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**Guaraní Académico or Jopará? Educator Perspectives and Ideological Debate in Paraguayan Bilingual Education**

# Guaraní Académico or Jopará? Educator Perspectives and Ideological Debate in Paraguayan Bilingual Education

Katherine Mortimer

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In Paraguay, a nation long known for its bilingualism in Spanish and Guaraní, the implementation of an educational policy for national bilingual education, now over a decade old, has enjoyed general support but stirred much debate. Chief among the questions has been how best to institutionalize a largely oral language that borrows heavily from Spanish for modern referents. This study investigates educators' perspectives on the question of whether a purified or colloquial variety of Guaraní should be used in schools, how these perspectives vary across relevant social groups, and how they involve ideologies of language that may mediate the potential for social change implicated in this ambitious program for national bilingualism and biliteracy.

## Introduction

Señora María Beatriz González<sup>1</sup> sat behind her desk, placed with imposing precision in the center of the room, surrounded by staff who stood tall, straight, and silent while she talked with me. She distilled incisively the debate I had come to Paraguay to better understand. I asked if it was her opinion that they should not teach the national indigenous language, Guaraní, in this school, and she laughed. *En todo el país no quiere que se le enseña. [El programa] no debe ser exigente total. Se aplazan los alumnos... Hay una lucha [entre] los alumnos que vienen de diferentes situaciones sociales... Tenemos todavía el tabu de hablar en guaraní... es una cultura arraigada. Todavía no estamos convencidas de nuestro bilingüismo.* (In all the country they don't want it to be taught. [The program] should not be totally demanding. Students are failing... There is a fight [between] students who come from different social situations... We still have the taboo against speaking in Guaraní... it's a deeply rooted culture. We're

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<sup>1</sup> This and all other names of people and schools here are pseudonyms.

still not convinced of our bilingualism) (SB, 6/6/05)<sup>2</sup>. On my leaving, one of the silent, standing staff slipped out to escort me to the door. Once on the sidewalk, he stopped me to talk, pouring forth with his love of the Guaraní language. *Se tiene que profundizar el guaraní. Vivo en castellano también pero me llega más en guaraní. Es algo importante como mamá, amor, Dios* (Guaraní must be deepened. I live in Spanish, too, but more comes to me in Guaraní. It's something important, like mother, love, God) (MA, 6/6/05).

While it may seem that Señora González and her staff member represent opposite poles of an ideological spectrum, their comments belie (or perhaps reveal) a struggle that is quite a bit more complex. Paraguay is a country long known for widespread bilingualism in a colonial language, Spanish, and an indigenous language, Guaraní (Fishman 1967; Garvin & Mathiot 1960; Rubin 1968a). While first written in the 1600s, still spoken commonly in daily life, and widely held as an emblem of national identity, Guaraní was long prohibited in education. A broad educational reform in the early 1990s, however, established an official goal of coordinate bilingualism and biliteracy in Spanish and Guaraní for all Paraguayan students by the end of their schooling. In the decade since, abundant debate over exactly how Guaraní should be incorporated into education has brought to light the complexity and contradiction in ideas about and positions on the role of Guaraní in contemporary Paraguayan life and in the nation's future. Some of the most heated discussion has focused not on whether Guaraní should be used in schools, but on what *kind* of Guaraní should be used: a question fundamentally ideological in nature.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the perspectives of Paraguayan educators, in particular, on this question of what variety of Guaraní, one academic or one colloquial, should be used in fulfillment of the requirement for bilingual education. Ultimately the foot soldiers of implementation, teachers and school-level administrators are deeply influential in how bilingual education is carried out, and more so even in a country where distance, modest resources, and limited infrastructure impede communication between language planners and policy makers and those who put plans into action. The voices of academics, media personalities, and policymakers in the capital circulate with some frequency through public channels such as newspapers and television, but it is more difficult to access the views of those who actually carry out the daily work of teaching. Educators are also members of the public, often of the local school community, and their ideological positions include widely circulating notions about the meanings of Spanish and Guaraní to individual and national identities, to the roles of these languages in

Paraguayan society and its future. It is my aim in this paper to articulate a range of perspectives belonging to teachers and school-level administrators and how these ideas vary across the urban and rural spectrum (one that corresponds to general differences in socioeconomic conditions and proficiencies in Spanish and Guaraní). Further, I aim to analyze these perspectives as ideologies of language thereby seeking to understand how they may mediate the potential for social change implicated in this program for national bilingual education.

In this pilot-stage project, part of a longer-term ethnographic study, I have pursued answers to the following questions. Most generally, what do teachers and school-level administrators think about the two varieties of Guaraní, *guaraní académico* (academic Guaraní) and *jopará* (a colloquial Guaraní) as subjects and media of instruction? More specifically, (a) How do they characterize the Guaraní language used in class and how is it different from that which is used outside of class? (b) What are their perspectives on how they are and should be used in the classroom? (c) How do these perspectives vary across rural and urban contexts? A description of the sociolinguistic context, language policy, and program design for bilingual education in Paraguay will provide some background for understanding why these questions are relevant. A brief review of research on language attitudes in Paraguay and the concept of language ideology in general will further define the context for this study.

#### *A Sociolinguistic Description of Paraguay*

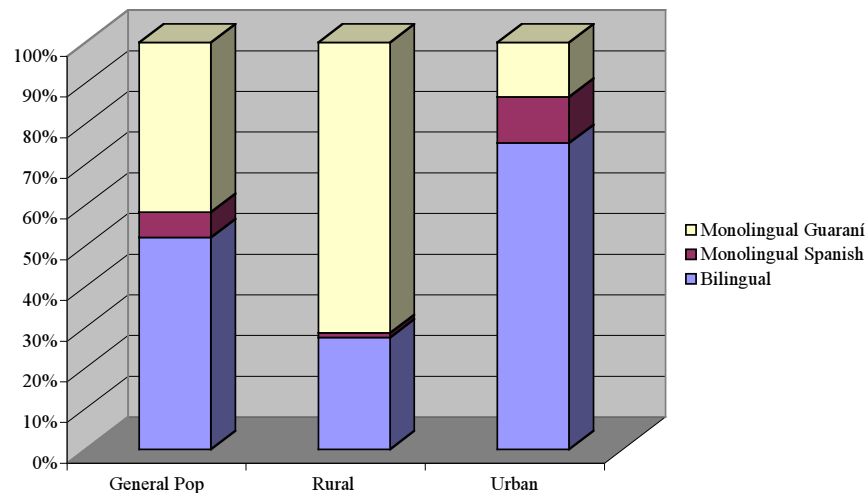
Data from the most recent national census (2002) in Paraguay reveals that 59.2% of households communicate primarily in Guaraní, while 35.7% of households use primarily Spanish (Paraguay DGEEC 2002). However, these proportions render bilingual households invisible because the 2002 language question did not allow respondents to select both languages. Figures from the 1992 census provide a more detailed picture: 49% of households are bilingual (i.e., both Guaraní and Spanish are spoken), 39% are monolingual in Guaraní, and just over 6% are monolingual in Spanish (Paraguay DGEEC 1992). This is to say that about 88% of Paraguayan households report that they speak the indigenous language, but within bilingual families, individuals' proficiency in the two languages will vary widely. That an originally indigenous language has survived with such strength is notable, but a factor further distinguishing Paraguayan bilingualism is that Guaraní is not associated with a particular racial or ethnic group. With very few Spanish arriving in the early colonial days, and all of them men, early and thorough *mestizaje* (racial mixing) led to a Paraguayan population that has always been of mixed ethnic/racial background. Varieties of Guaraní continue to be spoken by indigenous groups, but the variety spoken by most Paraguayans is typically called *guaraní paraguayo*, Paraguayan Guaraní, and it is a language of indigenous origins now spoken by non-indigenous people (Gynan 2001). Like

<sup>2</sup> Here and throughout the paper, participants' original words in Spanish or Guaraní are given in italics, while their translations immediately follow in parentheses and regular type.

other postcolonial nations, an indigenous/colonial cultural duality exists in Paraguay, but Corvalán (1982a) points out that “the ‘cultural duality’ is now represented by the two major distributions of the population: the urban and the rural, and not by the traditional dichotomy of whites versus indians” (185, translation mine).

