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Implications of past and present equivocations in reproducing or challenging epistemic violence in encounters with difference

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ABSTRACT

Based on an ethnographic research study, in an Ecuadorian Amazonian Kichwa territory, I use the notion of 'translation as controlled equivocation' as an analytical tool to explore the making sense of difference. Occurring in the same territory, I analyse these encounters with difference, read in relation to a classroom dialogue between teacher and students, with that of a historical encounter with the 'other' in a Dominican missionary's diary of 1887/1888. I propose that exploring the processes of equivocation centring differing subjective positions and situated dialogues, provides a reflective tool against reproducing epistemic violence whilst making space to recognize difference.

Basado en una investigación etnográfica, en un territorio Kichwa Amazónico Ecuatoriano, uso como concepto de análisis la 'traducción como equivalencia controlada' para entender la diferencia. Ocurridos en el mismo territorio, analizo dos encuentros con lo diferente, desde la lectura de un dialogo en clase entre estudiantes y docente, y el encuentro histórico con el 'otro' del diario de un misionero Dominico (1887/1888). Centrándose en las diferentes posiciones subjetivas y los diálogos en los que se llevan acabo, argumento que la exploración de equivalencias sirve de mecanismo de reflexión enfrentado la reproducción de violencia epistémica en el reconocimiento de la diferencia.

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Introduction

In 1887/88, Father Pierre, a Dominican Missionary, documents his travels to the Ecuadorian Amazon missionary's jurisdiction and beautifully narrates his first encounter with the indigenous leader Palate of the Canelos people. The text and this passage caught my attention because of the way the 'Other' is represented, but also because I was going to make the same journey as Father Pierre for my own ethnographic research, possibly in the same location[1] of Father Pierre's encounter with Palate. Having lived and worked in the Ecuadorian Amazon region for several years prior to engaging in academic research, though not in the location of my ethnographic study, I was already broadly familiar with the historical context of this region, however the description of this encounter written in first person was very striking and a clear depiction of the 'noble savage' from a hegemonic Eurocentric subjective position. I read this text as an example of historical 'misrecognition' (Taylor, 1994), constructing the 'civilized' vs the 'primitive' other. I analyse the passage of the encounter with Palate as a process of 'uncontrolled equivocation' (De Castro, 2004), invisiblizing radically distinct cultural norms,

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knowledge systems and ways of being, by creating equivalence from a single and hierarchically dominant subjective position. I argue that Father Pierre's representation of Palate is a result of an uncontrolled equivocation, since this encounter is explained as if fully transparent. In other words, Father Pierre seems to have no doubts in being able to understand and interpret the whole encounter, there is no different perspective. By working through this example, my aim was to move towards a 'controlled equivocation' (Blaser, 2014; De Castro, 2004), by explicitly recognizing the limitations of generating equivalence across differing epistemological subjective positions, allowing for diverse ontologies to be made present as part of the process of translation and interpretation.

In this article, I identify two cases of uncontrolled equivocation, the first that represented by the text of Father Pierre's narration of his encounter with Palate, the second is a local teacher's explanation of the earth's crust in a science lesson with primary school children. What unites these cases beyond that they may have taken place in the same geographical location is that they occur as a historical continuation of the dominant position of a universalizing epistismelogical subjective position.

