



CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES

53rd Foundation Day Lecture Series

Lecture 15

Friday, September 17, 2021 at 6:00 pm IST

Curriculum Design for Teaching and Learning Indigenous Languages in Mexico



Elin Emilsson

Elin Emilsson is a Professor at the Language Teaching and Learning Center of the National Pedagogical University where she codirects the Indigenous Language Workshop Program and is a member of the development and teaching team of the Diploma for Teaching and Evaluating Communicative Competence in Indigenous Languages. She has taught English and Portuguese at the language center of the National University of Mexico and Spanish at the School for Foreigners of the same university. This experience, informed by sociocultural, discursive and pragmatic perspectives, enabled her to develop literacy programs at the National Institute for Adult Education as well as indigenous language materials for middle school students. As a member of the UNESCO Chair "Language Policies for Multilingualism", she is working towards models of language learning and teaching towards multilingualism in Mexico.

Mexico is a country of great linguistic diversity, with 68 distinct indigenous language groupings in addition to Spanish, defined constitutionally as national languages, with no official language as such. The course of history and different historical processes have relegated indigenous languages to positions of subordination or of marginalization, but at present, this trend is being (hopefully) reversed, both by grassroots political movements as by government institutions. As a result, Mexico is moving towards the establishment of legal frameworks, institutions and government financing aimed at enabling Indigenous communities, languages and ways of being to develop in their own terms.

In this context, a reflection of language teaching and learning is made, with the premise that revitalization, reclaiming, strengthening and amplification of uses are processes that will, inevitably, imply teaching and learning the languages. If we are to take seriously the idea that the point is not to map indigenous languages onto hegemonic societies, but to enable these languages and communities to flourish in their own terms while at the same time co-existing with others and contributing to the larger society, teaching and learning models must be developed accordingly.

In this presentation, I will offer an overview of the history of language and language policies in Mexico as a context to describe recent trends in language teaching and learning including the role digital media is playing in the boom of offerings. Finally, I will present and describe a teaching and learning model informed by applied linguistics as well as different language revitalization trends and practices in existence.

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