Particularly relevant to this study is this uneven distribution of Spanish and Guaraní across urban and rural regions<sup>3</sup>. Urban areas are marked by bilingualism, while rural areas are marked by monolingualism in Guaraní. Nearly all Spanish monolingualism occurs in cities, but it is uncommon over all. Figure 1 shows the complementary distribution of the two languages. Gynan’s (1998a, 2001) close examination of the 1992 census data shows that the association between bilingualism and urbanness is so tight as to extend even to the areas along-side the major road connecting the capital, Asunción, in the west and the second-largest city on the western border with Brazil, Ciudad del Este. That is, bilingualism is associated not just with cities, but with aspects of urban life occurring along this thin commercial corridor.

**Figure 1**  
Distribution of Guaraní and Spanish across Rural and Urban Areas  
(data taken from the 1992 Paraguayan National Census)



Paraguayan bilingualism is also marked by some functional distribution of the two languages—a distribution that a number of scholars have recognized but not fully agreed upon. Fishman (1967) cited Paraguay as a situation of diglossia with bilingualism, with Spanish serving as the

<sup>3</sup> This is to say that the urban/rural distinction is not simply geographical, but also linguistic, demographic, and socioeconomic. I will refer to it here as a geographical distinction for simplicity, but it should be understood to encompass these other differences, as well.

high (H) variety and Guaraní as the low (L) variety (Fishman 1967). In another well-known work, Rubin (1968b) found that Guaraní is typically employed in informal and intimate domains, whereas Spanish is more often chosen in formal situations where social distance is significant. More recently Solé (1996), in a survey of youth in Asunción, the capital, found that much of the variance in language use among her respondents could be accounted for more by socio-demographic characteristics such as parents’ education and birthplace, such that “language proficiency differentials and internalized patterns of interaction influenced by the individual’s background” (101) seemed a more significant factor in language choice than domains of intimacy or formality. She did, however, find evidence of greater appropriateness of Guaraní in some highly affective situations. Most literacy, public or private, still occurs in Spanish (Paraguay MEC-BID 2001). Because of the urban/rural distribution of the two languages and the “cultural duality” to which Corvalán (1982a) refers, it has been argued (Gynan 2001) that Paraguay does not represent diglossia with bilingualism quite as Fishman (1967), described, but some functional specialization of the languages among bilinguals has been affirmed by a number of scholars over time (Choi 1998; Corvalán 1982b; Rubin 1968a; Solé 1991).

#### *Attitudes toward Guaraní*

The last Paraguayan dictator, General Alfredo Stroessner, declared in 1972, “Guaraní constitutes the most highly valued cultural patrimony of our country and it is the duty of every Paraguayan to learn it, disseminate it, and enrich it since it is the vernacular language of our land” (Gynan 2001: 101). While this is a grandiose declaration, individual Paraguayans echo the affective attachment to their national indigenous language. Attitudinal studies of Paraguayans’ perspectives on Guaraní consistently reveal positive language pride and loyalty, as well as a connection to national identity (Gynan 1998b; Paraguay MEC 2001; Solé 1996), even among those in the city who do not speak it well (Choi 2003). Respondents to one study gave statements such as the following regarding their thoughts on Guaraní and the bilingualism of their nation: “It is our identity, from our ancestors;” “It is what identifies us as Paraguayans;” “Paraguay is the only truly bilingual country in Latin America, and we wish to preserve that tradition;” “Paraguay is known for its bilingualism;” “Guaraní is the language of our homeland, our culture, and of our ancestors” (Choi 2003: 85-86). Large proportions of respondents to a study of attitudes about the use of Guaraní in schools felt that Guaraní was an essential or complementary element of education (87%), that an important function of the school is fortify individual and national identity through Guaraní-Spanish bilingualism (41%), and that Guaraní will gain importance in the future of Paraguay (70%) (Paraguay MEC 2001).



### *Paraguayan Language Policy for Bilingual Education*

Despite its consistent use throughout Paraguayan history, Paraguay only granted official status to Guaraní in 1989, and a major educational reform in 1992 initiated an ambitious policy for national bilingual education in both Guaraní and Spanish. While Guaraní has been a written language since the 1600s, it is widely considered a mostly oral language; whereas Spanish has been typically the language of literacy, and until 1992, of schooling<sup>4</sup>. The *Plan Nacional de Educación Bilingüe* established Guaraní as a medium of instruction and called for bilingual education “aimed at producing coordinate bilinguals by the end of the basic education of nine years” (Corvalán 1997, translation mine). Set forth in the *Reforma Educativa* (Educational Reform) of 1994, the current maintenance model extends from first through ninth grades. Schools are assigned one of two ‘modalities’ (program designs): one for speakers of Guaraní as a mother tongue (*la modalidad para guaraníhablantes*, MGH, hereafter) or that for speakers of Spanish as a mother tongue (*la modalidad para hispanohablantes*, MHH, hereafter). The *Ministerio de Educación y Cultura* (Ministry of Education and Culture, hereafter MEC) has been very clear to articulate that in both modalities both languages are to be used as *both* a language of instruction *and* a subject of instruction (Paraguay MEC 2000). According to the original designs, instruction begins entirely in L1 in first grade but gradually approaches an even allocation of the two languages by seventh grade.

Some years into the reform it became clear that two modalities did not adequately address the linguistic diversity in Paraguay. Assigned at the school level, the program designs assumed all students in one school would be either Guaraní dominant or Spanish dominant. In reality, proficiency in the two languages varies widely, not just within one neighborhood or school, but within one classroom, even one family. To address this issue, a third modality, the *Modalidad Bilingüe* (Bilingual Modality, hereafter MB), has been in pilot stages of development since 2001. It is intended to be flexible enough to accommodate varying local contexts and even changes from year to year. In this design, students are tested for language dominance upon entering school and assigned to one of two streams in the same school. Each stream begins with most instruction in L1, but gradually increases instructional time in L2 until the allocation is even.

### *Purism and Language Ideology*

Both officialization and incorporation of Guaraní into public schooling have enjoyed general support across the political spectrum (Boidin

<sup>4</sup> With the exception of official sanction of some very limited use of Guaraní in experimental transitional bilingual programs beginning in the 1970s, Guaraní was officially prohibited in schools, though unofficial use may have been common.

