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Figuroa-Saavedra, Miguel

La motivación para el aprendizaje de segundas lenguas minorizadas: el caso del estudio de la lengua náhuatl por universitarios hispanohablantes¹

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Motivation in minority second languages learning: a case study of Spanish-speaking university students learning Nahuatl¹

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Miguel Figueroa-Saavedra*

Abstract

This article presents a study on the motivations of hegemonic language speakers learning minoritized second languages, focusing on the case of the Nahuatl language. Two situations were analyzed: one where Nahuatl is a foreign language, and the other where it is a national language, to identify the associations of motives with certain sociolinguistic contexts. The results reveal that the instrumental motives have greater weight than the integrative ones, even when intrinsic factors predominate. This is so because Nahuatl is not seen or perceived as a spoken language in the learner's social and academic context, and because the predominant Spanish-centric linguistic ideologies tend to highlight its value in its historical or nationalistic ideological meaning. Thus, that the integrative orientation responds more to the desire to join an imagined national or professional community rather than directly contacting the Nahua community or being part of it. Therefore, learning Nahuatl is valued more as the acquisition of knowledge than as a means of communication or integration.

Keywords: second language learning – minorized language – motivation – multilingualism –Nahuatl.

Introduction

Studies on the motivation to learn a second language (L2) have always tried to shed light on the reasons why people are interested in studying a language and eventually decide to do it. They have also sought to find out why people choose to study a language instead of another. Sometimes this process is considered to be decisive to predict if they will succeed in learning and mastering an L2, but besides the pedagogical concern that underlies this objective, this choice is not an aspect from which merely issues related to didactic objectives or curricular achievements arise. This decision is marked by social and educational contexts that make the motivation and choice reflect a specific socio-linguistic situation under which the student acts.

¹ This article shows part of the results of the research project "*In ichikawaltlis in nawanemilistli ipan in weyitetlamachtilistli inik tlahtolkuepalistli iwan tlahtolihkuilolistli ika nawatlahtolli. 2pan Tlakxit*" (DGI 33238201862), Instituto de Investigaciones en Educación, Universidad Veracruzana.

* Ph.D. in Social Anthropology. Research Professor at the Institute for Research in Education, Universidad Veracruzana, Mexico. migfigueroa@uv.mx

Thus, in circumstances and situations in which the student may choose freely, we find cases where motivation as a determining factor of the successful learning of an L2 is more relevant, not only from a personal and psychological standpoint but from a community and sociolinguistic one as well.

Determining the motivations to study an L2 involves paying attention to the sociopolitical framework around the learner as a social subject and as member of a linguistic community. From this social and cultural perspective, we want to understand why students choose to learn an L2 without presence, support, promotion, or visibility like the languages traditionally taught at school, one not valued in the labor market; that is, a minoritized language (ML). The case of the study of Nahuatl is ideal because it is an ML that has been the object of diverse negative and positive valorizations, which reflect the marginalized and stereotyped situation of native languages in Mexico after a process of Castilianization and a linguicidal ideology (Heath, 1992; Barriga, 1995; Muñoz, 2009; Flores, 2017) that has not been entirely reversed despite the fact that since 2003 there has been a General Law of the Linguistic Rights of the Indigenous Peoples and a number of educational reforms fostering the study and use of Mexico's indigenous languages.

According to the 2010 Census of Population and Housing, 1'544,968 people 5 years old and older speak Nahuatl. This makes Nahuatl the most spoken language in Mexico after Spanish and the most spoken indigenous language in the country, way ahead of Yucatec Mayan. It is also the most widespread throughout Mexico, with speakers in 556 municipalities distributed in 17 of the 32 states that make up Mexico. From being a hegemonic language in the thirteenth century and until the middle eighteenth, during the nineteenth century it began to be de-literated, limited to rural areas and working classes and geographically fragmented, until it began to face the risk of disappearing. Although in Mexico Nahuatl has always been associated with autochthonous cultural splendor and idealized as the original language of the Mexican nation over and above other autochthonous languages, it has not been included in the general educational curricula except for the subsystem of indigenous education and intercultural universities, directed only towards indigenous population. As for the educational offer of Nahuatl as L2, it usually consists of workshops or the occasional subject in some bachelor's degrees, or mostly in the informal or not formal sector (Nava, 2021).

Motivations to learn an L2: theoretical approaches

If we review studies on motivation until now, this aspect has been worthy of attention insofar as it is considered a necessary starting point to learn a language. In the early twentieth century, the learner's ability was seen as the key psychological factor to learn an L2. It was believed to explain both the development of the desire to learn an L2 and the achievement in learning it (Henmon, 1929). However, linguistic ability becomes less important if it is not linked to other aspects having to do with the person and his/her environment.

Throughout the last century, social and educational psychology approaches to L2 learning underscored the affective variables (attitude, inclinations, anxiety, motivation) as predictors of achievement in L2 learning (Gardner, 1985). These aspects, centered in the character or the personality, highlighted the impact of the environment over the person. Thus, between 1960 and 1970 researchers began to pay attention to the importance of motivation, associated to environmental factors. In the 1970s and 1980s, sociocontextual considerations focused on aspects like the minority or majority status of the speakers (Clément, 1986: 271, Noels *et al.*, 2000: 58) to explain desire to learn and achievement. Gardner and Lambert (1972) saw in the relationship of the learner with the language and the target community an important social aspect, since it awakened and facilitated the desire to learn an L2. This integrative motivation, the result or the means of joining or approaching a particular linguistic community, and the instrumental motivation, which explains the learning of a language as an advantage or competitive and competency merit in itself, were key factor to learn an L2. The relevance of the integrative motivation (Gardner, 1985: 82-83), as a stimulus for determination and the learning of an L2, would be paid more attention to later (see Dörnyei, 2008: 82).

According to the self-determination theory, the motivation to learn an L2 would be grounded on intrinsic or extrinsic factors (Deci, Ryan, 1985) but also on some orientations or attractions that constitute the so-called integrativeness (Gardner, Lambert, 1959, 1972). Although instrumental and integrative interests ensure progress in learning an L2, the integrative orientation is not necessarily in a positive correlation with proficiency (Noels *et al.*, 2000: 59) or skills. Clément and Kruidenier (1983) claimed that the influence of the social environment requires a more precise problematization. They noticed that in multilingual contexts the integrative orientation appears among members of dominant groups. Thus, in the cases observed the learners shared four orientations: wanting to travel, making friends, increasing their knowledge, and instrumental orientations, i.e. those not associated to the desire to contact or join the native group who spoke the L2. Nevertheless, this desire to contact or identify with members of the target group, regarded as a determining aspect for learning, does not seem to be fundamental for the motivational process if its relevance is limited to specific sociocultural contexts (Noels *et al.*, 2000: 60). This assumes that, whether or not there are professional or curricular reasons (instrumental, extrinsic or intrinsic), individuals set about learning an L2 to join a particular community through the knowledge, appropriation and use of that language, so that this learning process becomes also an integration or acculturation process. This links the integrative orientation to the ethnolinguistic vitality and social context models (Clément, 1986, 1980), the acculturation model (Schumann, 1986, 1978a, 1978b), the aforementioned theory of self-determination, the theory of the *possible selves* (Markus, Nurius, 1986) and the theory of intercultural communication (Byram, 1997; Dörnyei, 2008).

