

# Triqui-speaking students on California's Central Coast

California Association of Bilingual  
Education

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March 6, 2015

# Map of Mexico: Oaxaca



# Weaving Huipiles



# Indigenous English Learners: Triqui-Speaking students on the Central California Coast

The purpose of the study was to examine a first year teacher's experience working with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Research Question: What factors contribute to the success and/or lack of success of a teacher working with culturally and linguistically diverse students during the first year of teaching?

Findings from the study will be used to better prepare teacher candidates to work effectively with culturally and linguistically diverse students in the K-12 school system. Implications of this work address issues of equity and access to quality educational experiences for all students.

# Conceptual Framework

## Linguistic Diversity

- ▶ Hollenback, B. (2008). Cultural Sketch of the San Juan Copala Trique. *Instituto Linguístico de verano en Mexico*.
- ▶ Triqui language:
  - ▶ Otomanguan stock → Mixteco family (Cuicatec, Mixtec, Triqui)
    - ▶ *Pequeno Dicionario Ilustrado*

## Cultural Context

- ▶ Cortina, R. (Ed.). (2014). The Education of Indigenous Citizens in Latin America.

# Conceptual Framework

## Oaxacan Youth

- ▶ Fox, J., Rivera-Salgado, G. & Santiago, J. (Eds.). (2013). *Voices of indigenous Oaxacan youth in the Central Valley: Creating our sense of belonging in California*. Santa Cruz, CA: UC Center for Collaborative Research for an Equitable California.
- ▶ Rascon, D. *Yo También Quiero Contarte (Que el Norte ~~No Siempre~~ Es Bonito)*. (2010). Impreso en Tavera Hermanos, S.A. de C.V. Morelia, Mich., Mexico

# Conceptual Framework

## Health issues of Oaxacan Migrant Workers

- ▶ Holmes, S. (2013). *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Berkeley, CA., University of California Press.

# Methodology

- ▶ Qualitative Research Methods
  - ▶ Research Site: Elementary School, 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom
  - ▶ Participants: 1<sup>st</sup> year Teacher
- ▶ Data Sources: Interviews
- ▶ Data Analysis:
  - ▶ Content Analysis: Interview transcripts

## Migration from Mexico to Greenfield

- ▶ 17 indigenous groups in Oaxaca, Mexico
- ▶ San Juan Copala, Oaxaca, Mexico
  - ▶ Triqui region: remote 300 sq. mile highland
- ▶ Migration pattern: Oaxaca, San Quintin, Baja California, Greenfield, CA

# Triqui community in Tri- Counties and beyond

- ▶ Greenfield (Monterey), Hollister  
( San Benito)
- ▶ Madera County
- ▶ Albany, New York

# Demographics of Triqui Community in Greenfield

- ▶ 2010: estimated 3,000 Triqui speaking people ( Melendez Salinas, C. (2010), Monterey Herald)
- ▶ Estimated 40,00 speakers worldwide, as many as 10% live in Salinas Valley, CA  
(Source: Rubin, Sara, (May 16, 2013, Monterey County Weekly)
- ▶ “Because of persistent undercounting, all official census figures provided in this report should be regarded as minimum estimates of the actual population of indigenous immigrants in California.”

(Source: Kresge, L., “Indigenous Oaxacan Communities in California: An Overview,” (2007), CA Institute for Rural Studies.

# Triqui language support

- ▶ 2012 Natividad Medical Center of Salinas began training indigenous interpreters
- ▶ March 2014 Natividad Medical Foundation launched Indigenous Interpreting +  
“A community and medical interpreting business specializing in indigenous languages from Mexico and Central and South America,” including Trique, Mixteco, Zapoteco and Chatino.

# School Context

- ▶ Greenfield School District: 3 elementary schools, one middle school
- ▶ Greenfield High School ( King City USD)
- ▶ Elementary school with largest population of Triqui native speaking students TK-5: approx. 30%

# Findings & Implications

# Students losing native Triqui language

Parent /teacher conference Fall 2013

Teacher asked student to tell her mom of her performance on a recent quiz. Student hesitated and responded that she didn't speak Triqui anymore.

*T: Can you tell her in Spanish?*

*S: My mom doesn't really understand Spanish.*

*T: So, how do you talk to your mom?*

*S: Through my dad.*

Oldest child in family, higher performing student, native Triqui speaker , fluent Spanish speaker, developing strong English literacy skills. Stated that she doesn't speak Triqui.

# Students losing native Triqui language

As students become more proficient in English, they are less proficient in their native Triqui language.

# Need for Trilingual Interpreters

- ▶ Q: What would help you support the culturally and linguistically diverse students in your classroom?
- ▶ T: ... we have such a need for translators. Of the 28 students I requested translation for 25 and I only received translation for 5 including the one Triqui...
  - ▶ Ameri-Corp student, native Triqui speaker and resident of Greenfield

# Respecting students' culture

- ▶ T: I wish they (school district) had done a little bit of the cultural aspect of the Spanish speaking and Triqui and Mixteco community. We would be able to respect and honor a culture more if you new more about it. I know that falls on an individual teacher but if a district know they have such a large population....
  - ▶ Providing heritage classes for Triqui speaking children through after school program

# Teacher reflection

*“These five months have made me see how much more I want to know about the culture and community. I try to honor the heritage of my students. Maintaining the language is so important...”*

*1<sup>st</sup> year teacher, January 2014*