1999) and throughout the population, including both rural and urban areas (Paraguay MEC 2001). Considerable debate, however, has focused on the best way to institutionalize a language that had never been used for academic purposes on a large scale and had no words for many academic and scientific topics. A number of scholars (Boidin 1999; Corvalán 1989; Gynan 2001; Melià 2001; Rubin 1978) have noted the existence of two general perspectives on this question, perspectives that have played important roles in educational language policy development and implementation and that provide some sociopolitical context for the views examined in this study. The two sides are variously described as *Guaranistas*/purists/essentialists/nationalists and *Bilingüistas*/positivists/liberals. The group Boidin (1999) calls the Guaranistas tend to support the study and use of a purified form of Guaraní, *guaraní académico* (academic Guaraní), also called *guaraní puro* (pure Guaraní), purged of any loan words from Spanish (of which, after 500 years of contact with Spanish, there are many); it is an elite Guaraní of writers, teachers, and educated people. The Guaranistas tend to support full two-way maintenance bilingual education with literacy in pure Guaraní, and they see any other form of bilingual education (e.g. transitional) as assimilationist and unjust (Gynan 2001). Boidin (1999) further characterizes the Guaranistas as “the third generation...the population generally born in urban zones speaking Spanish and Guaraní or only Guaraní as their mother tongue. They no longer fear being seen as ignorant for speaking Guaraní. They can reclaim Guaraní without personal threat...but only if it means a cultured Guaraní, scientific, a source of social prestige...” (153, translation mine). In contrast, the Bilingüistas support the use of *jopará* (a Guaraní word indicating ‘mixed’), the form heavily mixed with Spanish and commonly the popular Guaraní of the general public. They tend to favor transitional bilingual education for Guaraní speakers with literacy instruction in *jopará* and they tend to see these as the best means for respecting linguistic and cultural diversity. In Boidin’s (1999) description, “the promoters of colloquial Guaraní or *jopará* belong to the first generation of college graduates in Guaraní...[and] the language of multiculturalism is their source of inspiration” (153-154, translation mine).

Not surprisingly, the tension between these two perspectives represents not so much a linguistic divide as an ideological one. Indeed, it invokes the political tension between the two major political parties, the *Partido Colorado* (Colorado Party) and the *Partido Liberal* (Liberal Party). During the 35 years of the Stroessner dictatorship, the status of Guaraní was based on the power structure of the time: there was a “romantic exaltation of Guaraní, of the peasant community, the Paraguayan nation in order to more effectively impose a neocolonial and dictatorial domination” (Boidin 1999: 150, translation mine). In its tight bond with the national identity, the purist form of Guaraní (despite its development beginning only in the 1960s) has been associated with authoritarianism, dictatorship, the

Colorado party, and a historical Paraguay. In contrast, *jopará* has been more associated with democracy (and perhaps by extension with the chaos that has often come with elected governments in Paraguay), the Liberal party (Boidin 1999), internationalization, and modernization.

Until recently, nearly all curricula and materials for bilingual education in Paraguay were developed using *guaraní académico*, the “purified” form. Lexical items for modern and academic things and concepts have been derived from Guaraní roots to replace vocabulary borrowed from Spanish; these words are generally referred to as *neologismos* (neologisms). Many of these words are unfamiliar to the general public, who speaks *jopará*. The effort at language cultivation is in part an effort to cultivate an academic register where one has not fully developed yet, but it is also an effort to define the form of Guaraní into whose use generations of students will be socialized, the first form of Guaraní to be institutionalized. This struggle over the ‘purity’ of a language during the early stages of standardization is common, especially in situations of language contact with a more dominant language (Joseph 1987), as in the case of Guaraní and Spanish. Purism is a sociopolitical movement to restrict the sources of innovation in a language to native elements, and it often arises in response to cultural pressures for modernization (see for example, Hill and Hill 1980). Purism can be part of a response to periods of rapid change in social and political structures (Annamalai 1989; Jernudd 1989), and it can be a discourse that circumscribes not just a language but an identity, authorizing and authenticating one and delegitimizing others: “...Purification movements imply at some level that impure language elements belong to impure persons. This impurity ascription makes it then possible to put people who cannot claim affiliation with the privileged language in a lesser moral space” (Shapiro 1989: 23).

Paraguay is currently in such a period of rapid social change. After nearly 180 years of dictatorships and isolationism, a transition to democracy only began in 1989, and with it (though perhaps unrelated) have come severe economic depression, a significant rise in crime and social instability, and increasing international involvement in national issues through Mercosur<sup>5</sup> and globalization, in general. Some associated with the last dictatorship still hold positions of power in the Colorado Party, which has not lost an election yet, and the Liberals and others continue to struggle for change in leadership. With the aforementioned association between *guaraní académico* and the recently dethroned dictatorship and between *jopará* and the opposition, it is easy to see that the current struggle over the language of instruction may well be more about control over Paraguayan national identity, the sociopolitical system, and what it means to be educated, than it is about the language itself. Statements by local scholars make this abundantly clear. One academic, writer, and

<sup>5</sup> The free-trade association begun among Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina in 1991 and now involving a number of other South American countries.

member of the National Commission on Bilingualism (the body responsible for language policy) commented in an interview in 2004 that, “The Paraguayan thinks that he knows Guaraní, but he doesn’t. If he hasn’t studied it [in school], he doesn’t know...What kind of words in Guaraní do the children bring from the street or from home? They bring *jopará*, they don’t bring an authentic Guaraní” (translation mine)<sup>6</sup>. While those who advance the cause of purism do not explicitly connect it to the salvation of the Paraguayan identity, statements from others who stand in resistance to the purist movement convey their sense that the two are closely tied. Corvalán (1989) paraphrases the position of those who resist the purists’ efforts to reform the Guaraní writing system: according to her, they say it is “...sprouted from a test tube and what the people want is a natural enlightenment, something sprouted from the Paraguayan soil” (Corvalán 1989: 8, translation mine). Melià (2001), a scholar of Guaraní and Paraguayan history, sees the use of *guaraní científico* (another term for *guaraní académico*) as the imposition of a European view of language on an indigenous tongue. He writes that the texts written with purified Guaraní are really Spanish texts with Guaraní words; they represent “the height of the perversion of hispanicizing the mind and the sentiment of Paraguay, using and abusing Guaraní” (Melià 2001: 8, translation mine). He condemns what he sees in the teaching of *guaraní científico* as “the imposition of an authoritarian, totalitarian Guaraní” (Melià 2001: 8, translation mine). Superficially about the speech of children or the text of grammar books, these statements assign qualities of authenticity or artificiality to language varieties and map processes of colonization and government on to language use.

#### *Conceptual Orientation*

That these agenda are ideological in nature is clear. While often not explicitly discussed as such, what the aforementioned studies of attitudes toward Guaraní, as well as those discussing the political nature of the *guaraní académico/jopará* debate, explore are ideologies of language in Paraguay. Woolard (1998) describes language ideologies<sup>7</sup> as “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world...they envision and enact ties of language to identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology” (3). This is to say that language ideologies involve the process of representation or semiosis in establishing connections between language and people, connections that have meaning and consequences for who people are (who they are seen to be and who they see themselves as), what they are worth, how they are treated and how they treat others. As Woolard notes, they can be discovered in the way people use language as

<sup>6</sup> In an interview conducted by Dr. Nancy Hornberger and the author, 7/28/04.

<sup>7</sup> Following Woolard (1998), I use the terms language ideology and ideology of language interchangeably.

well as their metapragmatic discourse, their talk about language, and more subtle metapragmatic signaling (Silverstein 1976); sometimes overt, they are more often present as “commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world” (Rumsey 1990: 346). As taken-for-granted ideas often working under the radar in social interaction, language ideologies are especially powerful influences in the construction of social relationships: that is, “ideologies and social relations are...mutually constitutive” (Woolard 1998: 10). Seen as “natural, obvious, objective” views, not belonging to anyone in particular, ideologies of language can be used to create and maintain political authority (Gal & Woolard 1995: 132).

