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# They Soon Forgot Their Words - Documentary

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They Soon Forgot Their Words - Documentary

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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by

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## ABSTRACT

This documentary film, *They Soon Forgot Their Words*, is about the language issues that threaten the Kaqchikel Mayan language spoken in Guatemala. It is one of 21 Mayan languages spoken in the country and is one of the most widely used with more than 500,000 speakers. Unfortunately, however, scholars have noticed that Kaqchikel is in a state of “shift” a process where one language combines with another in speech. As is the case with many Mayan languages in Guatemala, Kaqchikel is often combined with Spanish in speech. The colloquial name used for the combining of these two languages is “kaqchinol.” Shift is considered the first step in language loss and 90 percent of the world’s languages are expected to disappear within 100 years (Nettle & Romaine, 2000). This is the focus of the film. To provide an in-depth examination of one language threatened by a global issue: language attrition. There are two sides to this story which have shaped this documentary, one of language use in rural Guatemala and one of language use in urban Guatemala. Because of this, I have focused this film on individuals from opposing communities to provide a broad scope of the current language use/disuse, circumstances and issues that affect Kaqchikel and its continued vitality as a spoken language. I also rely on history and expert commentary to provide historical and social context. The goal of this film is to shed light on the global issue of language attrition, an issue that effects most of the worlds languages, by providing an in-depth look at the unique issues threatening one language.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.	LITERATURE REVIEW.....	2
III.	PRODUCTION NARRATIVE.....	8
IV.	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	17
V.	APPENDIX .....	19

## I. INTRODUCTION

Kaqchikel is one of 21 Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala, and one of over 30 spoken throughout all of Central America. Though there are over 500,000 speakers of Kaqchikel there is a growing concern among scholars that it will eventually fade out as most of its speakers are combining the language with the dominant language of the country, Spanish. For this reason, I spent nearly five months in Guatemala producing a film to highlight the issues that face this language, the history that affects it and the potential future of defending it. I did most of my filming in a small rural community, El Barranco, outside of the larger cities of Panajachel and Solola in the Lake Atitlan region of Guatemala. My primary informants in El Barranco were Zoila Sicojua, a bilingual preschool teacher at a small bilingual preschool run by my partners on this film, the non-profit Mayan Families. I also interviewed Luisa Cuxulic, a life-long resident of El Barranco and whose 4-year-old daughter goes to the preschool. Additionally, I spoke with a Kaqchikel Mayan historian and professor at San Carlos University in Guatemala, Dr. Edgar Esquit, to provide context about historic oppression and marginalization of Kaqchikel Maya people and how that has affected the Kaqchikel language. I also interviewed Juan Tzep, director of the Francisco Marroquin Linguistic Project in Antigua, to provide context of historical challenges faced by the Maya in Guatemala and efforts of the organization to protect the language. Jose Luis Garcia is a Spanish and Kaqchikel instructor at a language school in Panajachel who provides context about language and education laws and practices. Further, I relied on the story of one informant from the urban city of Chimaltenango, located outside of Guatemala City to provide context about language learning, cultural identity with regards to language, and social and economic issues surrounding language use and disuse in urban Guatemala to contrast the story provided by Luisa, Vivian and Zoila in the rural community of El Barranco.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ninety percent of the world's languages are expected to disappear in the next one hundred years (Nettle & Romine, 2000). The Kaqchikel Maya language is one that is threatened by this global issue. Researching the cause of language attrition is essential to solve and reverse language loss. Additionally, the establishment of effective practices to combat the loss of languages is essential to protect not just a culture but a unique worldview and knowledge. Nettle and Romaine (2000) argue the importance of linguistic diversity is that it provides a unique perspective into the mind of the speaker and reveals the many creative ways in which humans organize and categorize their experiences. This supports that the language spoken by a group is a fundamental part of their culture. As more languages become threatened by attrition, due primarily to globalization, it is necessary to save them before it is too late (England, 2008). For the Kaqchikel Maya, the main elements affecting language attrition are lack of generational transmission because of long-held language ideologies devaluing Kaqchikel, a fear among indigenous Maya of identifying with an insignificant culture, which could harm economic stability coupled with a long history of governmental and societal oppression of indigenous groups in Guatemala. This article examines these elements focusing on three variables: current language ideologies, cultural identity trends and current language practices

Indigenous Maya make up over 50 percent of the population of Guatemala. Despite this, indigenous groups have endured a long history of marginalization by their ladino, non-indigenous, counterparts (Balcazar, 2008). Kaqchikel, like the other 20 indigenous languages recognized in Guatemala, has suffered a long history of governmental oppression. This marginalization as well as language contact to Spanish has resulted in either a shift towards Spanish-Kaqchikel bilingualism or the beginning of attrition and potential Spanish

monolingualism. Sridhar (1994) points out that many marginalized speakers of threatened languages have different attitudes towards their languages. Some may view their language as a cornerstone or symbol of cultural identity while others may view it as having little economic value (p. 630). This devalued perception is the beginning of language attrition. For this reason, the bilingual preschool education program at Mayan Families, a non-profit serving Kaqchikel Maya communities in Panajachel, Guatemala which aims to offer bilingual education to ensure Spanish fluency and prepare pre-school aged children for the Spanish-language school system, is examined in this documentary. This provides insight into current cultural and language use trends within the Kaqchikel speech community of Panajachel.

The primary methods used in previous research were field observation, in-depth interviews and surveys (Balcazar, 2008,; Bennette 2014,;Brown et al.,1998,;England, 2003,; Nagel 1994,;Yoshioka, 2010). Two similar films were discovered which address language attrition but there was not a documentary film featuring the case of the Kaqchikel Maya. This project and the production of a documentary film will be an asset to the field of language attrition research because film is a unique and highly accessible medium, which can be easily distributed. This will aid in reaching a wider audience and ultimately increasing awareness of this minimally acknowledged global issue. The study of language ideologies, cultural identity and language use trends is significant because language death and decline is a global issue. By providing a voice for a language that faces attrition, there may be an increase in awareness. This is important because increasing awareness is the beginning of reversing the affects of the issues faced by the Kaqchikel Maya.

