

8 Some Considerations about Empowerment and Attitudes in Language Revitalization

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Talking about minority languages means talking about efforts, strategies, brave people, and perseverance through the years. The success of these processes is closely related to the way that each group understands their very own situation and assumes the required commitment.

This chapter is about the importance of attitudes and the difference that it can make to language revitalization efforts if they are included as a fundamental element. This is based on experience of more than fifteen years of supporting the process of revitalization of the Nawat language in El Salvador. I also include some reflections that have emerged from the perspectives of the two fields that I know best: as a language activist and as a mental health professional. Both approaches are, in my opinion, strongly related in the understanding that language is the reflection of thought.

On the clinical side, I have had the satisfaction of seeing how people can resolve their once problematic situations when, alongside other elements, they take a positive attitude. If human beings are able to change the course of their destiny with this change at the mental level, it is possible to apply this question to a bigger context, such as the group level. What if the speakers of a minority language took a positive attitude toward their language? Could it perhaps change their destiny? Would it be possible to prevent a tragedy?

A Little about the Case of El Salvador

Salvadoran Nawat is currently the southernmost of the Nahuatl languages and the only one spoken outside of Mexican territory (excluding migrant/diaspora communities). It is spoken by a dwindling, scattered population in the central and western areas of this small Central American country. With the loss of Nawat, El Salvador would become the first monolingual country in its region, as the shift to Spanish would be complete.

Ever since the first Spanish colonization in 1524 the Nawat language has not enjoyed high status, even after the establishment of the national state in

1821. The Salvadoran Nahuas became dominated and minoritized, and their language has been weakening ever since. The already undermined language was dealt a severe blow by a major event in 1932: a peasant uprising by and in the area of Nahua villages resulted in an excessive response from the state, with the genocide of some 25,000 people (approximately 2 percent of the country's population at that time). The political dispute soon turned into an ethnic issue. The nucleus of speakers disintegrated and speaking the language could signify mortal danger for a person, whether or not they had any political involvement. The event, therefore, had serious repercussions for the health of the language.

Nawat speakers fell into a kind of hopelessness where they identified themselves as the least desirable component of Salvadoran society, along with all their traditional knowledge, including the heritage language. In order to survive many of them changed their native surnames, they moved away from their traditional areas, they changed their clothes, and finally they abandoned the use of their language (most of them completely). With the loss of positive attitudes toward themselves, intergenerational transmission of the language was also lost. It was not until eighty years later that the Nawat language would be able to experience more promising times.

Auschwitz, Nawat, and a Solution

It would be possible to consider situations of this type just from a social, historical, or political point of view. However, these events and their consequences also have psychological significance. Their impact can make a person vulnerable, provoking depression or anxiety. As a clinical condition, this problem deserves treatment, which are discussed below.

Although it was developed for individual experiences, the logotherapy approach to psychotherapy, pioneered by Viktor Frankl, lends itself to both individual and/ or group contexts, such as the case of Nawat. Frankl's approach was developed from his experiences in the face of the most extreme hardship in the genocide in Auschwitz in World War II. Threats, death, and despair were common experiences shared by both groups, despite them being quite different in both time and location.

The Logotherapy approach proposes that even when we face extreme adversity, we still have a degree of freedom in decision-making that can determine the course of individual responsibility that each person has for their own well-being. The core of Frankl's philosophy is that people can find meaning in their lives by identifying the unique **roles** that only they can fulfil. Logotherapy believes that lack of meaning causes mental health issues, so it attempts to help people find meaning in order to help solve

their problems. Thus, in a particular scenario people could resolve either to abandon themselves, or to find their own meaning in the situation and obtain a more satisfactory outcome, at the same time as understanding their own actions as well as the benefits in the short and long terms. This point can usefully be shared among people participating in language revitalization.

As is usual during times of adversity, people can feel forced to focus on threats and stress suffered instead of using that same time, passion, and energy to find other possibilities. We are less likely to achieve a success story if we only look at complaints and not at solutions. This does not mean we should ignore problems, of course not. The causes of a problem must be known if we want to make the best decisions, but we may be surprised at all the resources that we lose when focusing on a problem, when we could instead begin to believe in joint efforts and in our very own organizational capacities to create a magnificent story.

