Katherine S. Mortimer

Communicative event chains in an ethnography of Paraguayan language policy

Abstract: Language policy texts, talk and practices are situated in specific socio-cultural contexts, yet they also seem to move across time and social space: an official text drafted in governmental chambers may be discussed in teachers' professional development and instantiated in classroom practice. Drawing on linguistic anthropological work showing how communicative signs circulate among contexts to constitute such phenomena as culture and identity (Agha 2007; Agha and Wortham 2005; Urban 2001; Wortham 2005), this article offers an account of language policy implementation as a constellation of communicative events connected to each other through their use of the same cultural forms. These chains of communicative events link people together as they become first receivers and then senders of some message (Agha 2007), in this case messages about what it means to be a Guarani speaker. Drawing on data from an ethnographic study of language policy in Paraguay, where all schoolchildren are to learn in both official languages, Spanish and Guarani, I trace two widely circulating images of the Guarani speaker as they appear in policy text, in educators' talk about policy and in practice as one way to make salient connections between texts and actors' interpretations of policy at various levels. Analysis reveals that educators bring to their appropriation of policy a meaning of the Guarani speaker that is not evident in policy text alone.

Keywords: ethnography; language policy; Paraguay; identity

Katherine S. Mortimer: University of Texas at El Paso. E-mail: ksmortimer@utep.edu

1 Introduction

Es un poco lo que nos identifica, el guaraní es lo que nos identifica aquí en todo el mundo
'It is kind of what identifies us, Guarani is what identifies us here in all the world'

Mis padres, hablando en guaraní y prohibiéndome a mí, verdad, 'guaranga y maleducada, estás hablando en guaraní, grosera' [dijeron]
'My parents, speaking in Guarani and prohibiting me, right, "*guaranga* and impolite, you're speaking in Guarani, rude" [they said]'

This supervisor of teacher training from the Paraguayan Ministry of Education expressed two very different senses of what it means to be a speaker of Guarani. In one sense it means one is a Paraguayan, like all other Paraguayans and different from others in the world. It is a source of pride. In another sense, Guarani speaking means one is impolite and rude, like people who are *guarango/a* – meaning ignorant and from the countryside. The supervisor expressed these two senses of the Guarani speaker in her explanation of Paraguayan national educational language policy, which since 1992, has officially required the use of this autochthonous language in schools where it had been prohibited before. These two images of a Guarani speaker are readily recognized by Paraguayans and often deployed in discourse about the language, about language policy and bilingual education. People say of both that they are part of Paraguayan culture.

In doing so, they are observing consistencies in cultural meaning across time and space. They are using these images to perceive similarity across otherwise disparate contexts – this is how a multitude of moments of meaning making can be perceived as something unified, as culture. These same kinds of cultural images and the communicative events through which they travel from one person to the next can be used to understand connections in other meaning making processes. The appropriation (Levinson and Sutton 2001) of educational language policy is one such process. As much current research shows, language policy texts, discourses and practices are situated in specific sociocultural contexts, but they also move through time and social space – an official text drafted in governmental chambers may be discussed in teachers' professional development and instantiated in some classroom practice – and people draw upon elements of each new context to make meaning of policy. Yet this movement is neither linear nor unidirectional. A perennial question in language policy research has been how to empirically recover these paths in order to understand the process by which people interpret policy and put it into action. Drawing on linguistic anthropological work showing how communicative signs circulate among contexts to constitute such phenomena as culture and identity (Agha 2007; Agha and Wortham 2005; Urban 2001; Wortham 2005), this article offers an account of language policy implementation as a constellation of communicative events connected to each other through their use of the same cultural forms. I focus on two widely circulating images of the Guarani speaker and follow them as they appear in policy texts, talk about policy, and practice in an effort to make salient connections between texts and actors' interpretations of policy.

2 Educational language policy as sociocultural and discursive practice

Educational language policy, or policy regarding language as both medium *and* object of instruction in schools, and its appropriation are understood here as practice (Levinson and Sutton 2001) comprising normative decision making at multiple spatial, temporal, and social scales. This perspective foregrounds processes of meaning making, whether during the formulation of a policy text or its interpretation by those charged with implementing it. The meaning made of policy texts, decisions made accordingly, and actions taken in schools and elsewhere, then, constitute educational language policy as much as the official, state-produced texts with which they are associated. As the notion of practice implies, policy is thus more "things people do" – social action – than a thing itself. Following recent language policy scholarship (Hornberger 1996; Hornberger and Johnson 2007; Johnson 2009; McCarty 2011; Menken and García 2010; Ricento and Hornberger 1996; Shohamy 2006; Stritikus and Wiese 2006; Valdiviezo 2009), this research strives to make the process and practice of policy interpretation more visible.

Much of the action that constitutes policy is discursive, both in the sense that it comprises talk and written text and in the sense that it comprises normative frames through which experience can be understood and constituted.[1] Research that views policy as discourses (Bacchi 2000; Ball 1993) and as ideological (Blommaert 2006; Ricento 2006; Shohamy 2006; Tollefson 2002) calls attention to its non-neutral representations of problems, people, activities, knowledge, languages and skills. Official educational language policy text is a statement about the uses, users, forms and contexts of language. It often articulates a description of "the educated person" and the character traits that are desirable in a society or at least some sector of it, the nature of particular languages and their place in the social and cultural capital that is considered valuable, and the ideal shape of discursive interaction in classrooms and schools. Educational language policy explicitly or implicitly describes the social contour of language use (Agha 2007) – how culturally recognizable language forms (e.g., "standard American English")

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1 These two senses are captured in Gee's (1999) distinction between discourse, meaning "stretches of language", and Discourse, meaning "socially accepted associations among ways of using language, of thinking, valuing, acting, and interacting" (Gee 1999: 17). This latter sense of discourse also comes from the work of Foucault (1978), Bourdieu (1972, 1991) and others. I use "policy talk" to refer to talk about policy – representations of and commentary upon policy – and "policy discourses" to refer to normative frames of social life that are embedded in policy and policy talk.

are linked to culturally recognizable types of people (e.g., "honor roll student") and activities (e.g., "reading instruction") in an educational context (Wortham 2006). It is not, of course, a neutral description, but an authoritative characterization based on some set of language ideologies (Silverstein 1979; and edited volumes by Schieffelin et al. 1998; Kroskrity 2000), "on images of 'societally desirable' forms of language use and of the 'ideal' linguistic landscape of society, in turn often derived from larger sociopolitical ideologies" (Blommaert 2006: 244). As an effort to manage these images, language policy is an effort – tacit or overt – to produce and regulate identities, with policymaking bodies attempting to govern the linkages between language, people and country.

In interpreting policy text, educators must make some meaning of the particular languages, activities, and types of people concerned. This "appropriation is a kind of taking of policy and making it one's own" (Levinson and Sutton 2001: 3) through the sense-making process. People make sense of the world around them by perceiving signs of various kinds (e.g., a word, a symbol, an action, an accent, a hairstyle) and locating them in relation to relevant aspects of context (Agha 2007; Garfinkel 1967; Gee 1999; Gumperz 1982; Peirce 1992; Silverstein 1976). People's knowledge of and experience in the social world, as well as clues within the text, guide their determination of what is relevant. By locating a sign in context, people are able to generate one meaning, among all possible meanings, for a sign. For example, when the Paraguayan constitution states that "*la enseñaza en los comienzos del proceso escolar se realizará en la lengua oficial materna [castellano o guaraní] del educando*" 'instruction in the beginning of the schooling process will occur in the official language [Castilian[2] or Guarani] that is the student's mother tongue' (Paraguay 1992a) people generate some understanding of the activity of "instruction", the language forms of "Castilian" and "Guarani", and the identity of "the student" using meanings of these signs that circulate socially, both locally and more widely in terms of space and immediately and more enduringly in terms of time. They use circulating models of social life (Agha 2007; Gee 1999; Wortham 2006) or Discourses (Gee 1999) to understand which of all the things teachers do in teaching constitutes "instruction"; which of all the international, national, regional, local varieties of Spanish constitutes "Castilian" here; which of all the Indigenous, national, regional and local varieties of this autochthonous language of Paraguay constitutes "Guarani"; and which

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2 In Paraguay, the term *castellano* is generally used to refer to an unspecified variety of Spanish. The term *español* is also used. I have translated *castellano* as Castilian, though this English term should not be taken to mean a particular variety of Spanish from central Spain, Standard Peninsular Spanish from Spain, or any other specific variety. I am using it in the same way that Paraguayans use *castellano*, i.e., to indicate Spanish in general.

of all the kinds of children who attend schools with varying and multiple language proficiencies constitutes the Guarani-speaking or the Spanish-speaking student. The meanings that people make when they interpret educational language policy at one particular level are consequential for articulations of policy at other levels, and ultimately, for practice – for the decisions that administrators and teachers and students make in schools and classrooms about who speaks what languages when, where and how.