In a series of works Gal and Irvine (Gal & Irvine 1995; Gal 1998; Irvine & Gal 2000) describe three semiotic processes by which language ideologies operate and through which they can have powerful influence on linguistic change, social, ethnic, and political boundaries, and scholarly claims about language. In iconization, a relationship that obtains between linguistic features or varieties is interpreted as a relationship between speakers, a social relationship, such that some linguistic feature comes to represent, iconically, “a social group’s inherent nature or essence” (Irvine & Gal 2000: 37). In recursivity, “an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, [is projected] onto some other level” (38), and in erasure, an ideology simplifies real-life sociolinguistic complexity, making some patterns invisible while others are not. They demonstrate that these processes can result in material and sociopolitical consequences. Wortham (2001), discussing the application of the concept of language ideology in educational research, notes that the very concept of an “educated person” is influenced by language ideologies: “accents, dialects, and the use of particular lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic forms often get taken as indexes of how educated a speaker is” (257). Guaraní’s role in the definition “educated person” in Paraguay is essentially what is at stake there now, and the aim of this study is to better understand the language ideologies held by educators as a first step in understanding how they may mediate language use and social interaction in bilingual education there.

**Methods**

Best suited to addressing these questions of stakeholders’ ideologies of language are ethnographic research methods, though as a pilot-stage project, this study’s length and depth are limited in comparison to a full ethnography. My intention here is not a comprehensive description and analysis of the debate over *guaraní académico* and *jopará* in Paraguayan education, nor of the language ideologies or related linguistic practices involved. Rather, my objectives have been to uncover some common threads in school-level perspectives, with whatever consistency, contradiction, and ambivalence they entail, to analyze these themes as ideologies of language, and to discuss some possible ways in

which these ideologies may function through schools in promotion or limitation of social change—that is, changes in social groups’ relative access to power and social mobility.

*Setting and Participants*

With an awareness that the stridently purist (and resistant) opinions I had heard in circulation in Asunción belonged not only to urban resi-

**Table 1**  
**Description of Sites**

School & Community	Description
Escuela María Community U1	A primary school in a middle-income neighborhood in urban, central Asunción. Almost all students are Spanish-dominant and the school has run the MHH since the beginning of the reform.
Escuela Miguel Community U2	A primary school in a middle-income (semi-urban) university town about 350 km from Asunción. Students’ language dominance varies, and the school has always run the MHH.
Escuela Santo Domingo Community U2	A primary school in a lower-income area outside of the aforementioned semi-urban university town. Students generally speak Guaraní at home, but the school has always run the MHH.
Escuela Iturbe Community R3	A primary school in a middle-income neighborhood in a semi-rural town about 45 km from Asunción. Students’ language dominance varies. The school is the last public school in its area to run the MGH, though it currently runs it only in the morning, with the MHH in the afternoon, due to parental demand.
Escuela López Community R4	A primary school in a semi-rural, lower-income neighborhood about 350 km from Asunción. Most students speak both languages at home. The school ran both the MGH and the MHH for a number of years but phased it out last year because of the segregation it caused among students.
Escuela Colón Community R5	A primary school in a small town about 180 km from Asunción. Students’ language dominance varies widely. The school is one of several chosen to pilot the new MB, so the allocation of languages changes by class-section according to students’ language dominance test scores.
Escuela Concepción Community R5	A very small primary school with three rooms and 50 students in grades 1-6, in a low-income rural area outside of the small town where Escuela Colón is located. The school is usually inaccessible by car and students come from almost entirely Guaraní-speaking families. Though also chosen to pilot the new MB, all the current class sections use the design for Guaraní-dominant students.



dents, but also to academics, policymakers, and others who are somewhat removed from the day-to-day business of classrooms, I sought data on perspectives of those who are working in a variety of schools. With the assistance of the director of curriculum at the national Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), as well as contacts in regional supervisory offices, I selected and secured permission to visit seven schools in five communities representing a range of geographical regions (urban to rural) and program types, including the MGH, MHH, and MB (see Table 1). In each school I spoke with the director (principal) and a variety of classroom teachers (teaching pre-school through 8th grade and special education), as well as a librarian, a disciplinarian, and several *técnicos* (teacher-trainers from the regional supervisory office) and *coordinadoras* (coordinators, also teacher-trainers from the regional supervisory office). Most teachers had about 10 years of experience, though some were relatively new (in their second year) and some were well-seasoned (24 years' experience). Of a total of 46 individuals with whom I spoke, most were women (39), though a few teachers were men (7).

#### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Over a four-week period in 2005<sup>8</sup>, I spent roughly 75 hours in classrooms (10-20 hours in each school) with additional time spent in supervisory offices, the MEC office, and within the school communities. While I employed traditional ethnographic methods including participant observation and field notes, document collection, and audio-recorded interviews, the bulk of the data analyzed here comes from the former. MEC-authored reports provide background on the program designs and educators' perspectives documented elsewhere. Time and access permitted only a few recorded interviews, though other unrecorded interviews were documented in field notes, and all used a semi-structured format including similar questions but open to variation according to the participant's interests and context.

In these explicitly bilingual school environments, interaction occurs in both Spanish and Guaraní. Knowing me to be non-Paraguayan, all adult participants seemed to expect to interact with me in Spanish, and as my proficiency in Guaraní is still very limited, all my interaction with them, indeed, occurred in Spanish. While for sociopolitical and interpersonal reasons, it would have been ideal that I have the option of interacting fluently in Guaraní as well, my communication here with educators, at least, did not seem impeded by this shortcoming.

Interview transcripts, field notes, and local documents were coded for recurrent themes and patterns, which were then analyzed across the various settings. In particular, references to the various kinds of Guaraní and their relationships to Spanish and to each other were highlighted. For the pur-

poses of analysis, two of the five communities are considered urban (U1 and U2), and the others are considered rural (R3, R4, R5). The distinction is somewhat fluid in Paraguay, where conditions characteristic of rural areas (such as nearly impassable dirt roads, limited access to municipal water, telephone, and public transportation systems, and high concentrations of monolingual Guaraní speakers) can be found not far from cities. Data from the last national census classify all or the vast majority of residents of the districts surrounding U1 and U2 as urbanites, while a majority of those in R3 and R5 are classified as rural residents (Paraguay DGEEC 2002). My impressions of these communities corroborate this. The characterization of Escuela Santo Domingo in U2 and Escuela López in R4, however, are a bit more problematic. Census figures categorize most residents of the district in which R4 is located as urban (91%), and yet, the neighborhood immediately surrounding the school could hardly be considered as such. It is located a half-hour bus ride from the district center on a road barely passable by car and in an area where houses are farther apart and roaming livestock is common, unlike the more urbanized areas of Paraguay. The school also serves mostly Guaraní-dominant children, many from families of very limited resources, also more common in more rural areas. While it is impossible to determine from the available census data, it seems very likely that those served by Escuela López would fall into the 9% rural population of that district.

In a similar fashion, the district in which Escuela Santo Domingo is located, U2, is considered mostly urban (70%), and the other school, located in the district center, clearly serves an urban population. Whether Escuela Santo Domingo does so is less clear. It is located approximately 20 km from the town center in a neighborhood served by dirt roads. Most of the students are Guaraní dominant and qualify for international aid for impoverished children. Yet the school is located on a paved road, tying it more closely to the town center and increasing the likelihood that teachers live and parents work in town, and that urban ideas and attitudes are more influential. Because the evidence does not seem strong enough to consider it otherwise, I have left Escuela Santo Domingo with the urban label. That some ambiguity remains is a reminder that these geographical/sociodemographic descriptions are not as dichotomous as they might seem.