Firstly, I briefly frame the notion of 'uncontrolled and controlled equivocation' (De Castro, 2004), and apply this analytical tool to my own reading of the extract from the Spanish translation of Father Pierre's diary, through which epistemic violence is established. I then discuss how challenging the reproduction of epistemic violence is an inherent part of the discourse positioned by the indigenous movement and decolonizing scholars, central to the demand for an intercultural bilingual education in Ecuador. From here I turn to my analysis with my own encounter with difference, based on my observations and recordings of a local community primary school teacher's explanation of the earth's crust as part of a natural science lesson with 9/11 year-olds. I explore this analysis of recognizing difference in the space of a formal lesson, via a collaborative process of transcribing and translating in a sharing of linguistic and semiotic resources (Martin-Jones & Martin, 2017, p. 190). Through this process of co-translating from Kichwa[2] to Spanish, I describe the moments my co-translator and I are forced to 'slow down' (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017; Stengers, 2005) over our interpretation of this teacher's discourse. In the teacher's explanation, we interpret his enunciation as providing the possibility for non-human agency to become present in what is assumed to be a science lesson. I concluded that potentially an uncontrolled equivocation from the opposite subjective position to that of Father Pierre's was conducted. However, for me this raised a tension in terms of how intercultural education is discursively positioned from a decolonial stance, since the epistemological hierarchy between official subject knowledge and indigenous knowledge was, left unchallenged. In other words, this contrasts to that expected from a critical interculturality as a means for positioning epistemological justice and social transformation. On the one hand, a process of uncontrolled equivocation does not correspond to the notion of 'dialogue between different ways of knowing' (De Sousa Santos, 2007), whilst on the other hand, occurring from a subaltern subjective position it can be seen as a mechanism of subverting 'epistemicide' (De Sousa Santos, 2015), by enabling different ways on knowing and being to be present as part of science lessons, which would only allow for the reproduction of science as representing universal knowledge. Finally, I returning to this analysis as a process of critical self-reflection (Phipps, 2019) of how I interpreted this tension and suggest that my own 'fixing' of the producing of an equivocation may unintentional have been reproducing epistemic violence.

Here, I aim to engage as do others with the ethics and politics of knowledge in researching through and within multilingualism (Garcés, 2019; Holmes & Corbett, 2023; MacDonald, 2020; Phipps, 2019; Rappaport, 2005). I explore the complex issue of my own positioning as researcher committed to challenging epistemic violence as well as the potential limits of this.

Equivocation and the recognition of difference

De Castro (2004) within critical anthropology discusses the notion of 'equivocation' described as a misunderstanding that generates an incorrect equivalence occurring in an encounter where different systems of knowledge, believes and ways of being are not acknowledged, resulting in epistemic

violence. De Castro (2004) described this process as an 'uncontrolled' equivocation, 'a type of communicative disjuncture where the interlocutors are not talking about the same thing, and do not know this' (p. 7). As De Castro (1998) emphasizes an 'uncontrolled equivocation' rarely takes place in the context of equal relations of power, reflecting how research inherently taking place within racialized hierarchical social structures, mostly ignores our own limitations to acknowledge an encounter with difference. The central issue is not the producing of an equivocation, since acknowledging that the anthropologist task is one of cultural translation, equivocation is inherent in this process (De Castro, 2004). What De Castro (2004) proposes instead, is a 'controlled equivocation' aiming to focus the process of translation on the shared premise that 'a good translation … is one that betrays the destination language, not the source language' (p. 3). Regina Harrison (1989) in her seminal work translating Quechua texts describes the process of translation as ' … a means of linking our rational, analytical world with one which is phrased in other metaphors, other ideologies … The presence of the word, translated, ultimately seeks to transform us and create a more conscious awareness of ourselves and others' (p. 31). Translation, in this sense, can be understood as primarily concerned with revealing the process of creating equivocations. However, there is a difference between De Castro's proposition and Regina's, in so far as Regina is pointing to differences in cultural perspectives, whereas De Castro aims to go further by pointing to diverse ontologies by incorporating Amerindian perspectivism as a tool for understanding our process of creating equivalence in translation, i.e. a 'controlled' equivocation. As Blaser (2016) explains: 'Translation as controlled equivocation is premised on the counterintuitive notion that what needs to be kept in the foreground when translating two different terms is, precisely, their difference' (p. 565). Amerindian perspectivism developed from De Castro's ethnographic work on Amazonian cosmologies challenges the universal categories of 'nature' as fixed and 'culture' as relative. It is in this sense that Blaser highlights translation as a process of uncontrolled equivocation does not presume 'an already existing factual reality [instead], translation becomes a progressive project to compose a factual reality out of matters of concern and/or care' (Blaser, 2016, p. 565). I shall explore in more depth how Amerindian perspectivism is made use of as a tool for a controlled equivocation through my reading of the two cases of uncontrolled equivocation further on.