3 Movement of meanings along chains of communicative events

In Paraguay, as elsewhere, higher levels of language policy are fleshed out at lower levels in texts and in talk: in national education law, national curricula, teacher training programs and professional development workshops, regional supervisory offices, principals' guidance, and in schools and classrooms. At each level and in each context, sense is made of policy through reference to other elements of that sociocultural context. Policy's seeming movement across contexts is not so much the movement of objects as it is the movement or circulation of consistent sign-meaning relationships – the whos, whats and hows "specified" in policy. Agha (2007) describes how a particular meaning comes to be shared by an increasing number of people through the very act of deploying that meaning in interaction. This happens through what he calls speech chains, or series of speech events in which people are first receivers of some message and then senders of it, passing on the meaning – here, a particular type of person – to others who then continue to pass it on, much like the children's game of "telephone".

   Over time and space, continuity of meaning is created and the individuals become linked together through their membership in this "speech chain network". As Agha notes, "co-membership in a speech chain network depends not on knowing one another but on having something common in one's discursive history" (Agha 2007: 67). Some events of transmission involve only two individuals in face-to-face interaction, but others involve the transmission of meaning from a mass media source or widely disseminated document (like a national constitution or national educational curriculum) or a public lecture (like a teacher training seminar). Chains of communicative events can then form across diverse kinds of events involving two people or hundreds or thousands of people and all the people to which they might convey that meaning thereafter. This can happen quickly across moments or days or slowly across years or centuries. Thus individuals in very disparate places and times may share a similar understanding

of the meaning of some sign. Just as in the game of telephone, however, sign-meaning relationships are often altered in transmission because of changes in context – location, personal histories of individuals involved, etc. In linguistic anthropological work (Silverstein 1992; Silverstein and Urban 1996) as well as work in Critical Discourse Analysis (e.g., Wodak and Fairclough 2010) this movement of signs across contexts – and the sedimentation or transformation of their meanings – is discussed in terms of recontextualization. As signs are recontextualized along communicative event chains, meanings may retain a high degree of continuity, or emergent meanings may develop.

Ethnography is well-suited to the task of tracing these chains, because they are located in social interaction. Observational notes, recorded interaction, interview transcripts, and documents can provide evidence of these events. But as Agha (2007) points out, recovering these chains empirically seems problematic unless the ethnographer actually observes events of transmission. An alternative way of tracing the circulation of a message is by observing what he calls the "virtual model" of a chain of communicative events. This is the way one event (e.g., an interviewee's representation of official language policy to the researcher) describes its relation to other communicative events in which that meaning was transmitted. For example, one teacher in this study tied her understanding of current national educational language policy to the way it was represented in recent professional development seminars, establishing a virtual model of a speech chain connecting the teacher to professional development trainers. Studying these virtual models is one way of empirically recovering the paths of cultural meanings.

Evidence of a chain of communicative events might also be detected by observing patterns in the meaning of a cultural form as it appears in different social domains. As cultural forms are transmitted from person to person in interactions, their meanings may remain stable or new meanings may emerge as subsequent forms become fractionally incongruent – or exhibit change in some aspects and not others – with their antecedents (Agha 2007). Congruence – or stability – of meaning points to some common discursive history. Agha cites words that describe a type of person, a type of language use, or a type of other behavior as "devices which, by their linguistic design, are pre-eminently capable of circulation through social space and of creating unities among disparate events" (Agha 2007: 74). Language policy is rife with these kinds of typifications (e.g., here, "Guarani speaker", "pure Guarani" or "coordinated bilingualism"). It should be possible then to gain some understanding of the relationships among policy texts, policy discourse, and the practice of policy by tracing such typifications as they show up in various contexts and levels – that is, tracing the meaning of something like "Guarani speaker" as it appears in policy texts, educators' formu-

lations of policy, and their practices in the classroom. As noted above, the meaning of Guarani speaker can maintain some congruence with previous usages while exhibiting differences, as it is recontextualized. Observing these kinds of fractional congruences across moments of use can provide information about the movement of a cultural form across social space and time (Agha 2007; Rymes 2009), and, I argue here, about the way educational language policy is shaped as it moves as well.

4. Research context and methods

Over 80% of Paraguayans speak Guarani, about 50% speak Spanish, and some of each group speak both, as more than half of Paraguayans are bilingual (Paraguay DGEEC 2002). Guarani usage is more heavily concentrated in rural areas, while bilingualism and Spanish monolingualism are more common in urban areas. A number of scholars have observed that where both languages are spoken, some functional specialization of the languages obtains with Guarani preferred for domestic, informal and oral contexts and Spanish preferred for public, formal and written contexts (Choi 1998; Corvalán 1982; Pic-Gillard 2004; Rubin 1968; Solé 1991). While Paraguayan Guarani[3] is a language of Indigenous origin, it is now spoken largely by non-Indigenous people; it is a "*lengua indígena colonizada* [a colonized Indigenous language]" (Melià 2004). Guarani was the predominant language spoken by the mestizo population that descended from unions between Spanish conquistadores and Guarani women. Since Paraguayan independence in 1811, the national government has both promoted and proscribed its use, contributing to its complex and contradictory contemporary social value. Nationalist dictators extolled Guarani and used it as a means to foment support for defense of national territory in conflicts with neighboring states and to consolidate political control by appealing to the Guarani-speaking masses (Gynan 2001). Political liberalist governments led by Spanish-speaking elites prohibited Guarani in schools and propagated racist ideologies that equated Guarani with being uncivilized (Nickson 2009). In the second half of the 20th century, political discourse of the nationalist Colorado Party led by General Alfredo Stroessner used

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3 Throughout this paper, I use "Guarani" as a non-specific term to refer to varieties of the language used by a majority of Paraguayans, including everyday spoken Paraguayan Guarani (characterized by various degrees of borrowing from Spanish, seldom written) and academic Guarani (the variety taught in schools, characterized by little borrowing). While Indigenous varieties of Guarani are spoken in Paraguay and other varieties are spoken in Bolivia, Brazil and Argentina, these varieties are not discussed in this paper.

Guarani to render invisible increasing disparity between rich and poor: "The spurious argument 'rich and poor alike, we are all the same as we all speak Guarani' ... [and] the exaltation of the Guarani language in its political discourse served as a unifying factor that reinforced patron-client relations, thereby masking the rapidly emerging inequalities in income and wealth" (Nickson 2009: 7). The result has been that even as Guarani became officially recognized as a national language in 1967, subsequently taught in some high schools as a subject, and all the while publicly praised as a symbol of Paraguayan identity, it continued to be socially stigmatized, particularly in urban settings. Contemporary language ideologies about Spanish and Guarani in Paraguay remain antinomic, as evidenced in the opening quotations in this paper.

Despite its consistent use in daily life throughout Paraguayan history, Guarani was only granted official status in 1992 with a new constitution and transition from dictatorship to democracy. This constitution declares Paraguay a bilingual nation, recognizes Spanish and Guarani as official languages, and mandates mother-tongue and bilingual education for all students throughout the country. A major educational reform in 1994 and subsequent policy issued program designs, materials, and training for the implementation of national bilingual education. Officially the policy offers two *modalidades* 'modalities' or program designs: one for speakers of Guarani as a mother tongue, *Guaranihablantes* 'Guarani speakers', and one for speakers of Spanish as a mother tongue, or *hispanohablantes* 'Spanish speakers'. In both program designs both languages are to be used as both a language of instruction and a subject of instruction, albeit in different proportions (Paraguay MEC 2000). Though begun in over one hundred schools, the modality for *guaranihablantes* (MGH) has been abandoned in all but a small handful of schools. The vast majority of schools officially use the modality for *hispanohablantes* (MHH).

