing regional identity through sprinkling dialects in the conversation in standard language, see Doerr in this volume.
12. This project was funded by the Chilean Ministry of Education and the CONADI ("National Corporation of Indigenous Development") a national institution established by the Indigenous Law to serve as a liaison between the state and indigenous persons and groups.
13. One of the early wordlists was compiled by a French missionary Roussel (1908) who had resided intermittently on the island between 1864 and 1871 and posthumously published in 1908. This wordlist seems to have contained a number of Mangarevan and Tahitian items because of Roussel's previous acquaintance with those languages (S. R. Fischer 1992).
14. This publication was funded by Catholic University of Valparaíso, a Chilean university, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (now called SIL International).
15. Literacy had been predominantly with Spanish and this still continues to be the dominant language of writing among the Rapa Nui. While Rapa Nui literacy practices have been on the rise in the last two decades, its orthography is still being standardized and there are variations in the orthographic systems in use.
16. See Frekko in this volume for a case of standardization of language that has alienated its "native speakers".