#### **Findings and Discussion**

Close examination of these educators' perspectives on the use and instruction of *guaraní académico* or *jopará* in school reveals several patterns, some of which are common across areas and others that vary in significant ways between those who work in more urban areas of Spanish dominance and those who work in rural areas of greater Guaraní dominance.

<sup>8</sup> Data collected during this period are also informed by a 4-week visit in 2004, as well as nearly three years of living and teaching in Paraguay previous to that.

*Differentiation of Varieties*

First among the patterns to tease apart were participants' various ways of referring to the varieties of Guaraní and Spanish, but particularly the former. As metapragmatic discourse they contain information about relevant language ideologies (Irvine & Gal 2000; Silverstein 1976). The most commonly employed terms for the two varieties of Guaraní were *guaraní puro* and *jopará*. Also common were *el guaraní-guaraní* and *el jehe'a*<sup>9</sup> (also Guaraní denoting a mixed variety), respectively. Table 2 summarizes the various forms, with those most common in bold. Terms used for Spanish included *español*, *castellano*, *el castellano-castellano*, *castellano puro* (the last two referring to an unmixed variety, in contrast to Paraguayan Spanish, referred to in the first two). Terms themselves for the colloquial variety of Guaraní reflect both neutral and negative valuations. *Jopará* is described with words that convey normalcy: what is spoken in daily life, what is spoken at home, the language of use, everyday language, traditional language. Yet it is also seen negatively, its "mixed" nature often paired with explicitly negative descriptions. One teacher at Escuela López described *jopará* as *el guarañol*, *la mezcla*. *Es el guaraní mal hablado y el castellano mal hablado* (Guarañol, the mix. It is badly spoken Guaraní and badly spoken Spanish) (PP, R4, 5/25/05)<sup>10</sup>. One director described her son as having learned *el guaraní común*, *el guaraní mal* (common Guaraní, bad Guaraní) (SB, U2, 6/6/05). A sixth-grade teacher at Escuela Iturbe indicated that they try to encourage the correct use of Guaraní in the classroom and that this is different from what students speak at home (E, R3, 5/19/05). A second-grade teacher at Escuela María told me, *bueno, no hablamos perfectamente ni el guaraní ni el castellano*. *Mezclamos los dos* (well, we speak neither Guaraní nor Spanish perfectly. We mix the two) (PC, U1, 5/27/05).

At first glance, the terms used to describe *guaraní académico* would seem to be complimentary, using words like *puro*, *correcto*, *desarrollado*, *técnico* (pure, correct, developed, technical). Yet, when examined in context, these terms convey a stance more critical than complimentary. The following are some of the negative ways that participants described *guaraní académico*:

- *El guaraní-guaraní es difícil* (Guaraní-guaraní is difficult) (SF, U1, 5/30/05)
- *El guaraní-guaraní no tiene funcionalidad...el guaraní sin mezcla no va a tener otra vez función* (Guaraní-guaraní doesn't have any functionality...the Guaraní without mixing is not going to have any use) (PB, R5, 6/1/05)
- *El guaraní-guaraní no sirve. Si te vas al almacén, por ejemplo, no te van a entender con el guaraní-guaraní* (Guaraní-guaraní doesn't work[is of no use]. If you go to the store, for example, they won't understand you with *guaraní-guaraní*) (PG, R5, 6/2/05)

<sup>9</sup> Participants in the current study rarely distinguished between *jehe'a* and *jopará*. The terms were used interchangeably, though they apparently refer to varieties that combine elements of the two languages in different ways (Nelson Aguilera, personal communication, 2/2/2006)

<sup>10</sup> Sources of quotations are given by participants' initials, community (Urban 1 or 2, or Rural 3, 4, or 5), and date of fieldnotes or interview. All translations from the Spanish are mine.

- *No se usa el guaraní que se enseña, no los padres, ni la comunidad, ni las autoridades.* (The Guaraní that is taught is not used, not by the parents, not by the community, not by the authorities). (SB, U2, 6/6/05)

Table 2  
Referring expressions for the two varieties of Guaraní

Colloquial Guaraní	Purified/standardized Guaraní
<i>jopará</i>	<i>guaraní-guaraní</i>
<i>jehe'a</i>	<b><i>guaraní puro</i> (pure Guaraní)</b>
<i>guaraní mezclado</i> (mixed Guaraní)	<b><i>guaraní académico</i> (academic Guaraní)</b>
<i>guaraní de uso</i> (Guaraní of [daily] use)	<i>el verdadero guaraní</i> (the true Guaraní)
<i>guaraní paraguayo</i> (Paraguayan Guaraní)	<i>el uso correcto del guaraní</i> (the correct use of Guaraní)
<i>guaraní colloquial</i> (colloquial Guaraní)	<i>guaraní mas desarrollado</i> (more developed Guaraní)
<i>guarañol</i>	<i>el uso técnico de la lengua guaraní</i> (the technical use of the Guaraní language)
<i>lo que se usa en la casa</i> (what is used at home)	
<i>lo que se usa en la vida cotidiana</i> (what is used in daily life)	
<i>el guaraní no tan puro</i> (not-so-pure Guaraní)	
<i>guaraní corriente</i> (everyday Guaraní)	
<i>guaraní tradicional</i> (traditional Guaraní)	
<i>guaraní común, el guaraní mal</i> (common Guaraní, bad Guaraní)	
<i>es el idioma que los niños manejan diariamente, en casa, en la calle, en todas partes</i> (It is the language that the children utilize daily, at home, in the street, everywhere)	

(Original Spanish in italics, translation in regular type, and boldface denotes the most commonly used terms)

Already apparent in the names for the two varieties is some ambivalence about the role and value of a language in this context: a language that is mixed is useful but imperfect, while a language that is unmixed is perfect but useless. This kind of internal contradiction, not uncommon to ideologies of language (Woolard 1998), may be an important part of the social work being accomplished in part through these ideas and distinctions. A similar ambivalence implicit in usage of terms for both *guaraní*

*académico* and *jopará* is revealed in terms collected by a 2001 study of professionals' perspectives on Guaraní (Paraguay MEC-BID 2001). In interviews of 100 professionals in that study, no fewer than 26 terms were used for *guaraní académico*, including *guaraní original* (original Guaraní), *guaraní complicado* (complicated Guaraní), *guaraní sofisticado* (sophisticated Guaraní), and *guaraní cerrado* (closed Guaraní). Twenty-three terms were used for *jopará*, including *guaraní imperfecto* (imperfect Guaraní), *guaraní nuestro* (our Guaraní), *guaraní de lo mitâ*<sup>11</sup> (children's Guaraní), and *guaraní comprensible* (comprehensible Guaraní). As in the data from the current study, names for both varieties include positive, as well as negative evaluation.

#### *Commonalities in Urban and Rural Perspectives*

To contrast urban and rural perspectives on the two varieties of Guaraní and their use in school is necessary because of important sociolinguistic differences between the people who live there, but important commonalities point to what may be more generalized positions on the languages.