Data used to illustrate the movement of meanings across policy contexts come from a year-long ethnographic research project conducted in the Central Department of Paraguay, about 14 kilometers outside the capital city of Asunción. They include nearly 500 hours of participant observation within a single district, evenly divided across two focal communities and their elementary schools: one urban school in the center of town and one rural school, at the outskirts of the district. These two communities were only about seven miles apart, but they differed in several important respects: socioeconomic status, level of education, economic activity, and language use. Members of the urban community tended to be middle class, have more formal education (through high school, and in some cases university), and work in industries dependent upon the urban center (e.g., military, beauty salons, jewelry stores, small businesses). And they were more likely to be Spanish dominant. Members of the rural community were more likely

to be working class or poor and have less formal education (often only through the sixth grade). They tended to be employed as laborers, domestic employees, or as gatherers of medicinal herbs, which they sold on the streets of the business center. And they tended to be Guarani dominant.

For the illumination of communicative event chains across policy contexts in this paper, I trace the movement of two types of the Guarani speaker across multiple levels of policy text and talk about policy. I draw on language policy documents (for data on policy text), observations/field notes and videorecordings of classroom and school interaction (for data on practice), and interviews with the following ten people (for data on policy talk and practice): an official at the national Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), two former MEC officials, the two regional MEC supervisors in charge of teacher training and oversight (one in charge of the urban school and one in charge of the rural school), one regional MEC teacher trainer who trains teachers at the rural school, principals of both the rural and urban schools, and the sixth grade teachers at both the rural and the urban schools. Interviews were conducted in participants' workplaces (office, classroom, etc.) at a time of their choosing and were audiorecorded and transcribed. In most cases only the participant and researcher were present. I used qualitative research software (Atlas.ti) to code excerpts of interview transcripts and field notes in which participants discuss language policy and the use of Guarani and Spanish for patterns in what it means to be a Guarani speaker: that is, patterns in discursive linkage between the quality of speaking Guarani and other qualities of a person such as rural or urban residence, level of education, patriotism, etc. I attend to features of the talk and practice that point to which culturally circulating types of the Guarani speaker are indexed and which features of those types are made relevant.

5 Circulating types of the Guarani speaker in Paraguay

I focus here on two particular types that circulate widely in Paraguayan culture: the Guarani-speaking Paraguayo/a and the Guarani-speaking Guarango/a. Both typifications emerged as salient from a variety of data sources and across participants in the larger study. These are, of course, not the only images of the Guarani speaker available in Paraguay, but as particularly common and longstanding identities they are important and illustrative, and they align in interesting ways with different ways of using Guarani in the classroom.

5.1 The *guarango/a*

The *guarango/a* is a type of person frequently mentioned by adults when they talk about speaking Guarani, particularly in the past. This kind of person is perceived as Guarani speaking and non-Spanish speaking (i.e., in this context, a speaker of Guarani as a mother tongue), from a rural area, ignorant/uneducated, uncultured/rude, and someone who is embarrassed/mocked/ashamed. Many adults in both urban and rural communities say that their parents and teachers cautioned them not to speak Guarani when they were young so as not to be perceived as a *guarango/a*. One urban community member said, "*antes se prohibía [hablar el guaraní], si tu hijo habla el guaraní es como sea del campo, le decían guarango*" 'before [speaking Guarani] was prohibited, if your son speaks Guarani it is as if he is from the countryside, they called him *guarango*'. While most participants maintain that this term is no longer used as an epithet, and some evidence suggests that its meaning may be less negative now (Mortimer 2009), this prototypical Guarani speaker still circulates in educators' talk about educational language policy. For example, the teacher of the urban sixth grade classroom explained, "*Ahora nos obliga usar los dos [idiomas en la enseñanza], antes no. Mis padres no me hablaron en guaraní. Entre ellos, sí, pero no nos hablaron en guaraní. Dijeron 'no seas guarango'*" 'Now we have to use both [languages in teaching], before no. My parents did not speak to me in Guarani. Between each other, yes, but they did not speak to us in Guarani. They said "don't be *guarango*"'. Like this teacher, many people link decisions to not speak Guarani to this negatively valued image of the Guarani speaker. Evidence that *guarango/a* type of Guarani speaker is being indexed in a given instance includes references to ruralness and to ignorance, as well as use of the term *guarango/a* itself.

5.2 The *Paraguayo/a*

A second pervasive image of the Guarani speaker is the *Paraguayo/a*, or, a Paraguayan. A *Paraguayo/a*, while primarily understood as someone from the country of Paraguay, is often defined as someone who necessarily speaks Guarani. For example, when asked if he often speaks in Guarani, a sixth grade student replied, "*Sí, por supuesto, como soy Paraguayo*" 'yes, of course, since I'm Paraguayan'. The Paraguayanness of someone who does not speak Guarani is questioned, as in this comment by urban teenager: "*¿Cómo que no sabes nada del guaraní y sos Paraguaya?*" 'How do you know nothing of Guarani and you are Paraguayan?'. And a Guarani speaker is recognized as necessarily Paraguayan (even though other varieties of Guarani are spoken in neighboring countries), as in one of the

opening quotes by the MEC supervisor: "*Es un poco lo que nos identifica, el guaraní es lo que nos identifica aquí en todo en mundo*" 'It is kind of what identifies us, Guarani is what identifies us here in all the world'. This positively valued image of the Guarani-speaking Pararaguayo/a is evoked with pride in performances of national identity: folkloric festivals, celebrations of Independence Day and important national cultural holidays, political campaigns, signage at international points of contact (e.g., the airport), discussions of Paraguayan culture, and reportedly, when Paraguayans meet each other abroad. It is commonly deployed in schools, in daily conversation, and in various contexts of educational language policy, from the national constitution to classroom interaction. And most importantly for this analysis, it appears widely in educational language policy texts, discourse, and practice. Evidence of reference to the *Paraguayo/a* type of Guarani speaker includes discursive linkages to the Paraguayan nation and national identity, including use of the term *Paraguayo/a*.

6 Tracing *guarango/a* and *Paraguayo/a* through educational language policy text

Tracing the meaning of Guarani speaking across levels of policy text, talk and practice makes evident policy's reliance on circulating cultural images of kinds of people for interpretability. It locates policy in various levels of cultural context – from the national to the regional to the institutional to the classroom and helps to reveal the fact that the whos, whats and hows described in language policy are constituted not through policy text alone but through the same process of interpretation we use to make sense of any other cultural text. Articles 77 and 140 of the Paraguayan national constitution of 1992 comprise the longest standing contemporary national official language policy. They read as follows:

> *Artículo 77 – De la enseñanza en la lengua materna. La enseñanza en los comienzos del proceso escolar se realizará en la lengua oficial materna del educando. Se instruirá asimismo en el conocimiento y en el empleo de ambos idiomas oficiales de la República.*
> 'Article 77 – On instruction in the mother tongue. Instruction at the beginning of the schooling process shall be in the official language that is the mother tongue of the student. Likewise, he/she shall be instructed in the knowledge and use of both official languages of the Republic.'

> *Artículo 140 – De los idiomas. El Paraguay es un país pluricultural y bilingüe. Son idiomas oficiales el castellano y el guaraní. La ley establecerá las modalidades de utilización de uno y otro.*

'Article 140 – On languages. Paraguay is a pluricultural and bilingual country. Castilian and Guarani are the official languages. The law will establish the manners of use of one and the other.' (Paraguay 1992a)

These two articles have provided the basis for subsequently articulated policy specifically governing education and for the national curricula used by teachers to design their lesson plans. They offer very little specificity regarding which people, languages, activities, and contexts are concerned. In declaring Guarani an official language of Paraguay, Article 140 links the language to the Paraguayan nation, and thus Paraguayans may be understood as Guarani (and Castilian) speakers and Guarani speakers as Paraguayans. This is not to say that the constitution specifies that all Guarani speakers are Paraguayans – rather, that in linking Guarani speaking with the group of people and institutions called the country of Paraguay, the constitution guides policy appropriators toward (makes relevant) circulating types of Guarani speakers that are defined as Paraguayan.