The inspirational option to focus on solutions and on aspects that we can influence/modify, is the key to building answers. Problems are only our starting point and nothing more than that. This was what Viktor Frankl promoted among the survivors of Oświęcim (Auschwitz), but it is a lesson that traveled to El Salvador and to the world.

Attitude as a Basic Resource

Even if our language only has a small number of speakers, whatever the situation has been, we must look for strengths to make a difference. In this circumstance attitudes are highly relevant because of a very practical fact: talking about attitudes means talking about more possibilities. It is possible that in project planning, the attitude factor has not been taken into account as one of our resources. Nevertheless, it deserves attention beyond a superficial look. Positive attitudes provide resources, but if there are negative attitudes, resources could get lost.

Circumstances can be explained as the interaction of two types of events: external ones, outside our control; and internal ones, which we can control. The way in which we focus on the internal variables has emotional and behavioral consequences. This is one of the approaches proposed by emotive rational therapy. If we do not address circumstances successfully, we can become pessimistic, but on the other hand, we can start from the same experience with the positive option of going forward with optimism and enthusiasm if we focus in the right way.

Why is it important to notice this? Because minority languages are not in that condition by mere chance, but due to political, social, or economic adversity. Those of us who are interested in them must be aware of the need

for an approach that gives us the greatest possibility of resolving the situation in a positive way. Understanding this and teaching it to other participants and stakeholders in the process will be beneficial.

A simple way to achieve this is using the easy initials ABCDE:

- A means ‘action’ (our current situation).
- B comes from ‘behavior’ (we must provide at least two behaviors after the action).
- C means ‘consequences’ (one for each behavior).
- D is for ‘discussion’ of each consequence.
- E means ‘efficacy’, where we decide on the best answer after the discussion.

How can this be applied to a specific case of linguistic revitalization? To get an idea we can look at these two simple examples:

Case 1

- Action: My local language is in a critical situation.
- Behavior: I will not do anything for my local language because languages are being lost on the planet every fifteen days. It would be better if we promote more successful languages.
- Consequences: Defeatism and loss of cultural knowledge.

Case 2

- Action: My local language is in a critical situation.
- Behavior: My language expresses very beautiful forms, caring for my language is good for my culture and for humankind. Achievements are more appreciated when we face adversity.
- Consequences: Appreciation and enthusiasm.
- Discussion: A positive approach leads to more productive ways of facing reality and opens the door to more possibilities to solve this particular situation.
- Efficacy: If we want to revitalize a language, we choose the route presented in case 2.

In the case of Nawat, taking control of their situation has enabled community members to elaborate thoughts such as:

‘Firm hearts cannot be defeated. From our hearts we will continue speaking Nawat’

‘They gave us death but we will give flowers and new life to words,’ or the very popular

Ne nawat shuchikisa (‘The Nawat language is in bloom’).

Why is it important to consider attitudes in this way? Because it can make a big difference and really does not cost a penny. It does not cost anything to meet and get organized with people who are interested in the language, create joint efforts, and solve conflicts together. This reasoning allows us to see attitude as an immaterial resource that helps us manage or optimize material ones.

Help from the Outside to Help Inside

Although it might sound a bit paradoxical, this approach is effective and offers one of the fundamental ways to change attitudes of native speakers. Strategies are needed to counteract and compensate for discrimination, for reasons such as ethics, responsibility, dignity, or mental health of persons who have been discriminated against for a long time because of their language, ethnicity, and/or culture. It is important that people in the language revitalization team care about this point, not to play the role of a messiah, but as human beings sharing their experiences and feelings with the human being that is next to them.

In a recent educational project in El Salvador that involved the state, an educational institution, language activists, and some native population members, it was a Nawat speaker, Andrea López, who in personal communication said, 'Your team is looking after everything in school, you also take us and bring us safely and the classes are funny so we want to participate too because is evident the interest and good treatment you give to the Nawat language and its speakers'. She pointed out in this way that the effects of the position explained above have an emotional resonance that is translated into attitudes. If we add joy and enthusiasm, the combination becomes unbeatable as soon as we want to revitalize a language.

Some Ways of Changing Attitudes

For the past five years El Salvador has witnessed a growth in linguistic activism by citizen groups, which have recently been joined by various interested universities to create spaces and offer Nawat language classes. Despite the historical damage to the Nahua population, the involvement of native speakers stands out. Despite the advanced age of several of them, they are involved in the process of fostering language visibility, which has facilitated the presence and appreciation of these speakers inside and outside their towns. With the improvement in attitudes they have become figures in the changes they wanted to see.