Language revitalization and maintenance efforts can affect the loss of the Kaqchikel Maya language. Through standardization, language retention, transmission and increased



appreciation for the language, the effects of a long history of marginalization can be altered. An understanding of factors, patterns and mechanisms that relate to language loss is essential for combating socioeconomic difficulties and injustices that indigenous people have faced (Yoshioka, 2010). Guatemala's history of oppression has led to a threat of language attrition as well as decreased appreciation for Kaqchikel and serves as a unique backdrop beneficial in understanding the effects of language maintenance efforts on cultural identity. Drawing from the findings and methods of existing studies focused on current Kaqchikel Maya language ideologies, current cultural identity trends and examination of language attrition causes, this article aims to identify the current state of use as well as vitality of Kaqchikel.

Balcazar (2008) explains that Mayas comprise over 60 percent of Guatemala's population. However, Kaqchikel is still considered less economically advantageous when compared to the more dominant Spanish language. Balcazar's (2008) study of language loss, language shift, and the language attitudes of Kaqchikel Maya adolescence supports that current language ideologies continue to devalue Kaqchikel. The findings of Balcazar's (2008) study show that of the sample group, adolescents of the town of Tecpán, adolescents are a shift generation influenced by lack of perceived prestige among the Kaqchikel speech community. Brown, Garzon, Richards and Simón (1998), also indicate Kaqchikel Maya is shifting towards Spanish because a lack of perceived prestige. Brown et al. (1998) indicates that the basic reason is that speaking an indigenous language and not speaking Spanish hinders the ability to obtain jobs in the dominantly Spanish-language workforce. Unsurprisingly, Brown et al. (1998) found that language shift is more prevalent in urban areas and less prevalent in rural areas where Kaqchikel is more likely to be the dominant language of the community, primarily in the home.

England (2003) suggests that Mayan languages have been affected by globalization and long-held language ideologies devaluing Mayan languages by explaining that the number of people fluent in Spanish and a Mayan language has increased enormously in the 25 years before the study. Further, England (2003) mentions that in many areas this bilingualism is the first step towards language loss. Additionally, she points out that if the Maya population is roughly half of the entire population of Guatemala, then only 50-60 percent of actually speak a Mayan language. The disadvantaged socioeconomic status of indigenous groups and the pressures of assimilation into ladino society have influenced the language loss of Kaqchikel as well. In Guatemala, Kaqchikel is largely associated with the negative values of traditional times- lack of education, poverty and ignorance. In contrast, Spanish is associated with positive values of modernity (England, 2003). Crystal (2000) points out that just 4 percent of the world's languages are spoken by 96 percent of the world. This fact illustrates that the world's languages are giving way to the more dominant languages in their regions for a number of reasons, primarily economic necessity and long-held ideologies devaluing these marginalized languages as in the case of Kaqchikel. It is clear that these ideologies are the beginning of the threat of attrition.

Cultural identity is defined as the collective or true self hiding inside the many other, more superficial imposed "selves" which a people with a shared history and ancestry have in common (Hall & Du Gay, 1996). Nagel (1994) explains that identity and culture are two of the basic building blocks of ethnicity. For Kaqchikel Maya, identifying as indigenous is multi-faceted and affected by a long-history of marginalization. Marlen's interview directly portrays this fact as her parents did not teach her Kaqchikel growing up but she later sought to reclaim it as part of her cultural identity and heritage. Balcazar's (2008) study points out that of the adolescent's who participated, it was examined that their cultural identity and appreciation for

Kaqchikel were influenced by the lack of generational transmission from their elders. Seventy-nine percent of the monolingual adolescents surveyed in Tecpán had Kaqchikel-speaking parents or grandparents but did not speak it themselves (Balcazar, 2008, P. 28). This suggests that long-held language ideologies devaluing Kaqchikel continue to dis-warrant the generational transmission of Kaqchikel and self-identification as Kaqchikel. Furthermore, in Bennett's (2014) study of three Kaqchikel-majority towns it was found that the Kaqchikel Maya are reformulating their ethnic identities so that they are not town-specific but instead defined either by ethnolinguistic group (Kaqchikel) or through a more generalized concept of "indigenous" that includes all of the ethnolinguistic groups of Guatemala in opposition to ladinos. Additionally, Brown et al (2000), England (1998) and Balcazar (2008) indicate that the majority of Kaqchikel Maya navigate between two forms of cultural identity; Guatemalan and Kaqchikel Maya. Balcazar (2008) concludes the findings of their study with, "They negotiate between Mayan community pressures to maintain the Kaqchikel language, and social and economic pressures to choose Spanish over Kaqchikel. These adolescents are aware of the cultural values placed on Kaqchikel and the monetary values placed on Spanish. They believe that the Kaqchikel language provides them access to their rich cultural past and their Maya identity. They also believe that Spanish and English would provide them with the opportunity for progress. Thus, Kaqchikel is their source for cultural and linguistic identity, while Spanish is their tool for social and economic mobility" (p. 10). England (2008) further supports this by explaining that Mayan languages are widely considered the single most important symbol of Mayan identity because they are still spoken by a majority of the population and they are unequivocally "authentic."

The state of Guatemala has marginalized and attempted to "castellanizar" or "Spanish-ize" its indigenous citizens since the Spanish arrived in the 1500s (Bennett, 2014, p. 11).

Castellanización had been the official state policy since the late 1940s and was only repealed with the signing of the Peace Accords in 1996, at the end of Guatemala's 36-year-long civil war (Bennett, 2014). This, as well as a long-history of ethnocide in Guatemala, is to blame for the issue of attrition faced by the Kaqchikel Maya today. However, the Pan-Mayan Movement, a movement of cultural reaffirmation that began in the wake of the end of the civil war, has inspired revitalization in cultural identity, pride and appreciation for the language. Fischer and Brown (1996) identify the movement as two-pronged: to work for the conservation and resurrection of elements of Maya culture while promoting governmental reform within the framework of the current Guatemalan constitution and international law. England (2003) supports this by mentioning that this movement has reversed loss of language and strengthened appreciation for the language as more indigenous groups are becoming more educated and producing literary works in indigenous languages. England (2003) also points out the Mayan languages of Guatemala benefited from this increased appreciation through increased standardization practices beneficial in increasing literacy in these languages as well as having linguists be the diffusers of language ideologies that foster language retention with the goal of maintaining the vitality of these languages. Additionally, with the Pan-Mayan movement, there is more indigenous representation within the Guatemalan government (England, 2003).