*Mixing as Natural but not Ideal.* Neutral or positive valuation of "mixing" as natural, part of the Paraguayan reality, and that which makes communication possible, alongside negative appraisal of mixing as incorrect or imperfect language use is also affirmed in participants' more detailed statements about the two varieties of Guaraní, as well as Paraguayan Spanish. This perspective was common across both rural and urban areas, and it represents a naturalized perspective among participants: mixing is normal but it is also bad. With respect to use, most participants agreed that the Guaraní spoken at home and outside of school is *jopará*, a Guaraní mixed with Spanish words. As an example of words that would always be spoken in Spanish, even within otherwise Guaraní discourse, they often cited numbers.<sup>12</sup> One teacher told me that you cannot use the numbers as they are in *guaraní-guaraní*. If you ask for quantities of things with Guaraní numbers, she elaborated, the shopkeeper will not understand. Things like *bathroom*, *salt*, *sugar* must be in Spanish (as they are in *jopará*), because people never use the Guaraní words for them. A teacher from urban Asunción told me, *bueno, no hablamos perfectamente ni el guaraní ni el castellano. Mezclamos los dos. Hasta las profesoras mezclamos. En particular la gente que tiene plata dice eso porque hablan el castellano-castellano, pero ellos también mezclan* (Fine, we don't speak either Guaraní or Spanish perfectly. We mix the two. Even the teachers we mix them. In particular the people with money [*she makes a gesture off in the distance toward the big avenue nearby where big houses are*]

<sup>11</sup> *Mitâ* is Guaraní for "child."

<sup>12</sup> Words for numerals larger than five have traditionally been borrowed from Spanish for use in Guaraní. Thus, Guaraní words for large numbers are among those often cited as neologisms: too long to be practical and too rare to be recognized.

say that [Guaraní intrudes upon Spanish] because they speak Spanish-Spanish [a pure Spanish]. But they also mix them) (PC, U1, 5/27/05). She went on to give me examples of things that even rich people say in which Guaraní particles are attached to Spanish words. Especially interesting in this comment are the identification of wealth with a claim to purity of language (though in this case Spanish) and the neutralization of this claim through proof of mixing.

Participants in more rural areas often reported that *jopará* is the language that children bring to school and that people use in daily life. Those in urban areas asserted that *jopará* is what is useful in daily life, sometimes spoken at home or with one's clients or patients. The director of Escuela Santo Domingo told me, *no pueden exigir solamente castellano o solamente guaraní porque nosotros sabemos nuestra realidad* (we cannot demand only Spanish or only Guaraní because we know our reality) (SA, U2, 6/7/05). This is to say that mixing Spanish and Guaraní is part of daily life and part of sociolinguistic reality in Paraguay.

To some extent, these comments convey an attitude of acceptance, a view that mixing is normal, part of who Paraguayans are and how they communicate with each other. Yet, like PC's comment above, these statements about the normalcy of mixing were often accompanied by statements that mixing is undesirable, that it is imperfect language use. *Tratamos de mejorar lo que traen de la casa, se usa jopará [en casa]* (We try to improve what they bring from home, they use *jopará* at home) (ME, R3, 5/19/05), the librarian at Escuela Iturbe said. Of the practice of borrowing Spanish words into Guaraní, another teacher said, *una mezcla no es tan lindo, no te digo que manejan perfecto los dos idiomas, pero tratamos de enseñarles...tratamos de sacar eso, sería mejor que no lo haga* (a mix is not so nice, I'm not saying that they control both languages perfectly, but we try to teach them [to]...we try to get rid of that [mixing], it would be better that they not do it) (PE, R4, 5/24/05). The Guaraní teacher at Escuela López went so far as to say that the mix is both badly spoken Guaraní and badly spoken Spanish (PP, R4, 5/25/05). Negative views of mixing were slightly less common among urban participants, though still present. As mentioned above, PC at Escuela María (U1) saw mixing as speaking neither Spanish nor Guaraní perfectly. The director of the same school claimed that one can see all the richness that the Guaraní language has to offer in the speech of people from very rural areas, people who don't mix the languages. The director of Escuela Miguel equated *el guaraní común* (common [mixed] Guaraní) with *el guaraní mal* (bad Guaraní) (SB, U2, 6/6/05).

*Guaraní Puro as Difficult and Not Necessarily Useful.* Also common among perspectives from both geographical regions was a view of *guaraní académico* as not useful in daily life, as well as difficult for many people, especially those in the city. Participants in urban areas reported that the use of *guaraní académico* in school makes it difficult for parents to



help their children with their homework because they do not know the words, and many students struggle to pass the required classes in Guaraní. *Guaraní puro* is not for use, they reported, and many parents and students in their schools complain about its use. The neologisms are only used sometimes by advanced students. Teachers also reported that teaching *cosas que no utilizamos diariamente* (things that we don't use daily) (PA, U2, 6/6/05) is difficult—sometimes the students ask for a word that even the teacher does not know and they have to look it up (L, R3, 5/19/05). When originally first required, the teaching of and in *guaraní académico* was a *choque* (a shock) for many teachers (PA, U2, 6/6/05), a bad experience (MBB, U2, 6/5/05), and it didn't work. *El guaraní-guaraní no tiene funcionalidad...[su uso en la clase] no resultó al principio, en el noveno grado no resultó. Los técnicos mismos se dieron cuenta de que no funcionó* (Guaraní-Guaraní is not functional. [It's use in class] didn't work at first, in the 9th grade it didn't work, the trainers themselves realized that it wasn't working) (PB, R5, 6/1/05). Even the director of the most rural school, in which nearly all students are monolingual Guaraní speakers, told me that *guaraní-guaraní* did not work as a medium of instruction (PD, R5, 5/26/05). The community did not take up the new words, and in fact, rejected them (TG, U2, 6/5/05).

A number of people in both areas claimed that for those who already speak Guaraní, those in the countryside, *guaraní académico* is not as difficult as it is for those in the city. From one rural teacher: *Las palabras técnicas no les cuestan tanto acá que en Asunción. En la capital no hablan el guaraní entonces les cuestan más* (the technical words don't take as much effort here as they do in Asunción. In the capital they don't speak Guaraní, so it takes more effort for them) (PE, R4, 5/24/05). This comment, like other similar ones, is of particular interest because within it lies not only differentiation of the varieties, but also differentiation of the salient groups of people. People "here" are identified as speaking Guaraní, while people in Asunción, are identified as not speaking it. The "technical words" of *guaraní académico* are identified as something apart from the Guaraní that people "here" speak. Emergent here is the kind of link between group and language, and differentiation from another group and their language, that language ideologies so powerfully mediate. Irvine and Gal (2000) find that language ideologies are more interesting for their role in the construction of boundaries than for their role in the construction of likeness, or community. This perspective is particularly appropriate in a country where group distinctions are not racially or ethnically defined the way they are elsewhere, and so salient boundary that this linguistic evidence helps to create (and vice versa) is one of region (Asunción vs. here/R4) and wealth. It is a distinction I heard made by some in both urban and rural areas. The director of Escuela Itúrbe (R3) dismissed the question of the two Guaranís, saying that "here," where they already speak Guaraní, they

must contend with poverty more than a question of variety, not like in Asunción where people do not speak Guaraní and complain about this issue. In linking poverty to here, as different from "there"/Asunción, she establishes the link between wealth, region, and position on the two varieties.

*Differences in Rural/Urban Perspectives.* The link among group, variety, and ideological position on the question becomes more apparent, of course, when I examine differences in perspectives across urban and rural areas. This is where the struggle over what kind of Guaraní should be used in schools takes shape. Most interesting are a difference in how distinct the two varieties are considered to be from each other, a difference in perceptions of what the languages are useful for, and differences in opinions about how schools should be using Guaraní in educating students.