Article 77 describes Guarani both as one of the official languages of the Republic (again linking it with the nation) and as a language of instruction and a subject of instruction – thus providing some specificity as to its uses in school. It also refers to a type of student whose mother tongue is Guarani (as well as another type of student whose mother tongue is Castilian). Beyond these links, however, the constitution leaves much unspecified as to how to interpret the whos, whats and hows of using Guarani in education. For example, exactly what is to be considered a student's mother tongue is not identified: the first language to which a child was exposed, a child's currently dominant language, the language used most frequently by the child's caretakers in addressing him/her, or the language with which a child socially identifies, etc. In a bilingual/multilingual context, any of these may be difficult to determine (Khubchandani 2003; Skutnabb-Kangas 1981). This question of what language, as well as other whos and hows, is left to subsequent written policy and to those who appropriate it.

Beyond the constitution, four other policy documents further specify Paraguayan educational language policy. *Ley 28 del 1992* 'Law 28 of 1992' (Paraguay 1992b) and *La Ley General de Educación (1998)* 'The General Law of 1998' (Paraguay 1998) are national laws passed by the legislature. *El Programa de Estudio* 'The Program of Studies' (Paraguay MEC 1997) is the document detailing national curriculum, and there is one for each grade level. *La Educación Bilingüe en la Reforma Educativa* 'Bilingual Education in the Educational Reform' (Paraguay MEC 2000, 2004, 2006) (EBRE, hereafter) is a document produced by the MEC describing in detail the way Spanish and Guarani are to be used in education. Movement of increasingly specific messages about who Guarani speakers are and how Guarani is to be used in school can be traced through these documents.

Like the constitution, lower level policy texts contain messages about the official status of Guarani and its mandatory use as a subject of instruction. With one exception (Law 28), they specify that Guarani is to be used as a language of instruction as well. They all link Guarani and the national identity, thereby indexing the *Paraguayo/a*. For example, the Program of Studies[4] begins with a statement that a Paraguayan education "*busca afirmar la identidad de la nación paraguaya y de sus culturas*" 'seeks to affirm the identity of the Paraguayan nation and its cultures' (Paraguay MEC 1997: 9). It gives as the first reason for bilingual education "*reafirmar y valorizar el patrimonio lingüístico y cultural del Paraguay*" 'to reaffirm and valorize the linguistic and cultural patrimony of Paraguay' (Paraguay MEC 1997: 27), linking the speaking of Guarani (and Spanish) directly to the Paraguayan nation and to *Paraguayos/as*. That Guarani can be interpreted as a sign of Paraguayan national identity, the *Paraguayo/a*, is a message that runs through all of the policy texts. Some of the later texts (Law 1.264 and EBRE) formulate a virtual link to the constitution by mentioning it as the basis of the policy they describe. For example, EBRE begins with a background section stating that the implementation of bilingual education in Paraguay is grounded in several facts, including:

> La consideración del Castellano y del Guaraní como lenguas oficiales del Estado Paraguayo. . .[y] Las disposiciones legales con relación a la obligatoriedad de la enseñanza en lengua materna
> 'The consideration of Castilian and Guarani as official languages of the Paraguayan State . . . [and] The legal resolutions regarding the obligatory nature of mother tongue instruction' (Paraguay MEC 2000: 4–5)

In subsequent explanations of these facts this document names constitutional Articles 140 and 77, respectively, thereby claiming a connection to the constitution. This is a claim for legitimacy as well as a formulation of a virtual chain purporting the existence of some kind of communicative event or events in which the messages in the constitution were made available for use in this subsequent policy. The congruence in the meaning of Guarani speaker as a *Paraguayo/a* provides further evidence of this communicative event chain – that is, that these policy texts from various levels share a common discursive history.

Evidence of the *guarango/a* identity is not as salient in these policy texts. Still, though it is absent in the constitution, it surfaces subtly in other documents. As mentioned above, the constitution implicitly refers to a speaker of Guarani as

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4 Programs of Studies exist for each grade level. The Program to which I refer here is that for the sixth grade, since that was the focal grade of this study. The introductory matter is not specific to grade level, however.

a mother tongue, but the Program of Studies and EBRE refer to this kind of person explicitly as the *guaranihablante* 'Guarani speaker', distinguishing it from another kind of person, the *hispanohablante* 'Spanish speaker'. The Program of Studies, issued in 1997, does not describe how this is to be defined or determined, leaving that up to MEC officials, administrators and teachers. The EBRE, first issued in 2000, does specify that the mother tongue will be defined as "*aquella en la que el niño o la niña tiene mayor competencia oral al ingresar a la escuela (puede ser el castellano o el guaraní)*" 'that in which the boy or girl has greater oral competence upon entering school (it can be Castilian or Guarani)' (Paraguay MEC 2000: 7) and that this will be determined by a "*test de competencia lingüística*" 'test of linguistic competence'. However, all of the educators participating in this study referred only to the earlier Program of Studies as the source of educational language policy, and they did not mention the EBRE. None of the overtly negative features of *guarango/a* are present, only this feature of speaking Guarani as a mother tongue. The meanings of the Guarani speaker and of the *guaranihablante* are still relatively indeterminate in these policy documents. And any underlying chain of communicative events connecting the policy texts to each other and to subsequent policy talk is not yet recoverable. Only when placed in context with clues to their meaning in policy talk, does substantial congruence emerge that permits the assumption of shared discursive history.

7 Tracing *Guarango/a* and *Paraguayo/a* through educational language policy talk

The message that a Guarani speaker is a *Paraguayo/a*, as well as the message that a Guarani speaker is a *guarango/a* are more salient in policy talk. The linking of Guarani with national identity is present in some way in all the interviews. Most cite Guarani as an official language of the nation, and many index Paraguayanness with the use of the first person plural pronoun. For example, the principal of the urban school described her goal in using Guarani in school: "*que conozcan nuestros raices . . . lo que es nuestro . . . que ellos conozcan nuestro nuestra identidad, nuestra cultura, nuestras costumbres, el folklore paraguayo dentro de todo lo que, este, es la parte del guaraní*" 'that they know our roots . . . that which is ours . . . that they know our our identity our culture our customs the folklore of Paraguay within all that, well, is the part/subject of Guarani.' Many educators refer to Guarani simply as "*nuestro idioma*" 'our language', and though both Spanish and Guarani are spoken, "*nuestro idioma*" almost never means Spanish. A regional teacher trainer for the MEC grounded her explanation of the use of Guarani in schools in its new status as an official language:

*[cuando] empezamos con la democracia se buscó un poco la forma de que el Paraguay real-
mente sea un país bilingüe coordinado porque eso- no se pudo llegar a un bilingüismo coordi-
nado por el hecho de que fue marginado ese idioma[guaraní], una vez que terminó eso se
propuso y al nivel legal y de ley, hoy día tenemos que- la constitución nos ampara como dos
idiomas oficiales y al pasar hacer dos idiomas oficiales tenemos idiomas oficiales el guaraní y
el español*

'[when] we began with democracy a way was sort of sought that Paraguay could truly be a
coordinate bilingual country because that- a coordinate bilingualism could not be achieved
because of the fact that that language [Guarani] was marginalized, once that was done it
[Guarani] was proposed at the legal level and in law, today we have to- the constitution
protects for us two official languages and in making two official languages we have Guarani
and Spanish as official languages.'

She identifies Guarani as an official language belonging to "us" Paraguayans,
and she formulates a virtual communicative event chain between educators who
are now using Guarani in school and the constitution that made it possible/
mandatory to do so. Her and other interviewees' linkages between Guarani speak-
ing and the national constitution, national identity, official, national status and
"we" Paraguayans place Guarani speaking in a *national* context and identify the
Guarani speaker as a *Paraguayo/a*, and the *Paraguayo/a* as a Guarani speaker.
The congruence in meaning across these instances of policy talk is evidence of
the virtual chain linking this talk to the constitution and the other policy docu-
ments that contain this meaning of the Guarani speaker.

However, all the interviews also linked Guarani speaking with the *guarango/a*
type of person. Most formulate Guarani as spoken by people in rural areas (*el
interior)*, and by contrast, Spanish as spoken by people in urban areas (*la capital*):

*somos una zona que estamos muy próxima a la capital y donde estamos en una zona urbana
donde- se necesita pero si nuestros niños fueran a al interior a un lugar realmente donde
hayan guaranihablantes, este, no habría tan fluida comunicación . . . en nuestro ambiente no
es muy práctico comunicarse en el guaraní*

'we are a zone that is very close to the capital and where we are in an urban zone where- it
[Guarani] is needed but if our children went to to the interior to a place where truly there
were Guarani speakers well there wouldn't be very fluid communication . . . in our environ-
ment it's not very practical to communicate in Guarani' (Director of the urban school).