Pebley et al (2005) suggests that the importance of Spanish competency continues to be essential for social mobility of indigenous people and the efforts to use indigenous languages in schools, government, media and social services does not diminish the fact that Spanish fluency in contemporary Guatemala offers greater access to expanding economic opportunity (p. 231). According to Richards 2003 as cited in England (2008), with regards to literacy in relation to the Mayan-movement and language use and revitalization, what is especially telling is that literacy

in Mayan communities is inversely related to language retention. Those townships with the highest literacy have suffered the greatest language loss, while those with the lowest literacy have suffered the least (p. 2).

Language use and generational transmission is essential to maintain the vitality of a language. “Language death” is when a language is no longer spoken (Crystal, 2000). Balcazar (2008) found that 40 percent of the bilingual group in their study indicated that they would raise their future children as Kaqchikel-Spanish bilinguals, and 39 percent would raise them as Spanish monolinguals (p. 27). This indicates a 50 percent chance of the language being generationally transmitted. “It was revealed that urban adolescents prefer to speak in Kaqchikel with their elders, while they prefer to speak in Spanish with their siblings. In contrast, rural adolescents generally prefer to speak in Kaqchikel with their parents, grandparents and siblings. Nevertheless, the general tendency of the bilingual group is to speak Kaqchikel with their elders and Spanish with their siblings. Ninety percent of both rural and urban adolescents speak Kaqchikel with their parents or grandparents, and 54% speak Spanish with their siblings. This is an important finding, which indicates that the shift to Spanish is mostly intergenerational (Balcazar, 2008, p. 9). Generational transmission is essential for the vitality of a language to continue. When a language is lost so is a unique worldview and knowledge.

### **III. PRODUCTION NARRATIVE**

The research component of this film was to examine the current language use of the Kaqchikel language in Guatemala in response to experts noticing it is in a state of “shift.” Shift is the process of one language combining with another and is typically considered the first step in language loss, a global issue that threatens the majority of the world’s languages. The goal of this

documentary is to bring awareness to the global issue of language loss, especially as we move into a more globalized world where minority languages are becoming less intrinsic to one's culture and identity. The aim of this film is to enlighten and increase awareness of the beauty and unique knowledge that languages hold and the importance of maintaining them.

My interest in producing a film about the phenomena of language shift of Kaqchikel in Guatemala began when I worked at the Witte Museum in San Antonio and a Maya exhibit was featured at the museum. A component of this exhibit highlighted the current language revitalization and maintenance efforts undertaken by various organizations throughout Central America. This coincided with my interest in languages that started in high school and continued through college as I received my undergraduate degree in Spanish in 2014. I began the idea of producing this film in August 2016 without knowing which language I would focus on because as I began preliminary research into language decline, I found 90 percent of the world's languages are predicted to disappear within 100 years. This gave me many potential languages I could focus on for this film. After meeting with an old friend for lunch one day I discovered she was Kaqchikel and from the Lake Atitlan region of Guatemala. Guatemala had been one of the countries highlighted in the Maya exhibit I worked on at the Witte Museum so I began looking into anthropological research on language use in Guatemala. After sharing my idea with professors at the university and speaking with colleagues and experts in the field I found that there are 21 Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala and Kaqchikel is one of the most widely used. However, it has started to show signs of shift, and that is where the idea to focus on this one particular language and its unique issues regarding maintenance began. In December 2016 I met with the office of study abroad and was encouraged to apply for the Sturgis International Fellowship for the 2017-2018 year. As part of the grant proposal I had to partner with an

organization in the country in which I intended to do research, or in my case filming. I contacted a non-profit, Mayan Families, located in Panajachel that, among other programs, runs bilingual preschools throughout the Lake Atitlan region in southwestern Guatemala. The aim of these preschools is to prepare children in primarily rural communities, where indigenous languages are usually first languages spoken, to gain understanding of Spanish before entering the Spanish language school system of Guatemala. I thought having this type of access would give me insight into the current ideologies of rural communities regarding language use, which did prove to be the case. In April 2018 I was awarded the Sturgis International Fellowship that funded my five-month film project, December 2018-May 2018, in Guatemala. I prepared for this project by meeting with my advisors to go over necessary equipment, safety, explain my expectations and identify possible hurdles. When I arrived in Panajachel, the day after New Years, I met with members of the communications team at Mayan Families to discuss potential communities to begin visiting to find informants and build trust with members of these communities. I was set to meet with members of a Kaqchikel community that surrounded Lake Atitlan that coming week (January 8<sup>th</sup> 2018) but did not get the chance to attend as I came down with two ear infections and a throat infection that required me to be bed-ridden for two weeks. After I recovered I began visiting communities in which Mayan Families worked. To conduct interviews I began by seeking out key informants, “long-time members of the group under study who have expert knowledge of the group’s routines, activities and communication patterns. Using the knowledge provided by the informants, the researcher determines what behaviors to observe, where and when to observe them, what individuals to single out for intensive interviews, and what key documents might be relevant to analyze”(Wimmer & Dominic, 20010, p. 146) After a month of visiting and getting to know community members in each Kaqchikel language community

Mayan Families worked, I decided to focus my film on the bilingual preschool in El Barranco. El Barranco is a rural community outside Solola in the mountains that surround Lake Atitlan. After spending a few days filming around the community and talking with community members I ran into Luisa, who invited me into her home to meet her mother and who I later discovered had a daughter, Vivi, in the bilingual preschool in the community. I asked her if she wouldn't mind participating in my film and she agreed and allowed me to spend time with her family for the next few months. For the next three months I would visit Luisa and her family in El Barranco. I began the first few visits with my camera in my bag to gain the families trust and later asked if I could have a formal interview with Luisa. Only one interview was recorded with Luisa in the making of this film and there is a lot of B-roll of the family-Luisa, Vivi, her brother, older daughter, two sons and her mother Juana. I relied on in-depth interviews and field observation as my main methods of research. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) point out that the use of interviews along with field observations and analysis of existing documents suggests that the topic was examined from several different perspectives, which helps build confidence in the findings (as cited in Wimmer & Dominic, 2010. p. 123). I also spoke with Zoila Sicajua, a bilingual preschool student at the preschool in El Barranco. We initially met in Panajachel in January when I was talking to many informants at Mayan Families, the nonprofit, to figure out who I wanted to highlight in this film. Our initial interview was scheduled for February 6<sup>th</sup> at Mayan Families to get acquainted. We had an informal interview on video and established a more formal interview at the preschool in El Barranco for February 15<sup>th</sup>. The second interview is the interview in the film. I decided to include her speaking in Kaqchikel so viewers could get a sense of the language. I recruited a translator from the Mayan Families offices to accompany me on



this interview as I am not at all familiar with speaking Kaqchikel. Miguel, the translator, ended up being the person transcribing the interviews held in Kaqchikel.