*Expressive and poetic functions of Guaraní.* A number of participants in the urban areas discussed the expressive and poetic functions of Guaraní. They described the language in general as *dulce* (sweet), and as possessing *riqueza* (richness/wealth). Most striking was the comment from the introduction by the disciplinary officer at Escuela Miguel, quoted in the introduction: *vivo en castellano también, pero me llega más en guaraní. Es algo importante como mamá, amor, Dios* (I live in Spanish, too, but more comes to me in Guaraní. It's something important, like mother, love, God) (MA, U2, 6/6/05). Other participants discussed negative views of Guaraní. *La gente de plata dice que empobrece, digamos que el guaraní entorpece al castellano* (People with money say that it impoverishes, that is that Guaraní intrudes upon Spanish) (PC, U1, 5/27/05). The director of Escuela Miguel reported that there is still the conception that if you speak Guaraní you are from the lower class (SB, U2, 6/6/05). These two comments clarify further the connection drawn between Guaraní and wealth/class—and in PC's statement the association almost seems causal. That is, she reports that wealthy people say that Guaraní is a cause of impoverishment. This is reminiscent of the misrecognition of power to which Gal and Woolard (1995) refer. Here the language is seen as responsible for one's economic status: power (economic in this case) "is 'misrecognized' and perceived as legitimately rooted in, rather than indexed by, their control of linguistic structures" (Gal & Woolard 1995: 133). Despite the negative symbolic revalorization (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994) of Guaraní, however, urban participants generally supported the teaching of Guaraní in school: *el paraguayo sí o sí tiene que hablar el guaraní* (the Paraguayan, no matter what, has to speak Guaraní) (SF, U1, 5/30/05), the director of Escuela María told me. She added: as long as what is taught is *jopará*.

*The Uselessness of Guaraní Académico.* In these urban areas, *jopará* and *guaraní académico* were seen as very distinct, dichotomized as useful and useless, respectively. *Guaraní académico's* (perceived) lack of



utility stemmed from two facts: (1) with it, one cannot communicate effectively with monolingual Guaraní-speaking employees, patients, or clients from the countryside, and (2) it is of no use in university-level education. Students complain, the director of Escuela Miguel, told me. They say if we don't need this for the university, why study it? (SB, U2, 6/6/05). For university studies or to live, study, or work outside of Paraguay, one needs Spanish, not Guaraní of any kind. Participants often told me that to communicate within Paraguay, professionals like doctors and lawyers must be able to speak *jopará* with their patients or clients, for they will not understand an academic Guaraní. Similarly, parents and students, they say, find the academic Guaraní too difficult, and it causes students to fail. It is too demanding and should not be a required competency. One director told me of the bad experience they had with the MGH that required *guaraní académico*: *netamente era guaraní en la modalidad guaranihablante, leían en guaraní [y no en castellano]...con el jopará no va a ser tanto problema* (it was all Guaraní in the MGH, they read in Guaraní [and not in Spanish]...with *jopará* it won't be so much of a problem) (SA, U2, 6/7/05). Her comment reflects a tendency to see the use of *guaraní académico*, which includes written and oral use, as interfering with students' achievement in Spanish, while *jopará*, being generally oral in use, does not. The director of Escuela Miguel argued that *guaraní académico* boxes a child in because no one else uses it (SB, U2, 6/6/05). This is to say, the neologisms of academic Guaraní are limiting students and their futures, and the implication is that the use of *jopará* will not, a view that constitutes a significant indictment of the more formal variety.

*Guaraní as a Subject or Medium of Instruction.* Urban educators tended to see the solution to parents', students', and their own complaints about *guaraní académico* to lie in a change from Guaraní as both a language of instruction and an instructed language to Guaraní taught as a language only. A number of participants told me that it would be better if Guaraní would be taught as its own subject by a specialized teacher, much like English or other foreign languages. *Muchos se aplazan. Ellos piden que se saque del programa el guaraní, que se enseña como idioma...por ejemplo una hora al día con una maestra especial, y no por las materias* (Many fail. They ask that Guaraní be taken out of the program, that it be taught as a language...for example one hour a day with a special teacher, and not through the subjects) (SE, U1, 5/30/05).

In contrast, educators outside of these urban areas never mentioned the possibility of either Guaraní or Spanish being taught as a language only in a separate class by a specialized teacher. Rather, many of those in more rural areas see *guaraní académico* as merely a higher level of the Guaraní that their students already speak, an additional register, familiarity of which could only help their students. In their view and practice

*guaraní puro* is taught but not exclusively, for it would not be useful in daily life outside of school and the school's intent is to give students the skills to defend themselves in a variety of environments (ME, R3, 5/19/05).

When I asked about the question of the two Guaranis, the director of Escuela Iturbe responded, *tendemos mas a la pobreza...aquí es mas facil llevar a mas niveles de la lengua porque trabajamos con personas que ya hablan guaraní...sí, se vive acá la cuestión, pero nadie no se queja, solamente en Asunción. No se quejan los padres, ni los estudiantes, ni las maestras* (we pay more attention to poverty. Here it is easier to carry more levels of language because we work with people who already speak Guaraní...Yes, the question is alive here but no one complains, only in Asunción. The parents don't complain [here], nor the students, nor the teachers) (SR, R3, 5/20/05).

After noting that the technical words of *guaraní académico* are not as difficult for their students, who already speak *jopará*, a fourth-grade teacher at Escuela López commented that *los padres quieren que se eleve su cultura* (parents want their culture to be elevated) (PE, R4, 5/24/05), to improve their vocabulary in Guaraní and to learn the lesser-known words. One teacher, who also teaches Guaraní at a school in the city center, said that he must use *jopará* when he teaches there or the students will not understand him, but when he teaches at Escuela López he can use *guaraní puro*: *Aquí hablamos solamente el guaraní, porque podemos* (Here we speak only Guaraní because we can) (PP, R4, 5/2/05). Students who went all the way through the MGH when it was in use there are now seen to have *un guaraní mas desarrollado* (a more developed Guaraní) (SG, R4, 5/23/05). Teachers also noted that while many of the neologisms and other words unique to *guaraní académico* are not used in daily life, they teach them in class so that students will be familiar with them. Many indicated that parents and students were initially resistant to the words but are no longer.

These comments which discuss *guaraní académico* as an addition, a development, an improvement in the Guaraní that students already speak stand in contrast to the urban educators' portrayal of the variety as one that parents, teachers, and students do not understand, one that is useless, rejected by the community, a project that failed. This is not to say that educators in more rural areas embrace *guaraní académico* or support its use in class, but rather that they seem to see its relationship to *jopará* more as one of complementarity and less as one of mutual exclusivity, as seems to be common in urban areas. A few participants in rural areas saw academic Guaraní as useless and not appropriate for school, but this view was not common there.

*The Instrumental Value of Guaraní.* Unlike some in urban areas who waxed romantic about the Guaraní language, participants in the rural areas did not tend to comment on its beauty or expressive value. Instead,

teachers and administrators in these areas seemed more focused on the instrumental value of Guaraní, in general, in school and in daily life. But in contrast to the expectations of many urban teachers that Guaraní would be useful for communicating with one's patients and clients, rural educators tended to mention daily tasks such as shopping as instances where Guaraní (*jopará*) would be useful. Often the focus seemed less on a choice between *guaraní académico* and *jopará* than between Guaraní and Spanish, again with a focus on the instrumental importance of each. The director and first-grade teacher of Escuela Concepción, where students' Guaraní dominance was perhaps the strongest, said that *guaraní-guaraní* was difficult and did not work for them. Instead, he continued, a survey of the community revealed that parents, teachers, and administrators felt that more reading and writing in Spanish was needed in order to prepare students for work in Asunción (PD, R5, 6/1/05). Only one teacher discussed the importance of teaching Guaraní with a focus on both effective, practical communication and the cultural content of the language (PP, R4, 5/25/05).