The acculturation theory (see Siegel, 2003: 187) relies on two concepts, social distance and psychological distance, which are useful to understand that the attitudinal responses from internal or external principles are key to the desire to approach the L2 group in a context of contact, not limited to a classroom. Thus, Schumann (1986, 1978b), through a psychological model, highlights the social characteristics of the L1 and L2 groups, believing that this context, beyond motivation, would determine proficiency in learning an L2 as an acculturating effect. Therefore – and this leads us into the theory of intercultural communication – it involves a modification of the learner's attitudes, knowledge and behavior towards the native speakers of the L2. This modification or adaptation, expressed in the capacity of or predisposition to change, depends on the social and psychological distance between the learner and the target group. The greater the distance the less contact there will be with the group that speaks the L2, and the less openness there will be to stimuli that promote the learner's approach to and mastery of the L2.

This attention to the natural environment of the learner, immersed in the L2 community and its culture, and the learner's need of adaptation and acceptance, lead to phenomena such as linguistic accommodation (Beebe, 1988; Giles, 1977) and the construction of an ethnolinguistic identity (Giles *et al.*, 1977; Giles, Johnson, 1981, 1987). It also addresses cultural identity reaffirmation or transformation processes, through the use of languages as relevant markers of belonging. However, the concept of linguistic vitality (Giles *et al.*, 1977) had some weight and a role in the social context model to explain the cultural and linguistic attraction of the L2 group. Linguistic vitality is defined as the combination of three factors – status, demographic weight and institutional support – that make a cultural and linguistic group stand out above others. The more vitality, the greater its possibilities will be to remain and continue as a differentiated group.

Clément's social context model (Giles, Byrne, 1982) would be considered the most integrated theoretical model to describe motivation as a choice. According to this model, two processes would determine the motivation to learn an L2 (Clément, 1986: 272): the frequency of contact with the L2 group and the relative ethnolinguistic vitality of the L1 and the L2 groups. The former is understood as a primary motivational process associated to the concept of integrativeness, and as the resolution of the conflict between the affective orientation and the fear of assimilation. The latter seeks to understand the valorization of the status of the language of each one of the ethnolinguistic groups involved. Their valorization would be established by the degree of vitality, derived from their demographic weight, socioeconomic status, and institutional support (Giles *et al.*, 1977). This model would try to explain what unleashes motivation and how it becomes a continuous stimulus to succeed in learning another language. Other studies complement the integrative-instrumental distinction of motivation.

Deci and Ryan (1985), in their theory of self-determination, complement this integrative-instrumental distinction with two other types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic

motivation is based on stimuli that are external to the activity itself, while intrinsic motivation would be an interest in the activity *per se*. We must note that these are not categorically different, since they are linked in a self-determination continuum (Noels *et al.*, 2000: 60). If we regard self-determination as the capacity to decide voluntarily what to do and how to do something according to one's own interest, we will understand that some behavior is oriented towards the satisfaction of achieving some states and goals. This impulse would be determined by the individual's personality, biology, biography and context. The internalization of both types of motivation, therefore, explains the determination of the person to obtain something considered consequent to the person's particular nature and interest. In the intrinsic motivation those needs are perceived as particular, one's own, almost innate, and they seek enjoyment, satisfaction or improvement, as if in a competition. In that respect, Markus and Nurius' theory of the *possible selves* (1986) completes this notion of the development of the person through an adjustment of the person's expectations and desires of social participation, together with other views on self-cognition and socialization. The 'selves' are a number of individual ideas of what we should become, what we would like to be, and what we are afraid to turn into, which provides a conceptual link between cognition and motivation. That involves explaining how individuals will behave when they have the opportunity, possibility or necessity of learning an L2. Those possible selves are the cognitive components of the hopes, fears, goals and threats that make motivation specific according to the relevance, significance, organization and direction of the decision and behavior. This suggests that these possible selves function as incentives for future behavior (Markus, Nurius, 1986) and provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current viewpoint on the construction of the subject as a speaker and the identity load it entails.

The self-determination model explains this complexity as a process of negotiation and experimentation of interests and sanctions, socially promoted, and productive and achievable personal inclinations. Vallerand *et al.* (1992, 1993) established a taxonomy of intrinsic motivations: the search for knowledge (exploring and learning new things), the search for fulfillment (feeling the achievement of goals and mastery of tasks), the search for stimulation (excitation, gratification in execution, aesthetic fruition, fun). The extrinsic motivations are those that seek to gain a reward or avoid a punishment. This does not imply a lack of self-determination if the motives are internalized in the person's self-concept. Likewise, depending on the person's degree of self-determination or self-determined internalization, three other types are recognized: external regulation (where the motives are extraneous to the person, and therefore the activity ends if that incentive stops), internalized regulation (where the external motive is assumed as being in the person's interest or benefit, but is initially chosen by the person), identified regulation (where the person chooses and identifies with the motive and assumes it for reasons of personal relevance or competence) (Deci, Ryan, 1985; Vallerand, 1997). To this set of motivations and regulations must be added an amotivational state, understood as the situation where

people do not see a relationship between their actions and their consequences, and cannot establish the motive of their fulfillment when they believe the factors that explain or justify that activity are beyond their control or recognition. There may be a lack of desire, of stimulation and ceasing, which is linked to the so-called defenselessness, or learned helplessness.

Nevertheless, these intentions, repressions or dissuasions cannot be separated in the social framework from the existence of opportunities and possibilities of negotiation in the encounter with the other. This leads us to the theory of intercultural communication, which helps us to place the process of development of communicative competences within a context of mutual knowledge and recognition of cultural identities (Noels *et al.*, 2011). Learning an L2 involves developing capacities to manage and negotiate in a flexible way the meanings of our identity, whether to state it or to deny it, or to show disagreement with how it is defined and conceded by the other (Kim, 2007: 244). Language, as a tool to achieve social and psychological aims, can help us understand, define, and navigate between identities, facilitating through communication a reciprocal interpretive framework. Thus, it is possible to overcome the explanatory and predictive uncertainties generated by the contact with the other, but this depends on the development that linguistic and cognitive competencies afford, as well as the development of emotional competencies, which create the conditions for closeness and contact. It is at this point that the motivational aspect emerges as the result of a plurality of desires towards other cultures: a profound curiosity for the other, a desire to know and learn about the other, a desire to break down cultural barriers (Rodrigo, 1997: 16-18).