It is also worth mentioning the celebrations around the language that are held today, such as the annual Day of the Mother Tongue, which is

celebrated simultaneously in several places. These events require open spaces and the use of sound equipment because participants are numerous, whereas previously Nawat was only spoken sporadically in just a few homes.

Nawat is experiencing an initial process of revitalization which, the experts will agree, has not yet achieved much, but it gives enough encouragement to continue. In the words of Alan R. King, in the *Oxford Handbook of Endangered Languages*: ‘An awakening has begun, as intellectually capable and socially aware young adults start asking questions and discovering their capacity for effective action and exercising choices’. Collaboration between new speakers and native speakers is an outstanding achievement that has had mutual benefits for the attitude of both groups.

Conclusions

The issue of people’s attitudes toward a language is closely related to emotional factors. This makes it worthy of attention from a psychological point of view, particularly in those situations where the environment has been a determining factor in mental health, because substantial changes can have a powerful healing effect. Humans have the great ability to influence their destiny, even in the face of adversity, and to develop positive attitudes in different ways such as when taking on a commitment in a language revitalization process where attitudes are an authentic resource that must be adopted by the revitalizing community, even if they do not have material resources to start the task of preventing the tragedy of the loss of a language. The valorization of the language and ethical treatment of the speaker community by external figures can contribute to mobilizing the appreciation of speakers for their own language, and thus change their attitude to it. By doing so they can make more widespread use of their language.

The number of Nawat language speakers is still small today, but it is precisely this that gives it an interesting position. If this process runs successfully, it can become a regional model in Central America about how to go forward with the resource of attitudes, enabling us to win when history once said we should lose.

FURTHER READING

- Frankl, V. (1946/2004). *Man’s Search For Meaning*. London: Rider Books.
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- Reguera Baños, J. (2007). *Pensar bien, vivir mejor. Mediante la terapia racional emotivo-conductual*. León.

8.1 Empowerment and Motivation in the Revitalization of Wymysiöeryś

Tymoteusz Król

When I started my activities in revitalizing Wymysiöeryś, many Vilamovians in their fifties, who were too young to have learned Wymysiöeryś but old enough to remember people speaking it, told me a number of stories. They were about people who could not speak good Polish or had a Wymysiöeryś accent in Polish; about the last woman who used Vilamovian folk dress as everyday wear to her death in 2002 – Barańka-Anielka; about a man whose surname was changed from Schneider to Sznajder (to make it more Polish) and then how after many years he changed it back to Schneider. Another story was about a woman, Kuba-Hála, who was expelled from her own house in connection with postwar persecutions of Vilamovians. After having spent a couple of years in a labor camp where she was sent because she had been reported by a Pole who had taken over her house, she never took up Polish citizenship and died in penury as a stateless person. All those people (who were fluent only in Wymysiöeryś) were portrayed as stupid, backward, underprivileged, or stubborn. The people who told me these stories thought that I would make fun of the people described in those stories. But for me those people were a symbol of commitment to Wymysöü, similar to my own, despite living in other times and under other conditions. And unlike the Polish national heroes who I was taught about at school, they were not committed to killing a person or to organizing an uprising, it was a commitment of their own life by continuing the Wymysiöeryś language and culture.

The older Vilamovians told me stories about Vilamovian professors, bishops, and merchants, who used to live in Cracow, Lviv, or Vienna, but spoke Wymysiöeryś when they came to visit Wymysöü. These stories revealed that Wymysiöeryś was a language of educated people as well. This made me realize how important changing local ideologies was so that others could also know Wymysiöeryś as the language of prestige, spoke by people of certain status. Several factors contributed to this change. In 2012, I received the European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS) prize in Poland for a text about Wymysöü. Later more and more activities were supported by Tomasz Wicherkiewicz from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and by Justyna Olko from the Faculty 'Artes Liberales' of University of Warsaw, as both of these external institutions became involved in the revitalization of Wymysiöeryś. Because of these developments the attitudes of the municipal government changed. Also theater plays (see Figure 8.1.1) and the fact that Wymysiöeryś was being taught at the University of Warsaw started to positively influence language ideologies in the society: not only in Wymysöü, but in the whole of Poland. The same holds true for the acknowledgment of our language by SIL in 2007 and UNESCO in 2009.