*los de la capital los asuncenos parecía pegarse mas a la lengua española . . . pero sus padres,
abuelas hablaban el guaraní también el jopará*

'the people from the capital the Asuncionites seems like they stuck more to the Spanish
language . . . but their parents, grandparents [who typically live in the countryside] spoke
Guarani also Jopará [a mix of the two languages]' (MEC supervisor for the rural school).

*yo pienso que en cualquiera de los trabajos [se] va a necesitar si nuestra gente sigue hablando
el idioma guaraní porque en el interior hay lugares en donde solo el guaraní se habla*

'I think that in any of the jobs [Guarani] will be necessary if our people continue speaking the Guarani language because in the interior there are places where only Guarani is spoken' (Urban sixth grade teacher)

The director of the urban school makes clear with her use of *guaranihablante* that such a person, a Guarani-speaker, does not also speak Spanish. The urban sixth grade teacher conveys a similar meaning when she grounds the need for Guarani by urban residents in the possibility that they might travel to rural areas where people are presumed to be Guarani, but not Spanish, speakers. Participants are describing a different kind of Guarani speaking in these excerpts than in those in which they referred to Paraguayan national identity – Guarani speaking is identified with a rural type of person when Guarani alone (and not Spanish) is spoken. These are two of the most salient descriptors of the *guarango/a* type: Guarani speaking and non-Spanish speaking. Linked with rural origin, they point strongly to this typification.

Their references to the *guarango/a* identity were not only implicit, but also explicit. All spontaneously described the association between Guarani and an ignorant, lower class type of person. Some even named the *guarango/a* type. Most position themselves in opposition to this association (i.e., other people think this) or assert that the association was made in the past but is not now. The MEC regional teacher trainer says that "*en la epoca de la dictadura [hablar el guaraní] era como gente baja*" 'in the era of the dictatorship [1954–1989] [speaking Guarani] was like low-class people.' The MEC official described the historical association between Spanish and the small group of bourgeoisie and Guarani and the large lower class in colonial Paraguay, but added that that pattern has lived on in the present day. The urban director describes an attitude among some of the parents at her school regarding the use of Guarani in school:

Todavía está instalada la cultura verdad de que no es correcto hablar en guaraní en público en el cumpleaños . . . hay un poco de eso dentro de los padres que anteriormente se tenía verdad ese concepto de que el guaraní era del guarango
'it is still part of the culture right that it is not proper to speak in Guarani in public at birthday parties . . . there is a little of that in the parents who before had the idea that Guarani was of the guarango'

And the rural sixth grade teacher finds that the same association is made among parents at her school:

No quieren que sus hijos hablen el guaraní como ellos, ellos dicen che- que yo no me fui a la escuela, no me fui al colegio y soy ignorante porque hablo el guaraní. Consideran así y no quieren que sus hijos hablen el guaraní porque van a ser ignorante como el, como la mamá o el papá

'they don't want their children to speak Guarani like them, they say *che-* [first person singular pronoun in Guarani] that I didn't go to elementary school, I didn't go to high school, and I am ignorant because I speak Guarani. They view it like that, and they don't want their children to speak Guarani because they will be ignorant like the, like the mother or father.'

As educators talked about language policy in their specific contexts, they provided a fuller picture of the meaning of Guarani speaker than is evident in the policy texts. Like the discourse in policy texts, the characterizations of Guarani speakers and of Guarani by these educators demonstrate clear linkages between Guarani speaking and the *Paraguayo/a* identity. But they also specify much more completely than do the texts the link between Guarani speaking and the *guarango/a* identity. Explicitly, speakers align themselves with the identification of the Guarani speaker as *Paraguayo/a*, while they generally reject the identification of the Guarani speaker as *guarango/a*. Some claim that this latter identification is no longer made – it once was but not anymore. Others claim that other people still make this identification, but that they themselves do not.

Nevertheless, that a Guarani speaker can be interpreted as someone who is ignorant, non-Spanish speaking, rural, and low class forms part of their discourse about the policy of teaching Guarani and teaching in Guarani in schools. In their deployment of this typification, they usually formulate virtual models of communicative event chains between themselves and their teachers and parents through which that term came to be known and understood, and through which associations between Guarani and ruralness, non-Spanish-speakingness, ignorance solidified and came to signal for them a type of person with all those qualities. For example, like the urban teacher quoted above whose parents told her not to speak Guarani because it was *guarango*, the rural director said that, "*ellos anteriormente, nosotros no hablabamos guaraní en la escuela porque decían que eramos groseros, en mi epoca de escuela era así*" 'They [the adults at school] before, we didn't speak Guarani at school because they said that we were rude, in my day in school it was like that'. She refers to the communicative events through which she came to understand that a Guarani speaker was a rude kind of person, and having at other times defined guarango simply as *grosero* 'rude', she links Guarani speaking to a *guarango* kind of person.

Table 1 shows the fractional congruence of meanings of the Guarani speaker across policy texts and talk. This graphic representation more clearly shows that there is a difference between meanings of the Guarani speaker in policy text and in policy talk. References to the Guarani speaker as *Paraguayo/a* are present in both.

	Paraguayo/a				Guarango/a			
	Guarani as official language	Guarani as part of national identity	Guarani and the national constitution	Nuestro/ nosotros as Paraguayans and Guarani speakers	Guaranihablante as a speaker of Guarani as a mother tongue	Urban people as non-Guarani speakers	Guarani speaker as rural	Guarani speakers as ignorant, low class
Policy Text								
National Constitution	X	X			X			
Law 28	X							
Law 1.264	X	X	X	X				
Program of Studies	X	X		X	X[6]			
Bilingual Education in the Educational Reform (EBRE)	X	X	X	X	X			
Policy Talk								
MEC Official	X			X			(X)[7]	X[8]
Rural MEC supervisor	X	X	X	X	X			(X)
Rural MEC teacher trainer	X	X	X	X	X		X	(X)
Rural Director	X	X		X	X		X	X
Rural sixth grade teacher	X	X		X		X	X	X
Urban MEC supervisor	X			X	X		X	(X)
Urban Director		X		X		X		X
Urban sixth grade teacher	X	X		X	X	X	X	(X)

Table 1: Fractional congruence of meanings of the Guarani speaker across policy text and talk[5]

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5 This table format depicting fractional congruence follows Rymes (2012).

6 In both the Program of Studies and the EBRE, *Guaranihablante* not only assumes that one speaks Guarani as a mother tongue but also that one is a non-Spanish speaker.

7 An (X) in parentheses denotes the presence of this message along with some censure of it or statement that it is not currently done/believed.

8 In this column, an X indicates not necessarily that interviewees understood Guarani speakers as ignorant and low class themselves but that they claimed the existence of this meaning, both in the past and in current day, and they did not specifically condemn it.

That is, both policy texts and educators and others who make sense of them and put them into practice in classrooms assume that the speaking of Guarani, alongside Spanish, indexes a positively valued, proud, patriotic, bilingual national identity. The ideal educated person is someone who speaks Guarani and Spanish. Policy actors ground the instruction of Guarani in schools in the highest level of national law, the constitution, and in their moral obligation, as Paraguayans, to teach, learn and speak "their" language. Examining the presence of this typification of the Guarani speaker across texts and talk shows a high degree of continuity of meaning across levels, and this continuity is empirical evidence of a speech chain network, or some shared discursive history. Further evidence of shared discursive history is offered by virtual models of speech chains between interviewees and policy texts (namely the constitution) present in all but two of the interviews in the form of references to the constitution or to Guarani's status as an official language. While present, the link between Guarani speaking and the Paraguayo/a type is more tenuous for the director and the sixth grade teacher at the rural school, than it is for other interviewees (who all live and/or work in urban areas). In the community of the rural school, where communication is predominantly in Guarani and its use is less marked, there was, indeed, less emphasis on the patriotic value of the language and more on its value for interaction within the community. Tracing the fractional congruence of this type across contexts allows us to see this difference within policy talk, despite the relative continuity of the type between policy documents and talk.