This is connected to the xenophile impulse underscored by the sociocontextual model and the construction of identities (Clément *et al.*, 1994: 433; Dörnyei, 2008; Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2009; Gardner, Lambert, 1972: 132), where learning an L2 is the means for the integration of intercultural identities. These are not necessarily defined or national identities, but also global and imagined identities that guide the learning trajectories in the communities where they are practiced (Lamb, 2009; Yashima, Zemuk-Nishide, 2008) and allow the individual to find a place as a dynamic bicultural (Noels *et al.*, 2011) person or a generator of new identities, as the learner seeks to solve cultural, personal and collective conflicts and challenges.

All these models show a concern to be tested empirically as classroom studies to elucidate the relevance and weight of their theoretical aspects in the explanation and prediction of the second language learning process. However, in this approach, the location of the study groups and the languages selected as L2 as case studies generate a partial view of what the learning processes of an L2 are. All these models and theories seem to explain sufficiently the process of attraction in the study of an official, hegemonic, international or global language by speakers of other national or international languages, but they do not enable us to understand or address in the same terms the motivation to study a local ML without real or apparent vitality. Hence, they continue focusing on the global market of languages and do not perceive other phenome-

na linked to the local market of teaching and learning minoritized languages, which develops simultaneously and more frequently.

Encouraging students to start and continue any learning process with particular reasons or obligations, as asserted by the self-determination theory, or integrative or instrumental intentions, according to the sociocultural theory, does not acquire a true social – sociolinguistic – meaning if the internalization, resistance or rejection is not linked to the pressures and criteria set by language policies that determine prejudice and negative attitudes towards the L2. Even the variations in Vallerand's model, which allow us to see and understand this relationship in a more complex way, require acknowledging this ideological context to explain this internalization or reproduction of the rationalizations that justify the decision to study a ML. Since we are not concerned with explaining the relationship between motivation and proficiency but with the processes of overcoming, perpetuating or creating linguistic prejudice, we need to delve into the problematization of the influence of the social environment on that dimension of behavior as a social practice, since for the aforementioned reasons the studies conducted so far obviate or neutralize this issue. We cannot fully understand what represents a motivation to learn an L2 if we only look at cases where the learner is a speaker of a minority L1 and studies a majority L2 (local/national L1 and global/international L2), perceiving bilingualism as an unquestionable increase of communicative, social and intercultural value. Rather, we must delve into cases where the learner speaks a dominant L1 and want to learn a minority L2 (national/international L1 and local L2) in demotivating contexts where, moreover, the multilingual reality is seen more as a subjective monolingualism due to a systematic public invisibilization, lack of promotion and extracurricular or optative offer for learning it. This is what Jeff Siegel (2003: 182) makes clear when he states that studies about speakers of dominant languages learning a minority language are few and far between, and if any are conducted it usually happens in natural contexts rather than in classrooms.

In Europe, starting in the twenty-first century there have been studies that seek to address this situation in contexts of linguistic minority and centered in the figure of the “neospeaker” (*neohablante*) (Ramallo, 2020: 233-234; Amorrortu *et al.*, 2019) and the impact of the social context and linguistic ideologies such as imperialism and monolingual linguistic nationalism (Phillipson, 1992; Moreno, 2008). The study of the non-native speakers' interest in learning Euskera, Gallego, Aragonés, Corsican, Faroese, Frisian, Welsh, Lemko or Sami, among others, has attracted researchers' attention due to its link to linguistic politics and possibilities of revitalization. The neospeaker, defined by Ramallo (2020: 238) as “any person who learns a second language and makes relevant use of it”, that second language being an ML, has different motivations that are manifested as a verifiable, solid and lasting decision, and that involve a total or partial rupture with an established linguistic order through his/her communicative praxis (2020: 250). Thus, the implicit and explicit, instrumental and integrative motivations sometimes respond

“more to an imagined self-consideration by the neospeaker, a sort of ideological questioning that situates him/her as a possible savior of a particular language” (Ramallo, 2020: 250, referred to O’Rourke, Ramallo, 2018).

However, the case we address shows other characteristics that do not allow the learning of an indigenous language to give rise necessarily to a neospeaker, defined as an agent of change that will alter or subvert the minoritizing linguistic order in conflict, joining the minority language community (Ramallo, 2020: 239). The peculiarity of the Mexican sociolinguistic system, its linguistic politics and the degree of ethnolinguistic marginalization and vitality perceived in Mexican indigenous communities describe other phenomena and effects, as well as motivations. Thus, in the Mexican context we find some initial work on the subject, such as the thesis written by Nahua researcher Yoltzi Nava Hernández (2021) about the learning of Nahuatl in urban environments. Focused on the study of the non-formal – that is, not associated to any educational program and with little to no curricular value – language learning offer, she identified intrinsic motivations (acquiring new knowledge, learning about and appreciating other cultures, a taste for learning new and complex things), extrinsic motivations (formal requirement, demands of the environment, social recognition or economic incentive), instrumental (labor or school requirement, moving to another place, applied use) and integrative motivations (proximity to a community, historical awareness, self-adscription) (2021: 139-159). These motivations, present to a different degree in a wide variety of learners who want to study Nahuatl, share the feature of going against the current of a hegemonic linguistic market and imaginary, even before the lack of expectations of power or the desire to speak with a Nahuatl speaker.

These approaches to the phenomenon of the learning of a minoritized L2 by speakers of hegemonic languages in contexts where the learning of other prestige and dominant languages is incentivized gives motivational aspects a more meaningful dimension, especially in the presence of multiple dissuasive factors against making that choice. This kind of studies provide data that question some of the assumptions made from other theoretical approaches, within or influenced by linguistic hegemony frameworks that elude linguistic asymmetry, inequality and discrimination as variables. Thus, this research work wishes to contribute to these approaches to the dark side of the language teaching market, adding to the knowledge we have acquired about the domain of higher studies and its limited educational offer of minority languages.