For me a big motivating factor for continuing to work on revitalization is when I can show other people how we conduct our revitalization activities as well as



Figure 8.1.1 Performance in Wymysiöeryś, *Der Hobbit*, Polish Theatre in Warsaw. Photo by Robert Jaworski, Polish Theatre in Warsaw

experience what they do in their communities. I had an opportunity to do it for example in Mexico during a summer school of the EngHum project. Another important factor is the texts about Wymysiöeryś. Tomasz Wicherkiewicz wrote in 2001 that Wymysiöeryś will be extinct by 2010. Then, in 2011, I wrote an email to him saying that our language was still alive. After that, he came to Wymysöi and engaged himself in the revitalization process.

But the most motivating three moments of my life happened when I heard the following three statements by three Vilamovian women: first: ‘I want to invite you to my 90th birthday party, because I want to have somebody there to speak Wymysiöeryś to’; second: ‘If they expel you from your house as I was expelled for speaking Wymysiöeryś in 1945, come to me, I have chickens, they lay eggs, you will not starve in my house’; third: ‘When I see these children wearing Vilamovian folk dress and speaking Wymysiöeryś, I think that they are my parents and my grandparents, and aunts, and uncles. They have been dead for such a long time, and here I can see their clothes waving and hear their voices speaking’.

8.2 Language Activism

Nicole Dołowy-Rybińska

Engagement on behalf of languages, frequently called language activism, can be understood as intentional, often vigorous or energetic actions that individuals and groups undertake to bring about a desired goal, such as political, social, or cultural change. Activists are highly committed people who engage in activities on behalf of their communities, develop different kinds of strategies for the future of their communities and languages, and focus a collective spotlight onto particular issues. Sometimes they are able to motivate other people into action and change indifferent or hostile people's language attitudes. Language activism embraces a range of endeavors, approaches, protest slogans, demonstrations, advocacy, and information dissemination, which aim to change a current state of affairs, and which may also raise people's consciousness. The scope and levels of actions undertaken on behalf of a specific language depend on the situation of the language, the degree of recognition or protection offered by the state, and the attitudes of minority community members toward it, as well as the attitudes of the dominant society.

Language activists attempt to encourage native and potential speakers of a language to use it. They try to persuade governments and policy makers to support their goals. They do not possess authority or decisive power; therefore, they need to rely on people with whom they cooperate. When the minority community and its language lack recognition, their only promoters and policy makers are language activists.

There are different forms of language activism depending on the time and context as well as the aim of activities: to change one's own language practices or influence the behavior of others. Actions in favor of a minority language do not have to be spectacular. There are situations where progressive assimilation poses the most significant threat to minority languages, when language ideologies encourage an opinion that minority languages are regarded as an inferior form of communication, and when current and potential users of the language remain indifferent. If this is the case, activism may start with individual language choices such as learning an endangered language, using it even when it seems not to be accepted by the dominant society (or even the minority one), speaking it with children, and showing pride in using it and in being identified as a member of the language community. Such an attitude may positively influence other people's language attitudes and practices. This type of activism may be aimed at protecting the traditional life of the community, or more concerned with global issues such as social justice, the environment, fair trade, and human rights.

Minority language activism may take the form of organizing and participating in cultural, social, and public events related to the minority language and culture. Not only does this help to strengthen the community, creating new possibilities to use the language and identify strongly with other community members; it also empowers people to move to a more public level of activism in the struggle for language rights. Examples might include actions to show the movement's strength,

such as demonstrations, which gather many individuals as well as groups, communities, and associations supporting language and culture. They could also include language festivals to raise awareness in a less confrontational way.

An alternative form of language activism can be expressed through actions with political background. This often involves only a small, strongly engaged subgroup of the minority language community, because it demands considerable commitment and a higher awareness of the importance of fighting for language rights and the need to take responsibility for others. It might involve civil disobedience, for example, defacing public property such as signposts to draw people's attention to the absence of the minority language in public space; or refusing to answer tax bills or court officials in the majority language. *Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg* (the Welsh Language Society) provides an already classic example of such activities dating from the beginning of the 1960s. By their direct, often illegal activities and campaigns, this pressure group contributed to establishing the Welsh language as the coofficial language of Wales. These actions are more focused on securing language rights than increasing the use of the minority language.