In contrast to this relative continuity, references to the Guarani speaker as *guarango/a* are nearly absent from policy text, but they are present in all the interviews comprising policy talk. This is to say that policy actors are making some sense of the Guarani speaker that is not present in the policy texts – they are understanding a Guarani speaker to be not just a patriotic *Paraguayo/a*, but also sometimes a rude, ignorant, and/or rural person. This is not to claim that the notion of an ignorant, rural Guarani speaker was never part of the discourse, debate, and context of policy formulation, only that clues that people should understand the Guarani speaker as this sort of person were not included in policy documents. Clues that he/she is a *Paraguayo/a* were included, however. Tracing the meaning of the Guarani speaker across both policy texts and talk reveals that policy actors bring to the process of appropriation a meaning that is not evident in text alone.

8 Tracing *Guarango/a* and *Paraguayo/a* through practice

8.1 Identifying students as *hispanohablante* or *guaranihablante*

One of the steps in the appropriation of this policy is the assignment of one of the two bilingual program designs based upon the identification of students as either *hispanohablantes* or *guaranihablantes*. As mentioned above, only the EBRE, first published six years into policy appropriation, specifies how this identification and assignment is to be done, though no participant educators referred to it as a source of policy.[9] When the original 118 schools were selected to implement the program design or modality for *guaranihablantes* (MGH), they were selected by regional MEC supervisors according to their knowledge of what languages were spoken by students there (though, again, not according to any empirical testing) and according to the school's proximity to paved roads in order to facilitate support and monitoring from the MEC. One former MEC official who was involved in the design and initial implementation of the two bilingual program designs characterized the process as "artisanal", based on supervisors' "natural knowledge" of their contexts. Another former MEC official who had also been involved in the process described the supervisors as "*personas que no han sido alfabetizados en guaraní. Muchis- muchisimos de ellos con muchisimo prejuicio hacia el guaraní*" 'people who had not been taught to read and write in Guarani. Man- many of them with much prejudice toward Guarani'. From this representation, we cannot know the meanings they used to interpret "Guarani" or "Guarani speaker" or "*guaranihablante*", but we know that, at the first level of program design assignment, supervisors brought to the decision making process their own understandings of who is a Guarani speaker and user.

While the MGH was embraced in some schools, teachers or parents in other schools resisted the designation of their schools as *guaranihablante* (Nickson 2009). Reasons for their resistance were various. Some parents reportedly questioned the utility of teaching Guarani to their children who already spoke Guarani at home. Some teachers reportedly questioned their own ability to teach something they, themselves, did not know – literacy skills in Guarani. But both former MEC officials interviewed described instances in which teachers' or parents' resis-

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9 Furthermore, the test of linguistic competence that was to be used to determine language dominance was only in development at that point, and in 2008 participant educators indicated that no test was used to determine language competence in the focal schools.

tance took the form of a claim that their students/children were actually not *guaranihablantes* – Guarani speakers – but Spanish speakers, when in fact, subsequent tests of linguistic competence revealed that they were indeed Guarani dominant. This was an identity claim – adults claiming an *hispanohablante* identity for their children and disavowing the *guaranihablante* identity.

According to multiple participants' accounts of this early resistance to the MGH – their virtual models of the chains of communicative events involved – some of these teachers and parents understood the Guarani speaker to be poor, rural, punished and ashamed. One of the former MEC officials explained that central schools in rural regions are usually economically better off than their associated schools, which are generally poorer and more rural still. Voicing some central-school teachers' responses to their assignment to the MGH, she said, "*¿ por qúe a nosotros nos obligan enseñar el guaraní? Nosotros, la escuela centro, y aquellas escuelitas, aquellas tienen que enseñar en castellano. Se sentían castigadas. No lo vieron como una posibilidad de desarrollar en sus alumnos capacidad. Era un castigo*" 'Why are they making us teach Guarani? We, the central school, and those little schools, those have to teach in Spanish. They felt punished. They did not see it as a chance to develop capacity in their students. It was a punishment'. These teachers were reportedly claiming that Guarani was more appropriate for the poorer, more rural satellite schools than for them, who were different people. The other former MEC official attributed some parents' resistance to something. . .

> *. . .en la memoria colectiva del pueblo Paraguayo. A los niños se les llevó a castigada acá en la escuela porque hablaban en guaraní . . . los padres les tenían terror hablar en guaraní entonces cuando el guaraní- ¿cómo ha eso? Esa lengua que siempre fue despreciada que siempre les presentaron como maldita. ¿Ahora le van a enseñar a mi hijo en la escuela?*
>
> '. . .in the collective memory of the Paraguayan people. Children were punished here in school because they spoke Guarani . . . parents [of previous generations] made children afraid to speak in Guarani and so when Guarani- [was brought into instruction] How could that be? That language that was always scorned, that was always presented as wicked. Now you're going to teach it to my son in school?'

These accounts offer virtual models of speech chains connecting some policy text or talk to parents and teachers and connecting parents and teachers to these former MEC officials. They do not show where the message that Guarani is more appropriate for poor, rural students or that Guarani speaking is shameful originated; rather they show that this message was one that was associated with resistance to the MGH. And we do know that policy texts did not include clues that Guarani and Guarani speaking should be interpreted this way. According to these accounts, some parents' and teachers' own experiences as Guarani speakers informed their positions.

Having been children who had seen or experienced punishment, shame, and scorn for speaking Guarani in school, they understood that to be a Guarani speaker in school was to risk being seen as a *guarango* type of person – a rural, ignorant, rude and justifiably ashamed kind of person. They carried those experiences of what it had meant to be a Guarani speaker in school into the decision-making process regarding program design.

Having begun in 118 schools in 1994, the bilingual program design for *guaranihablantes* spread to a high of 427 schools in 1999, and then began to decline (Demelenne 2004: 427). Though the number of schools employing this design is not currently tracked officially, MEC officials report that only a handful of schools out of nearly 6,000 (Mello-Walter 2004) in the country are still practicing it.[10] The reasons for the program design's abandonment are multiple, including lack of instructional materials and lack of adequate teacher training (Comisión Nacional de Bilingüismo 1997; Corvalán 2004; Gynan 2001; Nickson 2009), but among them is a sense among parents and teachers that to be identified as a *guaranihablante* is not desirable. The director of a semi-rural school (not one of the focal schools) in which some grades had originally been assigned the *guaranihablante* program design ascribed their abandonment of that design to a problem of labeling:

> *estuvimos viendo estudiando, verdad, y como le digo, veíamos que los chicos mas o menos ellos mismos se discriminaban, así como los padres ( ) se les discriminaron al dividirles en otro grupo . . . ya no les dividíamos- ellos ya no decían yo soy guaranihablante ni hispanohablante . . . ahora el programa en si ya no está dividiendo nuevamente en hispanohablante y guaranihablante sino ya es- vamos (a decir una modalidad) bilingüe directamente, no así, separados, sino unidos*
>
> 'we were looking, studying, right, and how can I tell you, we saw that the children more or less they themselves discriminated against one another, just like the parents ( ) they discriminated against one another upon being divided into another group [*guaranihablantes* or *hispanohablantes*] . . . we no longer divided them- they no longer said I am *guaranihablante* nor *hispanohablante* . . . now the program itself is no longer dividing [students] into *guaranihablante* an *hispanohablante* but rather it is- let's say a bilingual program design, not separated, but together.'

She explained that they try use the two languages in similar ways to how they did before, but they just do not label and separate the children. The solution was not so much a change in language use, but a change in the way children are identified. The director of another semi-rural school that still used the MGH in 2005 told

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10 The MEC official interviewed for this study estimated that "*seguramente menos de diez*" 'surely fewer than ten' schools still use the MGH.

me that parents had pressured other schools in their region to leave that design because they feared their children would not become "*socialmente integrada*" 'socially integrated'; her secretary added that those parents "*tienen la mentalidad también que si hablan guarani son niños bajos, de bajo nivel, bajo nivel social*" 'have the mentality, too, that if they [their children] speak Guarani, they are low children, of low status, low social status'" (interview 19 May 2005). The sixth grade teacher at the focal rural school in this study explained to me why the only two schools in their region who had had the *guaranihablante* program design had discontinued it: in addition to using teachers who had not studied Guarani, the program alarmed people who felt that the children were learning "*grosería*" 'rudeness' in school, for example, when they learned about the parts of the body in Guarani – words that are often used to be crude and offensive. They worried that children were learning to *guarango/a*, defined often simply as *grosero/a* 'rude'.