Aim

Given the need to delve into the reasons that drive people to study a ML as an L2 and the lack of knowledge about what leads Spanish speakers to study a language like Nahuatl, the aim of this research work is to identify and define typologically the motivations and regulations that drive students to study it, as well as to try to understand and explain these reasons in regard to some dissuasive or encouraging sociolinguistic contexts. Thus, we will try to identify particular

features based on whether Nahuatl is seen as a minoritized national language (MNL) or a minoritized foreign language (MFL). On the other hand, our interest revolves around the college student population, since they are the ones towards whom the most formalized educational offer of the teaching of this language is addressed, and have the conditions for every possibility of expectations to be manifested, since the teaching is offered as optative or free choice courses. Therefore, the questions that guide this approach are what kind of motivations drive people to study a ML like Nahuatl, what variations these motivations present in Spanish speakers if this Mexican language is seen as a foreign or national language, whether the closeness or contact of the learner with the Nahuatl speaking community affects his/her decisions as an expectation or experience, and if so, whether the very fact of the linguistic minorization of the L2 is considered or manifested in this decision. After addressing these issues we will identify the following aspects as specific aims:

- The variation of the instrumental or integrative motivations to learn Nahuatl as an L2.
- The associated intrinsic and extrinsic factors that establish their regulation on the learning choice.
- The differences observed, whether Nahuatl is regarded as a national or foreign language, and the social and psychological distance assigned.
- The experiences and ideological conceptions that from the learner's self-determination the study of Nahuatl integrates within a context of justification and application of his/her knowledge.

This will help us understand the meaning of the choice and the sociolinguistic character of the motivations associated within the different theoretical approaches that try to understand the role played by motivation in the learning of second languages, even those not shown socially as desirable or possible to be learned, and in this sense also in the maintenance of minority languages.

Method

To elucidate these questions we have approached our research as a case study, given its uniqueness and because of its pertinence and relevance to the problem being studied, since Nahuatl is a clear example of an ML whose formal teaching is feasible under certain conditions and to which anyone interested may have free access. This involves broadening some early approaches that explored the issue of students of Nahuatl in Mexico City and Madrid (Figueroa, 2007), but did not problematize it fully in its global dimension. Thus, we establish a dialog between those early results and the new contributions obtained between 2015-2017 at Universidad Veracruzana. Since this kind of approach has not been abundant, the case study proposed is of an exploratory-analytical character (Coller, 2005: 41-44), because we want to explain a unique

phenomenon that is representative of what the motivation to learn a minoritized L2 in sociolinguistically minoritizing contexts is, as well as to contribute to theoretical reflection about it, and more concretely about the teaching of Nahuatl.

The sufficiency of the exploration is based on our extensive information gathering process, since the construction of the cases took place in two geographical locations (Mexico and Spain) and a period spanning from 2007 to 2017 in different institutions, because we wanted to detect exhaustively all the possible motives until we reached theoretical saturation according to its validity (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2003), which has justified that in the case of Mexico we have included more groups in different stages. This allowed us to make a systematic, objective and controlled description of the characteristics of the learners as population, and of the motivations as an area of interest (Colás y Buendía, 1998: 177).

To establish the two cases considered of learning Nahuatl as MNL and as MFL we selected as a theoretical sample the educational experiences under the criterion of being an educational offer of Nahuatl taught and endorsed by a formal institution to Spanish-speaking university students or graduates. In the case of Nahuatl as a MFE, we considered the teaching to university students offered at the Museum of the Americas in Madrid (Group 1), in which 15 students participated. In the case of Nahuatl as a MNL we included the Bachelor's Degree in Spanish Language and Literature for its optative class of Nahuatl (Group 3), with 13 students. To this data we must add other data obtained in two Mexican institutions which offered Nahuatl as an optative or free choice subject: the Philological Research Institute and the Anthropological Research Institute of UNAM, (Mexico's National Autonomous University) with the participation of 41 students (Group 2).

The gathering of information to be analyzed was done with a self-administered questionnaire where learners were asked questions about their occupation or current studies, place of origin, knowledge they possessed about the language, culture and history of the Nahua, learning expectations, thematic preferences and reasons why they chose to study this subject. The questions were structured and open. With Groups 1 and 2, in order to have an adequate contextualization, we also interviewed the teachers in charge of these classes to understand better the relationship between profiles, types of motivation and personal and social situations. In the case of Group 3 I, as their teacher, was able to conduct a participant observation, which allowed me to have a better understanding of the circumstances, and consequently more interpretive and analytic depth. In the case of Group 1 we also relied on information derived from the knowledge of the environment, the dynamics and the population, since I was also a teacher in the course. With these different strategies we were also able to triangulate the information in order to have quality control (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2003) in the descriptive and explicative analysis of each case.

The data obtained allow us to identify a wide variety of motives. These motives are not expressed as mutually exclusive categories in the learner, since they sometimes are grouped

together in each individual. In general we identified more common reasons, i.e. reasons expressed more frequently than others. Nevertheless, this frequency is not significant for our research since it responds to circumstantial issues and we do not analyze the preponderance of the types, but only their co-occurrence. Thus, their representativeness is theoretical rather than statistical, admitting cautiously limitations in the generalization of the results obtained (Ruiz Olabuénaga, 2003), as this research adopts a prospective approach centered in a particular language and educational environment.

For the descriptive and explicative analysis we recorded the students' answers and categorized them through theoretical classifying categories already defined according to their type of orientation (integrative-instrumental) and regulation (external, internalized and identified) to recognize their variety within such typologies, and then we related them to their socio-educational situations, linguistic experiences and national sociolinguistic environments, to understand the meaning of the impulse to satisfy a certain need or desire to learn as a social behavior that acquires significance according to a specific asymmetrical sociolinguistic situation.

Results: Motives to learn Nahuatl

In general, we found recurring motives in the students and different reasons to support their decision to study Nahuatl. We can recognize a first set of linguistic knowledge (learning an Amerindian language/learning a national language) and we find it expressed as the desire to learn about other languages, with no other goal than increasing their linguistic knowledge. This learning may be only about the linguistic system itself, expressed in claims about wanting "to learn about Nahuatl and its pronunciation" or "learn and have a repertory of vocabulary", although this "curiosity about the language" also shows a polyglot aspiration to know as many languages as possible, especially little known or "exotic" languages, or closer and "own". Thus, one of the students claims to "have an interest in knowing and learn a national language, because I would not like to focus my mind only on foreign languages".

There is a second set of anthropological or historical-cultural knowledge (learning about worldview and culture, learning about oral tradition, learning about history) that takes learning about the language to an applied purpose, that is, the language as a means to learn about the past and the characteristics of the Nahua. This has an ethnographic or anthropological-linguistic justification as wanting to "get to know how Nahuatl-speaking peoples structure their thought", "understanding my cultural and historical environment, what explains our behavior", "learning about the foundations of the language and how its vestiges are still present", "learning about the ancient culture", "being able to understand the language much better and understand a little of its historical context", or simply because "it is one of the most important languages to discover ancient cultures in our country".

The study of Nahuatl language or culture gives way to a literary-textual set (learning to read and write, studying codices, translating texts) that pursues an application more linked to

reading and writing skills and to the Nahua literate and literary culture. Thus, students want to “learn about the language and delve into its literature and history”, “be able to read texts and understand more about Mexican culture”, “learn the language to make an attempt to translate some texts”, or, bringing together the goals of the previous groups, “study Nahuatl reading and writing to be able to do research later into the thought of the people who speak this language”. Evidently, learning about the language is seen as part of some holistic knowledge, but students believe that learning about Nahuatl is “important to understand Mexican language and literature.”