The role of language activism is significant on many levels. It encourages other people to use a language and gives them the opportunity to engage in the cultural and language life of a community. On a more public level, language activism counteracts the lack of minority language recognition and can influence state language policy to be more favorable toward endangered languages.

8.3 'I'm Revitalizing Myself!'

Jeanette King

I am not Māori, but for forty years I have been participating in and observing the revitalization of the Māori language, which started in earnest in 1982 with the formation of *kōhanga reo* (preschool language immersion centers). I learnt Māori and raised my children bilingually; they went to Māori immersion preschool and schooling options until they were high school age, and I have been teaching Māori in schools and tertiary institutions since the 1980s. With this wealth of experience I can remember feeling encouraged in what I was doing because I felt I was part of a larger movement of people who were revitalizing the Māori language.

However, in the late 1990s, when I mentioned how I felt to a colleague and noted Māori academic, Dr. Te Rita Papesch, she told me that she didn't feel like she was part of any 'movement'! This stopped me in my tracks and made me think. So when I was interviewing Māori adults for various research projects I started asking them about why they wanted to be able to speak Māori. Te Rita was right – hardly any of them mentioned that it was because they wanted to revitalize the language.

Instead these 'new speakers' of Māori talked about how the Māori language was important for their identity as Māori – 'I am Māori, so I want to speak Māori'. Often they talked about wanting to be able to participate in and understand Māori rituals at *hui* (meetings, gatherings). Those I talked to also described how the Māori language was important for their spiritual well-being. In other words, personal

identity needs were their main motivator. And boy, were they motivated! Many of those I spoke to have gone on to become noted speakers and change agents. Such people are catalysts, inspiring Māori by challenging the dominant discourse. This makes sense, since one of the earliest language revitalization academics, Joshua Fishman, says that language revitalization will often involve identity (re)formation.

Apart from a focus on personal identity needs, most of those I spoke to were parents, and they mentioned the importance of ensuring that their children were speakers of Māori. In other words, they recognized their key role in establishing and maintaining intergenerational transmission of the language. I remember how one person, when asked to write down their three main motivating factors, wrote the names of their three children. Others also mentioned how they felt that the revitalization of Māori was important to the survival of their *hapū* (subtribe) and *iwi* (tribe).

The people I talked to did sometimes mention that they were motivated by the need to revitalize the Māori language, but this was in third place after their identity needs and desire to support others – in particular, their children.

In the 2000s, I noticed that national and tribal language planners in New Zealand were using promotional material to encourage people to both learn the language and also speak it as much as possible. These materials used phrases such as ‘every generation has a role to play in saving our language’. In other words, they were making the same mistake I did, by assuming my motivations for being involved in the revitalization of Māori were the same as those of others. I thought that the promotional material might have resonated more with potential speakers if it emphasized the positive associations of the language with personal identity and well-being.

The message here is that you should never assume that your motivations in language revitalization are the same as others’ – in fact, if you’re reading this book you are quite likely focused on revitalizing a language. So don’t forget that identity needs and a sense of belonging are highly motivational and that for many they aren’t revitalizing a language as much as they are revitalizing themselves.

8.4 ‘It’s Good for Your Heart’: Three Motivational Steps for Language Revitalization

Maria Olimpia Squillaci

To be honest, in all these years I realized that there are very few reasons why people should keep an extremely endangered language alive. It is certainly fascinating as it brings a different worldview and allows you to reason differently. But concretely, when you live in a very poor region that does not offer any opportunities to young people, a region whose only mantra is ‘learn a (dominant!) language and leave’, what should your motivations be to actually pass a minority language on to your children or – for young people – to spend much time learning a *useless* endangered language (which is not easy to learn)?

The only words that come to my mind when I think about sharing my motivation are those of my dad: to *platezzi greka kanni kalà stin kardìa* ‘speaking Greko is good for the heart.’ Starting from this quote, I shall share here three main steps that I consider crucial when undertaking a very *frustrating* revitalization process (as phrased by Lenore Grenoble) in extremely endangered contexts with a handful of older speakers left, which can turn into *a lot of fun* (as claimed by John Sullivan) but only with very good motivations as foundations.