During my first month, after talking with many people around the urban city of Panajachel and the rural cities that surround Panajachel, I realized I needed a second perspective. That of an indigenous person from an urban area that maybe didn't speak their native language as I found this was often the case because of lack of necessity when the dominant language spoken in urban areas is Spanish. After making contact with Centro de Investigaciones de Mesoamerica, a nonprofit research organization in Antigua, to conduct archival research for this film I was provided the contact information for the director of the Programa de Profesionalizacion "FEPMaya." This organization offers scholarships for indigenous youth to attend university in Guatemala. I was introduced to Marlen, a university student who studies Kaqchikel at San Carlos University in Guatemala City. Marlen agreed to participate in this film and share her story about learning Kaqchikel despite not being taught the language growing up because her parents did not see the value when Spanish is necessary for economic success, on top of the discrimination they endured for speaking Kaqchikel in the urban city of Chimaltenango where they lived. After wrapping up 4 months of filming in the Lake Atitlan region, I went to Antigua to be closer to my informants located in the urban areas highlighted in the film: Chimaltenango, Guatemala City and Antigua. Before leaving Panajachel I coordinated with historian and professor at San Carlos University in Guatemala City, Edgar Esquit, to establish a date to meet and hold an interview to provide historical context of historical discrimination and oppression of Kaqchikel Maya in Guatemala. Additionally, I coordinated with the director at Linguistic Project Francisco Marroquin, Juan Tzep, to set up an interview date to provide context of organizations working to maintain Mayan languages.

I first interviewed Marlen in the offices she worked in for FEP Maya in Chimaltenango, about 30 mins away from Antigua where I was based for the final month of filming. We met on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and our interview lasted about 2 hours, including time to gather B-roll footage. We then set up an additional time to gather B-roll in the town where she lives, Chimaltenango. We established May 7<sup>th</sup> as the day to gather additional b-roll in Chimaltenango. During my time in Antigua, I reserved Uber rides to and from the locations I was filming at as I did not feel comfortable carrying so much equipment on the public bus system and the buses took longer. This led me to meeting Byron, who would offer to drive me for the entire time I was in Antigua. As I kept requesting rides via the app I realized Byron was always the one to pick me up so we decided to bypass the app and exchange Whatsapp, the messaging/calling app, information and he became a friend and a reliable source of transportation. However, I always used the Uber app and told my roommates in the Airbnb I was staying in where and with who I was going with when we drove together, for safety reasons.

On days that I did not spend filming or conducting interviews I researched the archives of Center for Mesoamerican Investigations (CIRMA) in Antigua for archival materials for context about the civil war, where many indigenous people were targets of violence, and any additional information I could find. That is how I obtained the footage used in the film of the micro-scanner and computer as well as footage used in the timeline animations.

On May 9<sup>th</sup> I met with Edgar Esquit, the historian, at his office at the University of San Carlos in Guatemala City. We held a 2 hour interview and gathered B-roll footage, which are all part of the film. Our interview consisted of him providing context about how the historical marginalization of the indigenous population in Guatemala has led to the decline in generational transmission of languages and lack of perceived utility of the languages. This was a point I

wanted to make clear in the film to demonstrate how a language is affected by government policy and acknowledge how events in history can affect maintenance of a language.

May 11<sup>th</sup> I met with Juan Tzep in Antigua at the Francisco Marroquin Linguistic Project school. We established a meeting place via email, as I did with most of my informants. We held an interview for about an hour and a half, including B-roll shots. Juan provided context for the current and past government policies in place with regards to language use. Specifically he spoke to the history of marginalization of indigenous people, the civil war, educational policies and laws passed regarding language, as well as insight into those working to promote the use of the languages. This is included in the film and is something I thought was necessary to show the side of the story about those working to maintain the language for future generations and to also show how government policy can shape the future.

Juan was the last person interviewed for the film and after returning from Guatemala to the states in May I began editing starting in June and wrapping up post-production in November. I worked with an animator to produce the necessary history and law timeline animations included in the film. The inspiration for the design of the animations came from a repeat reference from informants about Kaqchikel being part of a “tree” of Proto Maya. So I thought it fitting to use that analogy in the film. Music in the film came from free websites like Youtube Audio library. The production of this film began May 2018 and I finished editing in late November. I relied on archival research from CIRMA, in Antigua, and relied on discovered documents as an essential component in this research. These documents were reviewed to provide historical context of the marginalization of the indigenous groups of Guatemala. These included but are not limited to newspaper clippings, archival video and photography and other relative materials. Data collected by Mayan Families such as reports on indigenous literacy rates of Panajachel and other

communities they serve, statistics of education levels of these communities, rates of completion of their Spanish-Kaqchikel programs and other data were also be examined. However, I did not add this data to the final film as I did not see it relevant since I decided to highlight more than just the bilingual preschool in El Barranco. The data collected, is from an unstructured interview format, which allows interviewers freedom to determine what further questions to ask to obtain required information (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011; see Appendix B for examples of preliminary questions). The subjects interviewed included teachers, experts in the field of Mayan languages, history and education as well as community members in El Barranco, Panajachel, Antigua, Chimaltenango and Guatemala City.