*Ideologies of Guaraní.* That there is at least some tacit acceptance by educators in more rural areas of *guaraní académico*, some sense of its complementarity to *jopará*, and some role for it seen in schools, stands in marked contrast to the almost total rejection of *guaraní académico* by educators in urban areas. While participants in both areas identified a link between Guaraní-speakers and rural areas and non-Guaraní speakers and urban areas, their comments revealed not so much a link between variety of Guaraní and a specific group (since both denied much knowledge of the pure variety), as a link among variety, group, and ideological position. Urban educators express (and are identified as expressing) views that (1) dichotomize *guaraní académico* and *jopará*, (2) deny any usefulness or value in education or daily use for *guaraní académico* while seeing *jopará* as useful for communication in the workplace (always with clients, workers, maids, patients, people of lower status), and (3) believe that *jopará* should occupy a place in Paraguayan education, but a marginal one (being taught as a second language and not counting for grade promotion). In contrast, the rural educators with whom I spoke identified themselves and their students as speakers of Guaraní, and they expressed (and identified themselves as expressing) views that (1) tend to see *guaraní académico* and *jopará* more as points on a continuum than as polar opposites, (2) see *guaraní académico* more neutrally and occasionally as having expressive or cultural value and *jopará* as having instrumental value in daily life, and (3) take for granted that (an unspecified) Guaraní, as their students' home language, be not just an instructed language, but also one of instruction.

In trying to discern what these perspectives (and the differences between them) might mean for the use of Guaraní in Paraguayan schools, for bilingual education there, for Paraguayan students, and how they are

part of more general language ideologies, it is helpful to return to Irvine and Gal's (Gal & Irvine 1995; Gal 1998; Irvine & Gal 2000) three semiotic processes by which language ideologies affect significant change. Irvine and Gal (2000) discuss historical cases in which dichotomization (e.g., Western vs. Oriental, foreign vs. native) has lent itself to processes of iconization, recursivity, and erasure that have sociopolitical and material consequences through their employment in the rationalization of power structures. In an analysis of discourse in policy and practice in Quechua-Spanish bilingual intercultural education in three Andean countries, Hornberger (2000) finds these three semiotic processes at work. She finds iconization at work in the conflation of Quechua and ruralness (much like the Paraguayan situation); the erasure of important differences, like gender, in the rural/urban-Quechua/Spanish opposition; and recursiveness in the way that a rural/urban distinction is projected onto different groups *within* the city. She concludes that the potential of interculturality in education to challenge hegemonic discourses depends in part upon the recognition of multiple dimensions of identity otherwise obscured by these semiotic processes.

It is worth asking, then, how these processes might be in operation in the urban-centered ideology of Guaraní in which (1) *guaraní académico* is entirely distinct from *jopará*, (2) it is useless, and (3) *jopará* is appropriate for use in schools and work but only in marginalized positions. Here *guaraní académico* becomes iconic not of a particular people, but of no one—not that it belongs to no one in particular, but that it is a disowned language, in stark contrast to *jopará*, which “everyone” claims. As Señora Beatríz remarked, no one speaks it and no one wants it. Its status as a language that no one speaks and no one wants to claim, then, not only calls into question its authenticity (as participants noted) but also calls into question its existence. Given the emphasis participants placed on languages' instrumental value, a language without functionality, without use for further education and professional advancement or travel, has little worth. In both, any potential that *guaraní académico* might have, in theory, as a higher register for use in more powerful spheres such as education, government, and business, is neutralized. Instead, an entirely different variety of Guaraní does have a place in schools, but one in which Guaraní remains a largely oral language, in a low-stakes position as an accessory to the Spanish curriculum. In short, these perspectives seem to hold Guaraní, as *jopará*, in a slightly modified spot in a largely unchanged allocation of languages. This positioning may happen in part because of iconization of Guaraní in general as a sign (and cause) of poverty. As Gal (1998) writes, “in this process of iconization, the ideological representation fuses some quality of the linguistic feature and a supposedly parallel quality of the social group and understands one as the cause or the inherent, essential, explanation of the other” (328). The ideology of Guaraní as an emblem of the Paraguayan nation likely pre-

vents its exclusion entirely from what urban educators see as the ideal allocation.

The process of recursivity, Irvine and Gal (2000) show, can often take a difference occurring *within* a language or group and map it onto a difference *between* languages or groups. It is possible that the difference between *guaraní académico* and *jopará* at one level becomes ideologically parallel to the difference between Guaraní, in general, and Spanish at another level. That is, that *guaraní académico* is useless and *jopará* is useful in daily life is similar to the notion that Guaraní is useless in universities, the internet, abroad, and in positions of power and wealth, while Spanish is eminently useful. Irvine and Gal show that recursivity can have the particular effect of obscuring (and eventually eliminating) “repertoires in which different languages were used for different social functions” (70). If the goal is advancement, as measured by wealth and status, then *jopará* is not useful and Spanish can be used for most social functions. If decisions are made on the basis of this difference, the usefulness of *jopará*, and by extension, any *potential* usefulness of an additional register of Guaraní, i.e., *guaraní académico*, is rendered invisible. It seems possible that what is being erased in the urban-centered ideology of Guaraní, is the *potential* use of Guaraní for literary, technological, scientific purposes. Urban educators seem to be expressing a desire to limit the degree of change in language use in schools, a desire to minimize disruption to the status quo. In contrast, educators from more rural areas appear to see the newness, rarity, and challenge of *guaraní académico* more as a potential enhancement to the education they already provide their Guaraní-speaking students. It is a potential that, while not embraced, remains included in the *guaraní-académico/jopará* continuum more common among rural educators. Their perspective seems to hold the academic register as part of a repertoire, a part whose potential has not yet been fully dismissed.

### Conclusion

More than being over the kind of Guaraní being used in schools, the current struggle seems to be over the degree to which the language is incorporated into the curriculum and the degree to which this incorporation might represent an additional academic challenge for students who have traditionally spoken the language of greater access and power—that is to say, the degree to which the incorporation of Guaraní into school challenges the advantages Spanish speaking students have traditionally enjoyed. The formal incorporation of both languages into public education undoubtedly represents improvement in access for Guaraní dominant children to both literacy and knowledge. If, as the educators allege, *guaraní académico* is not overly challenging to rural children, while it is so for urban children, its use (and evaluation for promotion) in school

might represent an upset to the advantages urban children have usually had. The current study is not comprehensive enough to warrant such a conclusion, but it seems worth wondering whether the dispute over two varieties of Guaraní is more about the degree to which current Paraguayan language policy in education unsettles the long-established distribution of power among socioeconomic groups, and not so much about whether or not teachers teach new Guaraní words that many people have never heard of.

It seems likely that Señora Gonzalez’ commentary was not unfounded: there is a fight between Paraguayans of different social circumstances over the deeply rooted paradox of a language that is both an object of national pride and one of social stigma. A fight brought on by uncertain times, its lightning rod is a policy for language in education that takes at face value this national bilingual identity.

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