After this evidently applied motive comes a fourth pragmatic set (completing my education, improving my academic argumentation, completing my credits) where the curricular and academic benefits of completing their education or simply finishing their studies stand out, seeking “completing free choice credits”, studying Nahuatl because of “its relationship with linguistic anthropology”, which can be linked to the idea of increasing their knowledge of languages, not to study them but to show this knowledge as an achievement.

Finally, there is a fifth relational-identitarian set (working in communities, belonging to the Mexican identity, being part of a community) with a more ideological and personal meaning that is also present in the previous sets under the expression of *what is mine /what is ours* and that implies justifying the choice as an approach to what is own, wanting to “know my culture better”. This vindicating or appropriating motive is justified only by the fact of being, because “my ancestors were Nahua”, because “where I come from [Sierra of Puebla] people speak the language and I am familiar with it”, because their “genealogy, on my mother’s side, is of Zapotec origin, so I think it is necessary to learn about my indigenous roots through oral tradition literature”, or because “I believe that indigenous cultures are our true culture and the rest is attempts of *mestizos* and creole Spaniards to imitate other rich countries”. Evidently, these opinions express imaginaries and ideological postures that must be contextualized further on, but that also express the adoption of a position vis-à-vis a linguistic order that conceals and minoritizes Nahuatl as an option of study. Thus, students want at least an opportunity to “reflect upon the revalorization and importance of Nahua language, culture, and literature”.

In order to contextualize and explain later the sociocultural value of these motives and contribute to the theoretical debate over the motivation to learn an L2, we will now categorize them according to the capacity of decision and intention to achieve a particular state or goal. Table 1 summarizes the motives mentioned by the groups studied and already described in the previous section. Initially, instrumental motives (intrinsic or extrinsic) respond to needs arising from educational or professional practice, for immediate or future application. Thus, some motives are linked to the nature of their studies or the expectation of what they might find in an optative class for a bachelor’s degree in literature, anthropology or study of the Americas.

It is evident that the environment sets conditions, referents and regulations that do not make the character of these motivations easy to differentiate in its intrinsic-extrinsic and ins-

trumental-integrative dimensions when relating educational, professional, personal and socio-family interests. Thus, Table 2 organizes the motivations expressed by Group 3 according to Deci and Ryan's self-determination model (1985) so that we can understand the types of regulation of the motivations to learn Nahuatl in a particular context, and thus show how they are internalized.

Table 1. Instrumental and integrative motives

Motivation	MFL Case	MNL Case	
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Instrumental	Learning about Amerindian language	Learning about Amerindian language	Learning about Amerindian language Learning about national language
	Studying codices Translating texts	Studying codices Translating texts	Learning to read and write
	Learning about oral tradition		Learning about history and literature
	Learning about worldview and culture	Learning about worldview and culture	Learning about worldview and culture
	Completing my education	Completing my education	Improving my academic argumentation Completing my credits
Integrative		Working in communities Belonging to the Mexican identity	Being part of a community

Source: author.

Table 2. Motivations and regulations to study Nahuatl as an L2

Motivation	External regulation	Internalized regulation	Identified regulation
Instrumental	• Completing credits • Arguing academic papers	• Arguing academic papers • Completing education: ◦ Learning about its literature and history ◦ Learning about and learning Amerindian language ◦ Learning about the history of the language ◦ Translating texts ◦ Studying codices ◦ Working in a community	• Learning about Amerindian language • Speaking the language • Writing the language • Reading the language • Working in a community

• Learning about the language studied	• Learning about the language studied • Learning about national language • Learning about the history of the language	• Learning about the language studied • Learning about national language • Learning about/Having access to worldview and culture • Learning about family language / being part of the community • Learning about the history of the language • Working in a community • Belonging to the Mexican identity
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Source: author

Now we will contextualize this typology according to the type of educational offer and profiles of the students to better understand each one of the motivational orientations.

Instrumental motivations

In regard to instrumental motivations (Tables 1 and 2) and external regulation we can see that, by being an optional choice, there are no motives that may be considered "forced" or predetermined, although there are motives that do not respond to an interest in the language or the target group, but to meeting graduation requirements. This reveals an extrinsic motivation to study this optative class as an experience (included or not within the curricula) that enhances the education with a professional approach or, in any case, helps to complete the credits required to finish the bachelor's degree program. Although this motive is mentioned here by Group 2, it is an implicit and considered incentive. In due course, even the Museum of the Americas moved to make its course have academic credit value as an external course.

On the other hand, curiosity about the possibility of using Nahuatl as useful knowledge for academic or research work (knowing what is being discussed, using words in another language properly, recognizing etymologies, corroborating translations) is combined with the use of narratives, historical sources or recordings, and knowing how to write it. This is also linked to the importance attached to the orality and literacy of the language in the literature and anthropology majors, not always for extrinsic reasons.

It is also manifested as an internalized regulation following professional ideals, and therefore, responds to what establishes a desirable educational profile towards the professional practice assumed by the student. Thus, as mentioned, this knowledge is believed to reinfor-

ce argumentative communicative skills, not because students consider a demand but because they see it as preparation for a professional with a potential value in the labor market. They see in it a necessary formative complement not recognized in the main body of the curricula, so they feel obliged to study it. History, philosophy or anthropology students feel that it helps them to be better prepared in Mexico's thought, history or culture. Likewise, students of linguistics or literature feel that it provides them with a closer approach to the literature and languages of Mexico and the world. It is also seen as a regulation identified from an integrative approach, and in a vocational sense there is an instrumental motivation that sees in this learning a means of professionalization, the prelude of being recognized as professional properly educated in a specific field. This becomes very clear in majors where Nahua oral and written culture is a pre-established object of study.

For this reason, the main instrumental motivation is the expectation of learning the language and having access through it to the Nahua culture (thought and language). This seems to be common to all the groups, with the added detail that among Mexican learners there is the label of national language, which gives it a very particular dimension that is associated with different integrative motivations between the Mexican case and the Spanish case, as will be seen. Interestingly, in its development as linguistic competency, it usually has an informative rather than a communicative orientation, although this relationship may be inverted in some integrative motivations. Therefore, they view the language very much as an object. This is reflected in a tendency to see it as a means and an end in itself to attain a deeper particular knowledge.

Integrative motivations

As for the integrative motivations (Table 1 and 2), they may be valued as a way to feel or be recognized as members of a community of work and thought. Thus, learning an exotic or an Amerindian language may be seen as a more complete approach to a profile as a linguist or expert in the language. On the other hand, and here the Mexican context has more weight, learning this language is seen as a means to feel more accepted or integrated in a context where knowledge of this language is valued as a 'plus' that makes the person feel or be recognized as a multicultural Mexican citizen.