I thoughtfully and purposely set up the film and conducted interviews in a fashion so as not to lead informants but to have them lead me via their experiences and knowledge. After each day of filming I catalogued and uploaded my footage to 2 hard drives for safe keeping. I then sent each interview off to be transcribed using Rev.com or my friend Miguel who assisted me on shoots as an interpreter as he speaks Spanish, Kaqchikel and English. If I could change one aspect of the process of producing this film I would have budgeted my grant funding better to provide for more expenses to be covered such as translation cost. I quickly discovered after the initial interviewing process there was miscommunication with the nonprofit I partnered with to provide me aid in regards to translating. Translating from Kaqchikel to English was my biggest challenge but I overcame this by becoming friends with Miguel Cuc, who I mentioned helped with my translating earlier. Another struggle I encountered, beyond the language barrier, was adapting to the environment. I was unaware of the danger of living in a foreign environment and how that may affect me physically. I received 2 ear infections and a throat infection two weeks after my arrival and also endured E.coli and ameba parasites my last 2 weeks in the country. I

wish I would have tried to be more cautious of what I consumed and taken precautionary steps to ensure my health wouldn't be jeopardized.

In conclusion, my outline for the film did develop and change as I moved forward with production. Based solely on the research I conducted outside of the country, I originally thought this would make more sense to be told from the perspective of one family or person from a rural community where the language is most likely to be spoken. However, I discovered there are more important layers to be discovered to this story and untimely decided to add the story of Marlen to show how long held language ideologies can affect a language's continued vitality. Especially since language use varies so widely across rural and urban areas as well as across the whole country. Additionally, I thought it was important to highlight the education system in place in Guatemala and demonstrate how the assimilative practices of language learning has prevailed in Guatemala, a country riddled with a long history of governmental and societal marginalization of its indigenous population. After learning about certain laws passed and amendments to the constitution, coupled with the history of Guatemala I realized it would be best to make a timeline of events in history and in terms of laws passed and developments with language use and disuse to provide a broader picture of all the things that have, and continue to affect, the language today.

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## V . APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER



**To:** Karen E Stigar  
BELL 4188

**From:** Douglas James Adams, Chair  
IRB Committee

**Date:** 12/20/2017

**Action:** **Expedited Approval**

**Action Date:** 12/20/2017

**Protocol #:** 1710080852

**Study Title:** Language Shift of Kaqchikel Maya: Assessing language ideologies, cultural identity, and current language use from the bottom up.

**Expiration Date:** 12/18/2018

**Last Approval Date:**

The above-referenced protocol has been approved following expedited review by the IRB Committee that oversees research with human subjects.



## **APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Kaqchikel Maya Community Members**

1. What is your name
2. How old are you
3. Where do you live
4. How many generations of your family have lived here?
5. Tell me about yourself- your life history
6. Are you a member of the non-profit Mayan Families?
7. Do your children attend their Spanish-language programs?
8. Why do you send them to these programs? Is there a benefit? What is it, if so?
9. How important is it to know Spanish for your children's futures? What disadvantages do they face if they do not speak Spanish?
10. What about the importance of teaching Kaqchikel to children?
11. Can you tell me what you know about the civil war in Guatemala?
12. Did it affect your family? How so?
13. How did it affect the indigenous community?
14. Is your language a part of your Kaqchikel cultural identity?
15. How do you identify as Kaqchikel? Traje? Language? Ritual or Trade you work in?
16. How is Kaqchikel different than other Mayan groups in Guatemala?

### **Experts in the field of language attrition/linguistics/special Kaqchikel knowledge**

1. What is language attrition?
2. Do you think the Kaqchikel Maya could face this issue? Why/why not?
3. What is the importance of language generational transmission?
4. Does being bilingual change the way Kaqchikel is used? How so? (ex:Spanglish)

5. The law requiring governmental buildings to use the indigenous language of the region—is this implemented? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this law?
6. Civil war and influence on indigenous communities. Influence cultural identity?
7. How does speaking a language influence cultural identity? Or does it?
8. How does/did historic government marginalization affect the indigenous groups in Guatemala?
9. Can you tell me about the historic marginalization of indigenous groups in Guatemala
10. What are the world's major languages?
11. What disadvantages do people have if they do not speak Spanish in Guatemala?
12. What other issues face these groups—specifically Kaqchikel

**APENDIX C: SCRIPT**

<b>Writer/Producer: Karen Paulk</b>	<b>Graduation Date: May 2019</b>
<b>Estimated time: 25 mins 35 sx</b>	<b>Status:</b>
<b>Version: 1</b>	<b>Revised:</b>

**Production notes: They Soon Forgot Their Words defend May 2019**

**The University of Arkansas School of Journalism and Strategic Media.**

**Master Thesis May 2019.**

<u>Scene</u>	<u>Video</u>	<u>Audio</u>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>OPEN</b></p> <p>Quiet lake drone shot off dock towards volcanos at dawn</p>	<p>Intro- mellow/suspenseful music. Youtube Audio Library</p> <p>Zoila New 3:45-3:25- "Our Language is in danger"</p> <p>Marlen 04 3:15-3:25 "You are from an indigenous area and you don't know your language"</p> <p>Edgar0312:56-13:12 The basis of racism is in all these processes, devices they established during the colonial period</p> <p>Luisa02 1:23-1:45 "Before when I was a child, people only spoke what is known as Kaqchikel. They didn't speak Spanish. Here you mostly heard Kaqchikel.</p> <p>Jose03 13:40-13:55- In Guatemala, to speak a mayan language was considered prohibited top speak a mayan language"</p>

	<p>Fade up title----</p> <p>Title "They Soon Forgot Their Words"</p> <p>FADE to BLACK</p>	
<b>2</b>	<p>Dissolve from black to map</p> <p>Map of North America and zoom to Guatemala and Zoom in to El Barranco</p> <p>Title- EL BARRANCO</p> <p>WSTuk Tuk going down road</p> <p>MSDog laying down/WSJuana and son chopping wood/</p> <p>WS Man walking with bundle of corn on back/</p> <p>MS- Woman weaving</p> <p>WSwomen walking/</p> <p>WSfarmer</p>	<p><b>TRT 00:57sx</b></p> <p>Music under. Youtube audio library</p> <p>Nat sound wind and cars passing in el barranco</p> <p>VO ZOILA NEW 7:10-7:36- Our language is in danger because we are forgotten a lot of words. We have been mixed it with Spanish, and we get use to do it.</p> <p>VO- ZoilaNew 1:05-2:47- El Barranco is an Indigenous Mayan Village; People here speak Kaqchikel. They work in the fields, they weave. women walk their children to school in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon. Man work on the fields everyday</p>