The director of the focal rural school demonstrated powerfully how her experiences of having been a Guarani-speaking child in school influenced her understanding of appropriate educational language policy for Guarani-speaking children:

> *se dieron cuenta de cuando es- lengua materna nosotros le llamamos la lengua que conversa el niño en su casa. Bueno, aquí en esta zona el niño conversa en guaraní, su lengua materna es guaraní. Viene a la escuela, si el o ella trae la lengua materna guaraní, ¿qué yo en la escuela le voy a enseñar para que tenga los dos idiomas? Le voy a enseñar el castellano, ¿verdad? Y eso es lo que se maneja, eso era lo que quería la política educativa que al niño se le enseñe la lengua que no conoce. Si la leng- si la niña habla solamente castellano, su lengua materna es castellano, va a la escuela. ¿Qué idioma le falta? Le falta el guaraní para que pueda tener conocimiento de ambas lenguas, ¿verdad? . . . porque yo tuve una mala anecdota. Yo viví en [un pueblo] allí con mi abuelo, solamente mi lengua materna era castellano- eh guaraní. Nunca en mi vida nadie me habló en castellano. No sabía ni- qué nada no sabía. Yo vine en [una ciudad] en donde todo el mundo hablaba castellano . . . yo me fui en la escuela y solamente se hablaba castellano yo no podía conversar. Me quedé muda. Yo escuchaba y yo no entendía, no sabía responderle.*
>
> 'they [the policymakers] realized that when it's- the mother tongue we call the language that the child speaks at home. Fine, here in this area the child speaks Guarani, his/her mother tongue is Guarani. He/she comes to school, if he or she brings the mother tongue of Guarani, what am I going to teach him/her in school so that he/she has both languages? I'm going to teach him Spanish, right? And that is what is done, that was what the educational policy wanted, that the child is taught the language that he/she doesn't know. If the lang- if the girl speaks only Spanish, her mother tongue is Spanish, she goes to school. What language does she lack? She lacks Guarani so that she can have knowledge of both languages, right? . . . because I had a bad story. I lived in [a town] with my grandfather, my mother tongue was only Spanish- eh Guarani. Never in my life had anyone spoken to me in Spanish. I didn't know an- I knew nothing. I came to [a city] where everyone spoke Spanish . . . I went to school and only Spanish was spoken, I couldn't converse. I was left mute. I listened and I couldn't understand, I didn't know how to respond. (Interview 24 September 2008)

She goes on to describe having had to go to the bathroom and not being able to ask permission to go because she only knew how to ask in Guarani and how this was shameful. She says that when one spoke Guarani one was laughed at and called *guaranga*. She is grateful for the policy change, which she says now allows children to speak to their teachers in Guarani and allows teachers to explain content to students in Guarani when they do not understand it in Spanish. But, having identified the program design at her own school as that for *hispanohablantes*, she says the MGH *encasilla* 'pigeon holes/typecasts' the students and does not prepare them for the world outside where they are expected to read and write in Spanish alone. As a result of this understanding of what will happen to students if they are identified officially as *guaranihablantes*, schools and communities have chosen to identify children as *hispanohablantes* even when they speak Guarani as a first language, as described by the sixth grade teacher at the focal rural school "*su lengua materna es guarani pero ellos se les consideran como lengua materna castellano. En todos [los programas] lengua materna castellano*" 'their mother tongue is Guarani but they are considered Spanish mother tongue [speakers]. In all [the programs] Spanish as the mother tongue.'

Rejection of the MGH has been rejection of a program that teachers did not feel prepared to teach, a perceived lack of materials, lack of support from the MEC. But it has also been rejection of Guarani as a medium of instruction (the principal distinguishing feature of the program) and of the identification of children as *guaranihablantes*. At the rural school where most students are Guarani dominant, their officially assigned program design is that for *hispanohablantes* (MHH). Guarani is used in instruction, but not in the ways specified by either of the official designs, the MHH or the MGH. In subjects other than Guarani language, it is used for compensatory purposes – to help children understand content in Spanish – and only in oral form. Assessments in subjects other than Guarani language are done in Spanish. At the urban school, Guarani is taught as a subject, but not used in instruction of other content areas.

In practice, neither the MGH nor Guarani as a medium of instruction (in particular, in written form and for purposes of assessment) have become part of widescale implementation. Children are officially identified as *hispanohablante*, regardless of their language dominance. Guarani is used in instruction in order to support Guarani-dominant children's comprehension. When participant teachers, directors, supervisors, and former MEC officials explain the practice of identifying students *hispanohablante* regardless of their language dominance, there is significant congruence in their understandings of the alternative type of person – *guaranihablante*. To be identified as a *guaranihablante* is to risk being identified as *guarango/a*. To a certain extent, these practices resemble the ways languages were reportedly used before national bilingual education was introduced.

8.2 Performing a formal *Paraguayo* identity

However, what has changed in practice is that Guarani is, indeed, now taught as a subject of instruction. And adults – both rural and urban, both Guarani-dominant and Spanish-dominant – are widely supportive of this. Parents, teachers, and even students, explain in interviews the need for instruction of Guarani as a subject as the need for all students to study *nuestra lengua*, invoking the Guarani-speaking Paraguayo type of person. At the urban school, Guarani is often used in formal, scripted performances of academic or artistic skill during morning assemblies and celebrations. These same events are also used for patriotic performances like the singing of the national anthem (sometimes in Guarani) and the raising of the Paraguayan flag, and for folkloric performances that employ symbols of Paraguayan culture and nationhood like traditional costumes and dances and tricolored ribbons, banners and sashes resembling the flag. At these urban school events, the use of Guarani is marked, scripted, and formal – it is not used simply as a medium to communicate other content, but as a salient part of the message itself. To use Guarani formally there is to perform a Paraguayo identity. At the rural school, Guarani is also linked to a patriotic *Paraguayo* type of person through the occasional performance of the national anthem in Guarani during morning assembly (e.g., once explicitly for my benefit on my first day observing there) or a Guarani language lesson on the origins of the nation. But Guarani is generally not performed formally there – the language of formality is Spanish.

A comparison of two expositions of Paraguayan nationhood at the two schools illustrates this difference. In the first, the urban sixth grade teacher (PC) led a social studies lesson with the objective of "*identific[ar] que son los elementos que unen a la nación paraguaya*" 'identifying what are the elements that unite the Paraguayan nation'. I described the lesson in my fieldnotes:

> She reads the reading while they are looking on. She begins,[11] *the Paraguayan nation emerged from the union of the Spanish man with the Guarani woman, the ethnic basis of our nation, with unique characteristics of its own . . . the elements that distinguish us are . . .* and she pauses, *language . . .* Manuel shouts *jopará!*[12] PC continues listing *the national symbols, dance, typical foods . . .* She reads a list of typical foods and at the end reads <u>kamby arro</u> [similar to rice pudding], thinks for second and then says in Guarani looking up, <u>we're having kamby arro for lunch today</u>.

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11 Italicized portions were originally spoken in Spanish, while underlined portions were originally spoken in Guarani.

12 A term meaning 'mixed language' in Guarani.

This was one of only two instances I observed in which PC used Guarani in the classroom outside of a Guarani language lesson. Language was the first listed element of the Paraguayan nation, identified readily by the student Manuel, and when I asked PC later in an interview about this uncharacteristic switch to Guarani, she explained, "*el tema se prestaba . . . cuando el tema se presta entonces podríamos hacer y los elementos- unos de los elementos los- las- los elementos principales pues es nuestro idioma . . . eso es lo que nos distingue como nación*" 'the topic lent itself . . . when the topic lends itself then we could do it and the elements- one of the elements, the- the- the- principal elements, you see, is our language . . . that is what distinguishes us as a nation'.