Thus, there may also be a desire to participate in and be part of a Nahuatl-speaking community, whether this community is imagined as the whole of the Mexican nation or identified concretely with the Nahua nation or with one of its communities, or even the person's family. As Anderson (1993: 48) points out, the construction of an imagined community as "a sociological organism that moves periodically through a homogeneous, empty time" is exemplified in the idea of nation and in any collectively experienced imaginary conceived as something solid and recognizable. Therefore, knowledge of the language and culture of the target group through it is considered fundamental to be or feel part of a language-based community.

Hence, these motives show two dimensions of experience, a professional and a personal one. The professional dimension may to some extent be predictable, since it responds mostly to seeing in this learning the development of intercultural communicative competencies. This possibility is also conditioned to anticipating experiences of contact with the Nahuatl-speaking group and therefore depends on the social distance of the learner, and for this reason Group 1 did not show at first this motivation, since it was not part of their immediate possibilities and expectations. This seems to be inherent to some majors that see field work or spending time in the Nahuatl-speaking community as a learning community, an object of study, or a professional destination. However, as we will see, this is not always the case due to the psychological distance and precisely to the linguistic ideologies of the Spanish-speaking group.

On the other hand, the personal dimension introduces the most differential aspect between Group 1 and Groups 2 and 3, which manifests itself very differently in each group but paints a landscape of action that is characteristic of the sociolinguistic situation in Mexico because, although they respond to an integrative orientation, it is not their aim to be part of the Nahuatl-speaking group. In that respect, there are a number of motives closely associated to the regulation identified, since there is no institutional model or stimulus or widespread imaginary about the academic or labor expectations that may be generated by studying Nahuatl. Thus, the approach to initial or in-depth knowledge of the language responds to personal concerns that see a personal advantage in it, and especially a way to embody an ideal of a professional or an educated person. This becomes more evident when students want to develop reading and writing skills, which are not required or even considered (since it is precisely the minoritizing effect which makes Nahuatl be seen as an illiterate language).

This becomes evident in students of literature when they confer Nahuatl a treatment of equality because they assume that the language is written or should be written, recognizing that there is a Nahua literary production. As for the anthropology students, some want to work in communities and although Nahuatl "is not necessary" in bilingual ones, they find it adequate or advantageous to use it to make their information gathering comprehensive and of good quality.

Therefore, it would seem that the learners' self-determination to learn the language has more to do with identifying than with integrating. But these issues deserve to be explored in more depth at an interpretive level. For this reason, we will now delve into the sociolinguistic contexts and imaginaries that help us understand the theoretical implications of these instrumental and integrative motivations to learn a ML, either as a MFL or a MNL.

Discussion

Nahuatl as a national or foreign language

As it could be expected and may be noticed (Table 1), there are differences between how Nahuatl is perceived and why students are interested in learning it depending on whether it is

seen as a MFL or a MNL by Spanish speakers. It is true that, both in Spain and in Mexico, Nahuatl experiences social invisibility, but this is due to different causes. In Spain, the pan-Hispanic linguistic imperialism has spread a uniformist image of the Spanish language, but also a uniformity-seeking one before a linguistic diversity. Thus, the Castilianization of the Spanish Americas as a civilizing landmark applied a homogeneous coat of Hispanic-ness and modernity that has made such diversity imperceptible or even erased it (*cfr.* Moreno, 2015: 144-146), creating the tautology or fallacy that the Hispanic Americas are so because Spanish is spoken there. This Spanish-speaking imaginary has its Mexican counterpart in Mexican linguistic nationalism, which has also portrayed Mexico within its borders and outside them as an essentially Spanish-speaking nation, although in recent decades this representation has undergone some social and political revision. However, the existence of American languages has been taught as a “pre-Hispanic” – i.e., *pre-modern* – regional feature. The revelation that these languages continue to exist makes some Spanish-speakers in principle dismantle certain linguistic prejudice that believed them extinct, useless and primitive, and find it interesting or necessary to learn about them and to learn them.

However, in the case of Spain, the vagueness of this recognition does not prevent falling into another imaginary derived from a generalized and diffused (almost confused) view of that American other as an imagined unitary community of the *Indian-ness* that reduces the diversity and difference of Amerindian languages to an idea that Nahuatl is the “language of the indians” and that therefore this language can be accessed or related to any autochthonous community, or that documents can be found about any region. For instance, some students believed that they could use this language in Mayan regions like Yucatán, or took the course because they could not find courses of Quechua, since they intended to study the Andes region. At any rate, Nahuatl is conceived and valued as an “exotic” and “archaic” language associated to a particular geographic and sociohistorical framework, as the fossil remains of a linguistic heritage that became dispersed after a supposedly early and complete process of Castilianization. Added to that is an extreme social distance that does not allow students to erase such prejudice or imagine meeting a Nahuatl speaker, and even less have a conversation with him/her. The few students who consider traveling to Mexico and working with autochthonous groups do not believe that their communication with them will be in that language. In this we discover an ideological distance (linguistic prejudice) shaped by a national (Spanish or Mexican) imaginary that assumes that Nahuatl is no longer spoken or, in other words, that the Nahua community now speaks (only) Spanish. Thus, it is studied as if it were a dead, literary, ancient, ethnographic language. This leads to a paradoxical situation, because although it seems that the value placed on the language contradicts the minoritized sense of the Nahuatl-speaking community through a reduction of the psychological distance, this does not seem to be due to or leading to a reduction of the social distance.

Although a linguistic diversity and particularity is recognized, the need to learn about the L2 and using it to some extent as a means of relating with the other is not accepted. It would seem that minorization of an L2 is neutralized and its use is normalized despite the fact that it is a minority language, but its apparent lack of vitality (or perhaps visibility or recognition) does not show the contact with the L2 group as a process of acculturation, although it may be believed that learning about the language helps to learn about the culture. Thus, most of the students do not see in this learning a means to contact or visit the Nahuatl-speaking group or to socialize with it. Therefore, we seem to run into a contradiction, because although instrumental and integrative motives prevail, they do not point to a direct contact with the Nahua community, so what do the learners want to integrate to?

Nahuatl as access to marginalized communities

Whether as a MFL or as a MNL, the fact that Nahuatl is the epitome of Indian-ness involves, in the case of students in Spain, representing the *other*, and in the case of the Mexican students an *us* or an *ours*, where the learner is headed to when he/she decides to learn the language. Thus, knowledge of the language is for the student in Spain a gateway to the *other*, to *his/her* other, Mexican, indigenous, autochthonous, ancestral. The students want to learn about the culture of the other, but this distant learning is just that, obtaining knowledge, not so much being what they want to learn about. This merely informative (translational-comprehensive) interest becomes even more obvious because not even an interlocutor is expected.