	CU back hoe	
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Explaining Kaqchikel Use in El Barranco</b></p> <p>Drone shot of El Barranco</p> <p>WS outside door Luisa making tamales/CU hands making tamales/WS inside house behind as luisa makes tamales</p> <p>ON-CAM Luisa Talking Head</p> <p>TITLE- “Luisa Cuxulic, el barranco resident”</p> <p>CU- vivi and Luisa holding hands MS- vivi and luisa walking towards camera</p> <p>CU Vivi playing on playground</p> <p>ON-CAM- Zoila talking head interview</p> <p>TITLE- “Zoila Sicojua Preschool Teacher”</p>	<p>Soft Music      <b>TRT: 2:27sx</b></p> <p>VO Luisa070:18-1:24</p> <p>When I was a child, there were just a few houses here. The houses were minimum. Some here, some below. There were just corn crops and sowings. Now time has changed a lot. Now there are a lot of houses and now there is a bilingual preschool, in El Barranco</p> <p>1:34-2:07 Before, when I was a child, the only language that people spoke was kaqchikel, no one spoke Spanish. Nowadays, you can hear people speak Spanish only, especially children.</p> <p>VO-Luisa040:01-0:34 I have a child studying in the Mayan Families bilingual preschool. Her name is Vivi Vanessa. She can speak Spanish. She can almost speak Kaqchikel, she already understands.</p> <p>VO- ZoilaNew 4:07 – 4:30 “Time has changed; in the past people speak Kaqchikel only. Spanish language did not exist. Now that it does exist we have to teach them, so wherever they go they will be able to interact with others</p>

	MS -Zoila teaching in classroom	
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Explaining bilingual education in Elbarranco</b></p> <p>MS-camera following Zoila walking to school in El Barranco</p> <p>MS zoila name outside door of classroom</p> <p>CU clown face floating in wind as zoila cleans up classroom in background</p> <p>WS- zoila drawing a number on ground outside classroom</p> <p>MS- zoila counting kids in a line</p>	<p><b>TRT:</b></p> <p><b>04:20</b></p> <p>VO-ZoilaNEW 2:30 – 3:30- “I am here with the children teaching them how to talk, to sing, and to write; that is what children do here every day. We also teach them Spanish, because there are some of them that doesn't know how to speak it. So it's our job to teach them. We also teach them Kaqchikel</p> <p>VO- ZoilaNEW- 8:55 – 9:21 “It is important to know Kaqchikel and Spanish. We need to know both languages. So wherever we're going, we will be confident and we are not going to have hard times when interacting with others. If there is a child who speaks Spanish only, trying to talk to and adult who doesn't know Spanish, they will not be able to communicate.”</p> <p>VO-Luisa05 2:14-2:49When I was a child, I didn't know how to speak Spanish, because my parents did not speak it. So I had a hard time when I went to school. I didn't understand what my teachers were saying. I don't want my children to have the same problem, so I taught them Spanish first, once they were fluent , I taught them Kaqchikel</p> <p>VO-Luisa06 4:51-5:05 I have noticed with my</p>

	<p>ON-CAM- Luisa talking head interview</p> <p>WS- Luisa and vivi cooking at stove inside house</p> <p>WS- Luisa walking towards camera with family</p> <p>MS- Luisa and Vivi doing homework in home</p> <p>ON-CAM Zoila talking head</p>	<p>children, when we talk to them, they use Spanish and Kaqchikel words at the same time. That's when we hear Kaqchiñol.</p> <p>VO- Luis063:30-4:02 Kaqchiñol is when we say one word in Spanish and another one in Kaqchikel. Almost unifying the two languages</p> <p>VO-Zoilanew11:24 – 11:52 That's why we mix it (kaqchikel) up with Spanish. Almost nobody speaks a pure Kaqchikel. We all mix it with Spanish. In the past people spoke a pure Kaqchikel but now, we don't know how to translate a lot of words</p>
5	<p><b>Timeline History Animation</b></p> <p>Animation of tree growing – following limbs to next set of information</p> <p>1500s—Guatemala becomes a Spanish colony under Spanish</p>	<p><b>TRT:</b></p> <p><b>07:00</b></p>



	<p>explorer Pedro de Alvarado.</p> <p>1839 - Guatemala becomes a fully independent nation</p> <p>1960- A 36-year-long civil war begins. Indigenous population is the primary target of violence</p> <p>1996- civil war ends and Peace Accords signed acknowledging human rights violations against indigenous population</p>	<p>Suspenseful Music- Youtube Audio Library</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>History/hispanization</b></p> <p>Title- Guatemala City</p> <p>WS Edgar sitting on couch behind title then title fades out</p> <p>ON-CAM- Edgar talking head interview</p> <p>Title- “Edgar Esquit, Kaqchikel Maya Historian San Carlos University”</p> <p>WS- tuk tuks in front of Antigua arch</p>	<p>Upbeat Music. Youtube Audio Library <b>TRT: 07:56</b></p> <p>Edgar02-13:49-15:13 The bases of racism is, to say, in all these processes, devices, that they established during the colonial period to control the population.....</p> <p>Edgar03-18:20-19:01 All of these processes impact and have a great force on the disuse of the languages. It is very difficult that a Kaqchikel speaks their language if there are no open spaces for the use of the language at the national level. Of course they can speak at the local level, but also at this level, at the local level one can quit using their language if people start to believe that the language is something primitive, something useless for economic reasons</p>