Her assertion that the topic of the Paraguayan nation lends itself specifically to the use of Guarani contrasts with a moment at the rural school when the rural sixth grade teacher (PE) describes the elements that represent Paraguayan culture during the introduction of a major schoolwide celebration of *El Día de San Juan* 'Saint John's Day', a traditional Catholic holiday and major Paraguayan national holiday:

> PE introduces the festival. She calls San Juan *one of the most traditional holidays that we have*, one most representative of Paraguayan culture. She lists the *typical foods* that are eaten today: *sopa paraguaya*, *payagua mascada*, *pastel mandiʼo*, *mbeju*, *chicharô trenzado*. She mentions *traditional games* as part of this day, *jokes/riddles*, and *dances*. This whole introduction is in Spanish. (Field notes 20 June 2008)

Despite the parallel nature of the topic, Guarani was not used to index a *Paraguayo/a* identity. Instead, the use of Spanish pointed to the formality of the situation. At the urban school, where Guarani is marked and used in formal performances, the instruction of Guarani language is grounded in students' needs to be able to perform a *Paraguayo/a* identity. At the rural school, however, where Guarani is the language of informal interaction, its use does not signal the *Paraguayo/a* to the same extent.

Table 2 shows the fractional congruence of meanings of the Guarani speaker in these two areas of practice: the identification of students as *guaranihablante* (GH) or *hispanohablante* (HH) and the use of Guarani in formal events linked to the Paraguayan nation.

Multiple participants' accounts of the events in the process of identifying students as GH or HH included reference to the Guarani speaker as ashamed, ignorant *grosero/a*, rural, or of low status. Not all representations of these events included all these features, as participants reference only those that are important to them. Yet, none included any reference to the Guarani speaker as a member of the Paraguayan nation. As the table shows, the Guarani speaker in these accounts

Table 2: Tracing the *Paraguayo/a* and *guarango/a* through two areas of practice

	Paraguayo/a		*Guarango/a*					
	Guarani as suited for formal purposes	Guarani speaker as member of Py. nation	Guarani speaker as ashamed	Guarani speaker as ignorant	Guarani speaker as *grosero/a*	Guarani speaker as rural	Guarani speaker as low status	Guarani as suited for informal purposes
Identifying students as GH or HH								
Selection of MGH schools by supervisors								
Teachers' resistance to MGH			X	X		X	X	X
Parents' resistance to MGH			X	X			X	X
Abandonment of MGH			X		X			
Identification of all students as HH			X	X	X		X	X
Formal events related to the Paraguayan nation								
Urban								
Guarani lesson on Paraguayan nation	X	X						
Guarani in morning assemblies	X	X						
Guarani in formal celebrations	X	X						
Guarani use in discussion of elements of Paraguayan nation		X				X		
Rural								
Guarani lesson on Paraguayan nation	X	X						
Guarani in morning assemblies		X						
Guarani in formal celebrations								X
Guarani use in discussion of elements of Paraguayan nation								X

bears more resemblance in meaning to the *guarango/a* typification than to the *Paraguayo/a* typification. Participants, some of whom were directly involved in these events and some of whom were not, understand the process leading up to the identification of all students as *hispanohablante* regardless of their language dominance as having been about a *guarango/a* type of person. Now that nearly all students are identified officially as *hispanohablante* and Guarani is used in principally compensatory ways as a medium of instruction, the guarango/a type is not as relevant in practice. In my direct observations of interaction in the classroom and around the schools, the Guarani speaker was not explicitly understood to have the qualities of the *guarango/a*, but was often understood to be a *Paraguayo/a*. This is particularly true at the urban school, and less so at the rural school, where Guarani speaking and Paraguayanness were less often linked. This difference might be attributed to the difference in markedness of using Guarani in school in these two places. The table also shows that in these same educational events, Guarani and Guarani speaking become differently positioned as formal and informal. At the urban school, students are gaining experience in performing a formal, academic Guarani-speaking identity, while those at the rural school are not (Mortimer 2012).

9 Conclusion

The *Paraguayo/a* type is indexed in policy text, policy talk and practices at various levels. This image is highly valued and widely circulated, and, Guarani is indeed taught as a subject of instruction in all schools. In contrast, the *guarango/a* identity is only tenuously indexed in policy text. This meaning would not be recoverable from policy text alone. Only when policy talk and practices are examined can we see that when people interpret the whos involved in Article 77, they sometimes understand *guaranihablante* to be someone who does not also speak Spanish and who is rural, ignorant, rude, ashamed and low class. The ideas people express in policy talk do not erupt spontaneously and idiosyncratically. When educators interpret policy text or others' talk about policy text, they use images of the Guarani speaker that are in circulation in their context to understand the whos, whats, and hows specified by policy.

In the process of identifying students as *guaranihablante* or *hispanohablante* for the purposes of determining program design, educators and community members did not understand the *guaranihablante* to be a valued and patriotic Paraguayan citizen, as in the Paraguayo. They understood the *guaranihablante* to be much like a *guarango/a* type of person, and that designation was widely rejected.

In contrast, in current practice where nearly all students are identified as *hispanohablantes* and Guarani is used principally as a subject of instruction and not as a medium of instruction, educators in the focal schools almost never link the Guarani speaker to a *guarango/a* type. They do, however, understand the Guarani speaker to be a *Paraguayo/a*.

Tracing the meaning of the Guarani speaker from one level of educational language policy activity to another reveals the role of circulating images of types of people in the process of policy appropriation. It reveals that while some whos and whats – in this case the *Paraguayo/a* type – are part of the entextualized policy that is transportable from legislative chambers to classrooms, others – like the *guarango/a* – are not, and yet are still drawn upon when policy actors make sense of what they are supposed to do and what they choose to do. Connections among policy text, talk, and appropriation are recoverable in the case of the *Paraguayo/a* type, where supervisors, teacher trainers, directors and teachers have made sense of the Guarani speaking student in ways similar to those found in policy texts. That policy actors and policy texts are drawing on common discursive history is evident. On the other hand, this analytical process also reveals that policy actors have made another meaning of the Guarani speaking student – the *guarango/a* type – that is not present in texts but is present in their talk and in their practice. With respect to this meaning, actors may be drawing upon a different discursive history than do policy texts – communicative events particular to them as individuals or actors in this regional or temporal context. But they may also be drawing upon a network of communicative events through which the *guarango/a* typification was passed and of which policy formulation discourse and debate was a part but which is not recoverable by examining policy text alone.

What becomes salient in this analysis, and what must not be forgotten, is that at the ends of these trajectories of interpretation, there are material consequences for the educational experiences of Paraguayan children. Paraguay's national educational language policy specifies that Guarani should be used in all schools as *both* a subject of instruction and as a medium of instruction for all students, *hispanohablantes* and *guaranihablantes* alike. By and large, Guarani is being taught as a subject. A popular, longstanding, nation-forming identity, the Paraguayo/a, aligns well with this use of Guarani as an important complement to Spanish. And a formal, academic Guarani-speaking identity is becoming newly available to some students. However, Guarani is generally not used as a medium of instruction, at least to the extent that policy specifies. Educators and communities have rejected the portion of the policy requiring mother tongue instruction for all students, in part because in making sense of it, they have understood the *guaranihablante* to be a *guarango/a* type of person and have rejected this categorization.

Analysis of the virtual and directly observed chains of communicative, meaning making events through which educational language policy comes to take shape in practice along with analysis of the cultural forms that travel along them reveals the nature of policy itself as a cultural formation – subject to recontextualization and shifts in meaning – and its appropriation as a cultural process. It reveals the cultural forms, like images of the Guarani speaker, that come to influence appropriation. But it also reveals the indeterminacy involved in policy practice. At each link in each chain, there is indeterminacy of meaning and thus opportunity for change. Often individual educators or groups of educators consciously exploit these indeterminate links and thereby open up "ideological and implementational spaces" in otherwise restricting policies (Hornberger 2005a, 2005b; Hornberger and Johnson 2007). But this Paraguayan language policy, rather than restricting the use of a minority language in education, specifies that it should be used on par with the majority language, and educators have appropriated it in ways that have closed some spaces – specifically those in which Guarani is used as a comprehensive medium of instruction. This is not to condemn educators but to recognize their role in contextualizing policy where they work. In abandoning the MGH, they may have denied Guarani-dominant children an opportunity to learn more fully through Guarani, but they also may have protected children from an identification that was perilous in their time. Now, 15 years into the policy there is evidence that the *guarango/a* type is less widely circulated or recognized (Mortimer 2009) and an academic Guarani-speaking identity circulates more. With time, it may become possible and/or desirable to amplify the use of Guarani as a medium of instruction and allow Guarani-dominant children to learn more fully in the language they understand best.

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