Therefore, the learner feels that the language rather transports him/her, makes him/her identify with, approach and be embodied in the past. In that case, the student in Spain seems to be led by an archaeophilia, an archaeotopia or fascination for the ancient (like students of Latin and Greek, for example). Mexican students may also experience it this way, but also as a progynopexia or obsession for their indigenous ancestors (Nahuas or otherwise). This does not only mean to identify with the ancient Aztecs and relive their ceremonies, beliefs and worldview, but to underscore a sort of vacuum or family loss by reasserting their vocation in the fact of having had a grandparent or great-grandparent who spoke Nahuatl (or another indigenous language). It is thus less of an integrative orientation and more of a re-integrative orientation guided by an affectivity that seeks a coherent self, identified with being a Nahuatl interpreter. Having access to this course is experienced as an opportunity to revert processes of abandonment, displacement or omission of the autochthonous linguistic dimension.

This longing, motivated by experience rather than knowledge, leads us to other imagined communities stemming from Mexican linguistic nationalism that aim to incorporate an essence (founded on the attribute of language) and do not pursue a communicative goal at all. We do not hear them speak about returning to or entering a Nahua community, but about entering into a true Mexican-ness where the cultures that gave birth to the Mexican self are integrated. They

start from the concept of *mestizaje* that in the national anthropological discourse that has tried since the nineteenth century to overcome internal contradictions with the national foundational myth that makes the Nahua group a privileged historical protagonist. However, this type of student of Nahuatl cannot be considered a neospeaker, because although he/she may share a sense of vindication, this leads him/her to adopt an alienated “authentic” identity feature, and his/her cultural “rupture” does not lead him/her towards an effective linguistic move, because a full communicative use of the language is not considered necessary, and therefore he/she does not aspire to be actively bilingual. Thus, many of these students seek to learn about the language, but not to speak it because they do not identify a “vital” or “authentic” speech community, nor do they aspire to constitute a neospeaker community. They stay at the level of fantasy or false *neofalantism* (cfr. Ramallo, 2020: 240, 245).²

Thus, rather than being recognized as members, they want to see themselves as heirs to the Nahua culture. They want to reinforce a belonging, an identity. This aspiration of ethnolinguistic congruence is a way to strengthen a self whose self-determination entails making visible aspects that have been made invisible, repressed or not promoted, or to the contrary, now valued, displayed and externalized. This identity “detachment” or “approach” seems to respond to the concept of *indigenist mestizo* (Villoro, 2014), who before a minoritized Nahua group would not so much confront it but rather recognize himself/herself in it, showing that in his/her actions (Villoro, 2014: 244-245). In this sense, wanting to learn Nahuatl would be an act of vindication, but also of distancing from an other that “adopts the figure of the foreign or creole exploiter”. This denial of the other involves building a self that tries to solve identity contradictions and feel part of an imagined community where distinctions and inequalities have disappeared (Villoro, 2014: 246). Therefore, wanting to be seen as part of the Nahuatl-speaking community means actually refusing to be part of a Spanish-centered community. Consequently, it cannot be argued that there is a xenophile attitude, since there is not a genuine interest in being or participating of the other, but an autochthonophile one that, unlike the case of the learner who values an *us* and aspires to reintegrate a re-valORIZED attribute of his/her ethnic group, values an *ours*.

This apparent re-integrative or dis-integrative orientation leads us to another integrative reason observed and not always stated, which underlies the majoritarian instrumental motivations: feeling part of a special group. This has been alluded to since it was manifested as intrinsic

² This aspect can also be seen in Yoltzi Nava's (2021: 148-168) work, where we can find profiles that allow us to recognize neospeakers, such as the *tlahtolilnamikinih* or remeberers, or the *wehka ewanih* or foreigners. The *tlahtolilnamikinih* are Nahuas whose acquisition of the language was hindered or interrupted in their childhood, or whose family language was already predominantly Spanish, so they try to recover, activate or update their language of origin, and regard learning it a compensatory resource to develop basic communication skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), not only to be proficient but to certify and endow their condition of speaker with a certain intellectual prestige. Obviously, they do know and recognize a speech community and can therefore constitute a community of practice even in an urban environment. As for the *wehka ewanih*, they see the language as a resource to be able to interact with Nahuatl speakers, assuming a multicultural and multilingual configuration of Mexico, so being a Nahuatl speaker is regarded as a requirement to relate to them and to feel they are integrated in Mexican society. However, it is unusual to find this aspiration among Spanish speakers; at least in the groups studied here we did not see this, perhaps because of what has been pointed out or because it depends on a secondary motivation.

motivations because it is a tacit objective. Nahuatl is seen as a language for work, an object of study or a tool for research is a means of communication or reference between specialists; that is, students aspire to be part of the group of scholars of the Nahuatl language and everything it represents as a field of knowledge.

Therefore, this professionalization framework explains that the learners underscore instrumental motives as a demand of specialization of knowledge, as an opportunity to make up for shortcomings in their study programs, or to take advantage of options that they had not considered in the curricula. Following Vallerand's classification, even in those cases where they study the language after a teacher's recommendation it would be, as in the case of the students in Spain, the result of an identified regulation but also of an internalized regulation in the students of anthropology, since their study program requires they study an indigenous language from a varied but limited offer, and in that case, even if the person assumes the need to learn about a language. Therefore, the learner's self-determination reflects an intrinsic motivation to develop a technical-professional competency to unveil cultural meanings and thus embody a professional ideal that sometimes portrays the teacher as a specialist in a discipline, where learning about this language gives him/her authority as an expert.

This initiatory and professionalizing meaning is reinforced by the fact that it is an uncommon educational offer which is shown as a 'plus' that can make a difference, doing or learning what other students do not, especially if they feel the vocation of becoming an expert in Nahua culture, history, and literature. Thus it is easy, based on other comments and experiences, to understand which "self" articulates this learning experience and the type of community in which it is immersed and gains significance. It responds primarily to the desire of assuming an image of specialist, both thematic and humanistic, insofar as they hold access to the original source and contact with the people of origin of the language as a guarantee of seriousness, authenticity and significance of the knowledge and the cultural interpretation-translation and, if possible, contact with the other, but from a prudent ethnographic distance. Thus, it is a professional "self" that implies being recognized as a member of a scientific community of excellence and competence. The aim is to reproduce the ideal of the omniscient and autonomous anthropologist, the field ethnographer and the ethnohistorian who shuns translations made by others and is able to consult directly the sources and testimony. Therefore, the integrative orientation paradoxically does not respond to an insertion into a native L1 group, but into a group of L2 scholars of that language or who study cultural phenomena through the L2.