People start learning or revitalizing minority languages for several reasons: cultural heritage, curiosity/interest, research, and many others. I noticed, however, that the big difference comes when they feel connected to the language, when they realize that speaking this language makes them feel better to the extent that they decide not just to study or occasionally speak the language but to *live the language*, that is to embrace the world this language describes and at the same time allow it to move forward into new ones by constantly speaking it and fighting for it. This change usually occurs when people start spending much time with older speakers (even without understating a word initially). When this happens, they deeply connect with the language and crucially with the speakers. In that moment new potential revitalizers realize the treasure of the words stored in people’s mouths and feel that the responsibility of transmission has moved from the old speaker down to them, to their *kardìa* – heart. This relation between the speakers and the potential revitalizers (who might be speakers themselves) adds a strong emotional value to language, which is no longer *a* language, but *the* language that people use to speak with or to listen to the people they love. This strong emotional value is the first step toward language revitalization.

The second crucial step is to build a team. It is difficult for revitalizers (either native or new speakers) to go against the flow and keep speaking the language when the rest of the community has stopped using it on a daily basis. In particular, once the initial enthusiasm fades away, revitalizers too can begin to forget the reasons for their work. By contrast, having a team of at least two or more people is a big motivation to move forward; it allows you to always be more creative and it incentivizes new actions when frustration takes over.

The third step is very much linked to the potential outcomes that speaking a minority language can bring with it. In most cases, when we tackle critically endangered languages, the economy – for instance – is a major factor to take into consideration, as its lack of economic value and the fact that ‘it does not give you a job’ is usually among the root causes for its abandonment. Therefore, it is important to foresee social and economic outcomes that can result from speaking the language and that can lead to concrete improvements for the community.

These three steps are a summary of what I (un)consciously promoted in Calabria, with my community. Regardless of any ‘more objective’ motivation, I must however go back to the title of this text and admit that the driving force for each of my actions has always been a profound love for my language and for the people who speak it.

8.5 Monolingual Space

John Sullivan

We founded the Instituto de docencia e investigación etnológica de Zacatecas (IDIEZ) in 2002 to provide scholarships to native speakers of Nahuatl who were studying careers in Spanish at the Universidad Autónoma de Zacatecas, and to furnish them with a place to continue practicing their language and culture. At first we held most of our collective discussions in Spanish. But as my command of spoken Nahuatl grew, I realized that my students were more than capable of discussing, in their own language, any of the academic topics that came up in our sessions. At that point I understood that every minute I spent working with them in Spanish was time contributing to the destruction of their native language. We decided that IDIEZ, from then on, would be a monolingual academic space. I played the role of 'language police' for a while, reminding them, when they would switch to Spanish, to look for the appropriate Nahuatl word or to paraphrase.

It's important to clarify here that we are not purists: our aim has never been to return to the time before the conquest, when Nahuatl was free of European loanwords and before the changes to pronunciation, meaning, and how words are formed and ordered that have come about as a result of contact with Spanish – as if that were even possible. The purpose of our monolingual space is akin to that of a jump start for a depleted battery. Our students have, in their brains, all of the cognitive and linguistic tools for thinking critically and creatively from the unique perspective of their language and culture, a perspective that benefits not only their community but all of humanity. They have fallen out of practice and they need to discover for themselves the richness, complexity, and power of their language: The monolingual space is the instrument for achieving this.

Students arrive at IDIEZ as native speakers who have gone through twelve years of formal education in Spanish, and have heard time after time from school, the government, and the media that their language and culture is worthless. So they no longer use Nahuatl except when they return to their villages for short family visits. When they begin to participate in the monolingual space, many ask themselves if they will be punished for speaking Spanish, as some of their former teachers punished them (with beatings, verbal abuse and humiliation, fines, extra chores, etc.) for speaking Nahuatl.

The transition is not easy: as they begin to work monolingually, many students report experiencing headaches. But at some point, each one of them realizes that their language is a powerful, complex instrument for reasoning. At that moment, a light comes on in their eyes – a light of curiosity, self-esteem, and empowerment. And then, through direct participation in monolingual teaching, research, and revitalization activities at IDIEZ, they learn that their opinions matter and their ideas are valuable; they learn that they can develop curriculum and conduct research on their own, without relying on the formulas and recipes they have been taught during their formal education. In other words, they think for themselves and express what they think, in their own language.