<p>CU- Hand on window seal in bus</p> <p>MS- women vending fruits at market</p> <p>WS- Antigua Church</p> <p>MS-Flag</p> <p>WS- Park</p> <p>CU-Fountain</p> <p>MS-women&amp;traje</p> <p>CU- girl selling flowers at market</p> <p>WS- DRONE Overhead of children running across</p>	<p>Quite suspenseful music</p> <p>Soft music begins. Youtube Audio Library</p> <p>Jose04-00:37-01:52  In the past, before the (civil) war in Guatemala, almost in the whole country, in many communities Mayan languages were prohibited....</p>
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	<p>CU-pan from books on book shelf to Juan searching for book</p> <p>WS- Behind Juan standing at book shelf and turning to sit at table</p> <p>ON-CAM- Juan talking head</p>	<p>children to schools to become more “hispanic”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>TRT: 11:01</b></p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Education</b></p> <p><b>Laws Explained: Part1</b></p> <p>WS- Jose writing on board</p> <p>Title- Panajachel</p> <p>Jose talking head interview</p> <p>Side MS Jose writing</p> <p>CU- Jose writing behind</p> <p>WS Mayan alphabet on board</p> <p>MS- Jose pointing out Mayan numbers on board</p>	<p>VO-JoseLuise03-14: 11-16: 09 From many years to date, in Guatemala a decree law for the education system was created. In public schools or schools in Guatemala must teach indigenous Mayan language or languages of the region, depending where the schools are located. For example if we are talking about Panajachel, the language taught in schools there has to be the Kaqchikel language</p> <p>VO-JoseLuis04- 15:14-15:31 In reality, they teach the basics because many of the students do not have interest in learning the language, and they take the class because it is part of the curriculum, and something that they have to take and complete.</p> <p>Nat sound Jose saying Mayan numbers</p> <p>VO-JoseLuisWriting06-02:49–02:54- There is a problem in Guatemala with a lack of bilingual teachers. The problem is that there are not enough to cover all the schools</p>

	CU- Jose wiping board off	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Animation of Education Laws</b></p> <p>Animation of tree growing – following limbs to next set of information</p> <p>1945- Government adopts an assimilation program of teaching literacy to Mayan children in their mother tongue to ease into Spanish learning</p> <p>1965- Constitution of Guatemala declares the national language of instruction Spanish but maintains assimilative education policies</p> <p>1979- Government extends assimilative indigenous language instruction through 2nd grade</p> <p>1985- Constitution recognizes Guatemala as multiethnic, pluricultural, and multilingual. Maintains Spanish the official language</p>	<p><b>TRT 12:38</b></p> <p>Soft suspenseful music - Youtube audio library</p>

	<p>1987- Unified Mayan alphabet</p> <p>1996- Civil war ends and bilingual education in Spanish and indigenous languages sanctioned.</p> <p>2003- Law passes granting indigenous languages co-official status with Spanish and promotes use of languages in public offices</p> <p>2012- Bilingual, intercultural education becomes an official national priority</p>	
<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>Reactions to Laws Passed- Juan and Edgar</b></p> <p>MS- Juan reading side profile</p> <p>MS- Juan reading front</p> <p>WS- busy street in Antigua</p> <p>WS- woman walks by on phone in street</p> <p>MS- Woman vending traje (clothing)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>TRT 14:39</b></p> <p>Juan 04 1:15-2:00- There are many laws, in X treaty, en X subject. But the case in Guatemala is that very few comply with the laws passed.</p> <p>Nat sound street</p> <p>Juan02 1:15-1;25- Unfortunately, by necessity, we have to communicate constantly. If not constantly, then 80 to 90 percent in Spanish. And we stop using our indigenous languages.</p> <p>Nat sound- shoes squeaking in hall/typing</p> <p>VO-Edgar03 21:00-22:50– I would understand that the law is for the whole country, but I have seen</p>

	<p>WS- Edgar walking up hallway</p> <p>MS- Edgar typing at computer</p> <p>MS- Woman framed in doorway vending on busy street</p> <p>MS- Flag waving in wind</p>  <p>MS- kids in boat in Panajachel</p> <p>WS- band and government building</p>	<p>very little of this in Guatemala.</p> <p>Nat sound street/ band playing</p> <p>VO- Edgar03 21:40-22:50 To put a label is like a cosmetic matter in the use of languages equally. Because, the state hasn't established a policy that has an impact between all of the communities or an impact in the cities for the use of the languages. To put a label is something symbolic and nothing more. And the use of the languages requires a lot more.</p>
<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>Marlen explains why she wanted to learn Kaqchikel</b></p> <p>WS- pan following Marlen walk through town center in Chimaltenango</p>	<p>Nat sound city through-out sequence <b>TRT: 16:00</b></p> <p>VO-Marlen02 1:07-1:20: I am from Chimaltenango, the municipality Chimaltenango. It is a Kaqchikel area and have municipalities around. All of the municipalities speak Kaqchikel.</p>

	<p>ON-CAM- Marlen talking head interview</p> <p>Title-“Marlen Fabiola Socoy Iquic, University student Studying Kaqchikel”</p> <p>CU- marlen traje and side profile</p> <p>CU- clothing designs</p> <p>WS- women selling traje (clothing)</p> <p>MS- Marlen side profile on bench</p> <p>WS- marlen sitting on bench different angle</p> <p>CU to WS ZOOM OUT marlen sitting on bench</p> <p>MS- Following behind marlen walking though city park in Chimaltenango</p> <p>MS- Marlen following camera walking through park in</p>	<p>Soft Music Begins- Youtube Audio Library</p> <p>VO-Marlen02 6:21-7:07: One of the main reasons for not learning the language was based on the idea that we always have in our society. That it is discriminative, the language, the clothing...</p> <p>So, based on this, my parents definitely did not teach me the language. I found myself like “But, Why?” “Where?” “Why did I never have a mother language?” So, the explanation that they gave me, pushed on me, is that they did not want me to go through the same circumstances as them.</p> <p>Amplified soft music</p> <p>VO-Marlen02- 4:15-5:14 “I started with the idea of, why? Questioning myself. They saw me, looked at me and asked me “You do not know how to speak y and you don’t understand.” "You are from an indigenous community and don’t know your</p>
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	<p>Chimaltenango</p> <p>ON-CAM-Marlen talking head interview</p> <p>CU- pan around Marlen head at park in Chimaltenago</p> <p><b>Dissolve to next scene</b></p>	<p>language". So, from there it gave me the incentive to find my identity, perfect my language, rescue that, really in a lot of time, had been lost.”</p> <p>Nat sounds continues and soft music fades out</p>
<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>Education System Explained by Jose/ Marlen Explains her experience in urban area</b></p> <p>WS- Zoila walking outside bilingual preschool in El Barranco</p> <p>MS- Vivi drawing in book at school</p> <p>WS- Kid chasing birds in city park in Antigua</p> <p>MS- Marlen sitting at desk reading paper- pan</p> <p>MS- Marlen Flipping through paper</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>TRT 17:54</b></p> <p>Ambient nat sound throughout</p> <p>VO-JoseLuis04-15:41-16:00 In rural areas the language are taught as well. And, children of those schools take it more seriously and it becomes more necessary for them compared to the urban school students who give less importance to this.</p> <p>Nat Sound</p> <p>VO-Marlen04 800- 8:40That's what we have right now in schools. Why is it necessary, why the importance?</p> <p>They only see it as a course they need to pass. After</p>