Conclusions

Self-determination in the study of a minoritized L2 is oriented in the case of Nahuatl by the aim of constructing a social self marked by a xenophile or autochthonophile orientation if the L2 is considered a mother tongue or a national language. In this case, it leads us to processes already

identified in other cases (Kim, 2007) where learning an L2 is also shown to be a process of negotiation, affirmation or denial of identities by the learner. In this sense, it is not considered an acculturation process as such, since the construction of an identity or identification through a ML like Nahuatl does not respond to a process of accommodation to a hegemonic or dominant language nor to a process of migration to the Nahua community, not even to living in a (visible) multilingual environment. Thus, in L2 groups that show little or no ethnolinguistic vitality (or are made invisible), its social importance does not lie in the sociolinguistic characteristics of the L2 group but in the attributes with highly symbolic and political signification that the L1 group projects on it.

Other times, the integrative motivation – if we can still call it that – does not have a target group or respond to an idealized image or representation of the target group. This distant imaginary becomes more evident when Nahuatl is regarded as a historical language, in which case we could even speak of phenomena of archaeomania, archaeophilia or archaeotesia, a taste for the ancient that is especially visible in a more defined approach to ancient or classical Nahuatl instead of more modern or dialectal proposals. Weighing in its favor is the consideration of a more formalized, standardized, extended, written variant, closer to the Nahuatl spoken by historical civilizations and cultivated in Colonial Mexico. On the other hand, there is also a phenomenon of progonoplexia for everything that identifies them with their mythical ancestors, whether they recognize a family descent or identify with Mexico's linguistic national and indigenous imaginary, strongly centered in the Nahua.

Still other times this decision, as an integrative orientation, does not necessarily arise from the fact that they feel immersed in a multilingual context, as Clément and Krudinier (1983) argued. This evocative or nostalgic approach does not arise from the student's recognition of the multilingualism of his/her immediate context or of Mexico, and not even from contact with members of the L1 group, as it happens with neospeakers from other regions (Ramallo, 2020), due precisely to the coexistence with Nahuatl that does not exist in Mexico's or in Spain's urban environments, in the former because of the invisibility of Nahuatl and in the latter because of the distance. Thus, that multilingualism is experienced more as anticipation or evocation of spaces of rural purity or historical blossoming. This also explains their interest in documentary work and reading and writing practices, although after they make their choice they are shown a different panorama in class.

Seeing the learning of this L2 as a national language and not as a foreign one does not mean among the students that an international posture is being adopted, as is the case of the study of English, precisely because that L2 is defined minorizedly as a local language, but in its revalorization they would at least have an opportunity to adopt a national posture or a bicultural posture through its re-appropriation, as it happens with Indonesian (Lamb, 2004; 2009) and Hungarian (Dörnyei, Csizér, 2002) students of English.

Among Spanish-speaking students from Spain, a xenophile impulse would help their approach to Nahuatl also involve questioning or abandoning the monolingual representation of the Hispanic community. From this perspective, they see in this learning an opening and an access to a connected other-community, but that due to its local and minority character underscores a *glocal* sense, insofar as they limit mobility to a Mexican national environment or a an alternative imaginary community that represents American Indian-ness. On the other hand, Mexican Spanish speakers would manifest something inversely similar, because if we take into account the fact that their belonging to the Hispanic community confers them a global dimension, their knowledge of Nahuatl helps them assume or highlight their local or national sense. This means that learning an L2 does not always involve undergoing a process of “nationalization” or “de-nationalization”, as was traditionally believed based on linguistic and cultural imperialisms and the established principle of the *inner linguistic form* as a defining feature of a national “being” (Moreno, 2008: 186-188) and follows other processes in which the L2 helps question the minoritizing view of plural representations.

We might thus think of a reaction against globalization and the international market of languages, but evidently everything arises from the existence of opportunities of contact and learning that sometimes lead to that same process of globalization or at least of more circulation of information and possibilities of communicative contacts and academic, professional, touristic, and other types of mobility. Thus, in this case one escapes the mechanisms or circuits of diffusion and imposition of second languages as forms of cultural or linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992; Moreno, 2015), and supra-national or multinational identities in a pluricultural or multicultural sense seem to be propitiated. However, wanting to propitiate these identities, whether as self-affirmation or as identification with an imagined community, does not necessarily involve wanting/expecting to be accepted or recognized as a member of an ethnolinguistic community. If there is a parallel between the concept of integrativeness and the processes of identification that arise during the learning of the L1, a process “extended to a whole ethnolinguistic community” (Gardner, Lambert, 1972: 12), it would be consistent and coherent to aim for an association between ethnolinguistic identity and social identification (becoming a speaker involves being able to feel or be seen as a member of the sociocultural group), constructing a bicultural, intercultural or transcultural self-concept. Here the process shows a weakened or restricted desire in this respect.

While minority ethnic groups communicate in a second language, they adopt particular linguistic codes and speech patterns in their behavior inside the group (Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2009: 2) and show a predisposition for and an interest in interacting with members of other groups (Gardner, MacIntyre, 1993: 159). In the case of majority ethnic groups, this integrative orientation does not in itself imply this predisposition. Although it could be argued that the learner of Nahuatl “must be willing to identify with members of another ethnolinguistic group and take on

very subtle aspects of their behavior" (Gardner, Lambert, 1972: 135), we would have to consider other modes of integrative orientation, as Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009: 2) suggested, insofar as that desire does not involve a target group or a specific group of speakers. Thus, this integrativeness "does not necessarily refer to any kind of real integration at all, but in most cases to a metaphorical integration" (Dörnyei, 2008: 82); that is, it is more linked to personal self-affirmation and to putting at its service a given imagined community on the basis of a language as its defining feature.

If we take Nahuatl as an illustrative case, learning local and minoritized languages does not adjust strictly to the sociolinguistic and psychoeducational dynamics usually described in studies on the learning of L2, which are often centered in foreign, not minoritized languages. While international languages such as the varieties of World English are acquired by learners with a strong integrative motivation "reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group" (Gardner, Lambert, 1972: 132), in the case of local and especially minoritized languages it may be argued that there is also that sincere and personal interest, but this does not necessarily imply a participative and appropriating attitude, since its instrumental aims respond to its possible professional application in the generation of specific profile and in being accepted in specialized disciplinary environments.

On the other hand, as has been pointed out, its integrative orientation, even though it is aimed at the L1 group, does not necessarily imply an acculturation due to the asymmetrical power relationship and, in our case, the advantageous condition of bilingualism for the Spanish speaker, added to the social stigma associated to the "indigenous". This has implications in aspects such as the relationship between motivation and achievement, even maintaining the initial motivation, which is the one we are dealing with. Therefore, it would be interesting to learn about the impact of the learning experience itself (teacher, curricula, didactics, relationships with classmates) in these cases, as it has been analyzed in general cases (Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2011; Csizer, Kálmán, 2019).

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