	<p>CU- Walk art</p> <p>ON-CAM- Marlen talking head interview</p>	<p>this, elementary school, I remember I never took a course.</p> <p>I never took a indigenous language course, until after high school.</p>
<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>Difficulty learning/ missing words explained</b></p> <p>MS- grandmother sorting thread</p> <p>CU- Juan weaving</p> <p>CU- loom weaving</p> <p>CU- grandmother pointing out design</p> <p>MS- Zoila grading books surrounded by kids</p> <p>WS- Zoila teaching and writing on board in classroom</p> <p>WS- Zoila outside talking to group of kids</p> <p>WS- Marlen writing at desk</p> <p>MS-writing side profile</p> <p>CU-hand writing</p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>TRT 18:48</b></p> <p>Nat sound grandmother talking/ambient noises</p> <p>VO-ZoilaNew-9:22 – 10:10 “ Some day if we don’t speak Kaqchikel anymore it is going to disappear. We are only going to have one language. Something that distinguishes us. Something that tells us where we are coming from. So, it is necessary that we teach children to speak in Spanish and Kaqchikel. If someone speaks only Spanish in the home or only Kaqchikel, they will have problems communicating. We have noticed that is harder for children that know Spanish only to learn Kaqchikel because of the accent we use in Kaqchikel, that makes it harder for them to pronounce, in the other hand, it is easier for a child who knows Kaqchikel to learn Spanish.”</p> <p>VO-Marlen 3 2:15- 2:25 Learning Kaqchikel was very hard for me because I returned to the same, the grammar is totally different than Spanish.”</p> <p>VO-Marlen3- 5:15-5:45- I talk, I can say that the most force I use is between the tongue and the teeth. That is to say, how it is in Spanish. Kaqchikel is totally in the throat. It is a totally different distinct sound. So, for me it was very difficult</p>

	<p>MS- behind Marlen writing</p> <p>CU-hand writing</p> <p>CU- side profile</p> <p>CU- pen laying on paper</p>	
<b>13</b>	<p><b>Explaining language- Jose/Zoila</b></p> <p>CU- rolling film on microfilm reader</p> <p>MS-Computer</p> <p>CU- rolling micro film</p> <p>CU-Kaqchikel/Spanish words on screen</p> <p>WS- behind tuktuk driver in antigua</p> <p>MS- Lady selling ice cream on street</p> <p>CU-black shoes hanging and waving in air</p> <p>WS- ton of shoes for sell in stand</p> <p>CU- colorful kid shoes hanging</p>	<p>Nat sound microfilm machine <b>TRT: 21:02</b></p> <p>Vo-Jose Luis04 02:15-3:30 There are words that do not have translation, and these are normally the modern words. ...computer, <i>quemat'zip</i>. Now, if we try to explain what <i>quemat'zip</i> means, it means handwriting weaver. So, many words are translated depending on the sounds they make or their description.</p> <p>Nat sound tuk tuk engine/ rattling/ ambient street noise</p> <p>VO-ZoilaNEW 7:37 - 8:38 Spanish has prevailed over Kaqchikel, because almost everybody speaks it, that's the reason we are losing our language. For example we know how to say vehicle in Kaqchikel, but since there are different types of vehicle, like, pickups, trucks, we don't know how to translate it, The same happen with shoes we only know how to say shoes but not all the types of shoes, so we have to say it in Spanish. Another example would be shoes. We know how to say it in Kaqchikel but not all the varieties that exist today. For example, Sandals, shoes, y many other types. For us, to say shoes we are referring to all the types of shoes.</p>

<p><b>14</b></p>	<p><b>END-language related to nature</b></p> <p>CU- silhouette of branch with volcano in background</p> <p>WS- volcano at dawn/CU- parrot/WS- man in boat at lake Atitlan at dawn</p> <p>WS- Luisa hanging out door to talk to turkeys</p> <p>MS- Turkeys</p> <p>WS- drone over Semuc Champey waterfalls</p> <p>MS- Drone through cavern and waterfall</p> <p>WS- drone over trees at Semuc Champey</p> <p>WS- drone over trees at Semuc Champey</p> <p>END- Fade to black</p> <p>Title- "Kaqchikel is in a state of "shift" a process where it is</p>	<p>Nat sound- birds chirping</p> <p>Marlen03- 5:55-7:10 " The language is related a lot to nature. So, every sound, including sounds animals make, is related in the language."</p> <p>Nat sound Luisa making turkey noises/ music starts half way through this quote</p> <p>"I remember them saying, "Turkey" and turkey makes a sound. It's sound is it's name and that is how you translate it in Kaqchikel. That's to say, the turkey says "col" and he says in part, "col, col, col" and How do you pronounce it in Kaqchikel? "Col". So a lot with nature, it's sound and its name. This is how I began to learn including imitating sounds of animals, of a spring, including water, including the sound of leaves. Everything has a relation to nature</p> <p>Marlen04- 3:00- Many of the issues today, people that use the Spanish language mix(with Kaqchikel) They use Spanish because they have not yet found the roots of these languages.</p> <p>I believe this is part of the story that made us disappear at some point, the language. They soon forgot their words.</p> <p>Music Ends</p>
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	<p>combining with Spanish in speech</p> <p>Title- Language shift is considered the first step in loss</p> <p>Title- <i>“Within the next 100 years 90% of the worlds languages are expected to disappear”</i> – Nettle &amp; Romaine “Vanishing Voices” 2000</p> <p>Fade to black</p> <p>Pan around Balam Ajpu Rapper talking head appears on screen—rapping in Tutzujil</p> <p>Fade to black</p>	<p>Balam Ajpu Rapping</p> <p>CREDITS</p>
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**APPENDIX D: LINK TO SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEO FILE LOCATION**

**<https://vimeo.com/300984168/48b612a539>**

**(Trailer below)**

**<https://vimeo.com/294625056>**