Decolonial literature also focuses on the lack of recognition of difference since all encounters are understood from a dominant epistemological perspective in what Quijano coins as 'colonialism del saber' (epistemological colonialism) (Quijano & Ennis, 2000). De Sousa Santos, in this sense describes modern epistemological thinking as 'abyssal thinking' (2007), whereby epistemologies that differ from the parameters of that positioned as 'universal knowledge' are not acknowledge as knowledge. Modern epistemological thinking is therefore inherently blind to the plurality of ways of knowing and so constructs reality by consolidating a process in which Other epistemologies are denied existence, resulting in an act of 'epistemicide' (De Sousa Santos & Meneses, 2014). Epistemicide occurs by circumscribing epistemological plurality to the 'local' as relative cultural perspectives, in other words, local knowledge is other's beliefs relevant only 'locally', whilst a dominant epistemology is positioned as 'universal' (Dussel, 1994; Mignolo, 2007; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). In this way, research from a dominant epistemological position is inherently understood as a process of epistemic violence. Mignolo (2007) describes the construction of modernity is this historical process of constructing the knowing subject from a single subjective position setting up a dualism between knowing subject vs subaltern. Mignolo (2012) proposes that this dualism is disrupted through 'border thinking' by privileging the subaltern's subjectivity as the position from which epistemological pluralism is revealed. The demand from a decolonial position is therefore the need to move towards epistemic justice, which at its core aims to recognize the subaltern as knowing subject from a plural epistemological reality. For De Sousa Santos (2015), this means constructing 'a dialogue between ways of knowing', which implies finding paths that recognize plural epistemologies as ways of knowing and being that move towards a transformative process for social and ecological justice. In this way, decolonial thinking demands a repositioning of the subaltern as knowing subject that deconstructs the hierarchical epistemological subjective position of dominant

vs subaltern revealing plural epistemologies as a transformative process towards social justice (Mignolo, 2012; Walsh, 2012).

Following this critique, I am not the first to recognize the dilemma of conducting research in a multilingual context from my own subjective position as a bilingual (Spanish/English) white European woman based in a prestigious academic institution in the Global North (Holmes et al., 2022; Phipps, 2019). Not only do I embody a historical colonial past in the context of my research as a Spanish national, I also potentially represent that precise epistemological hierarchy the decolonial literature critiques as a relative 'outside' researcher. I was conducting my research communicating mostly in Spanish in the context in which Spanish explicitly continues to represent a dominant and colonial language and producing my research in English, the dominant academic language. Having said this, I was known by individuals of the community leadership as a friend and colaboradora[3] collaborator in the context of supporting struggles for relative territorial autonomy against resource extractives programmes. Therefore, the possibility of conducting this research was granted by community gatekeepers based on my ongoing relationships with community members in solidarity with a shared ideological position. For me, this implied a particular ethical responsibility towards the community and in support of the counter-hegemonic positioning of indigenous politics, whilst at the same time recognizing a change in subjectivity and relationship that as a researcher this implied.

Recognizing my complex subjectivity and dilemma, I start by discussing how I read Father Pierre's translated text as an example through which I could clearly recognize epistemic violence in the description of the encounter with the indigenous leader Palate. What is most significant is that through this reading I felt relatively safe I would not be reproducing this same epistemic violence in my own encounter with difference in this same territory.

Case 1 – A historical encounter as an uncontrolled equivocation

The diary of Father Pierre helped me understand more vividly the historical context of the continued colonization and resistance to this in the Ecuadorian Amazonian region. During the Spanish colonial period (1492–1822), the Amazon region was subdivided into religious missionary jurisdictions in representation of the Spanish crown and all indigenous groups were considered under the tutelage of each corresponding religious mission. This continued through the republican period meaning indigenous peoples were not considered fully capable subjects, needing to be represented and under the official 'protection' of others, i.e. the Catholic Church. However, up until the beginning of the twentieth century, missionaries had been unsuccessful in establishing permanent settlements in this region of the Ecuadorian Amazon due to difficult access and indigenous resistance. The encounter between Father Pierre and Palate relates to this key period of serious threat towards the Canelos peoples by the State, aiming to establish permanent missionaries in this region.

I came across the translated Spanish text (1988) from the original French (1888) of Father Pierre's diary whilst conducting my research in this territory. I was struck by the passage of the encounter with Palate without having realized its significance as an official historical document and of this specific passage in the present day. It was not until after reading the diary, that I noticed the life-size sculpture in the town centre of the regional capital, Puyo, depicting Father Pierre and Palate's encounter from this passage. I had heard of Palate before, whilst coordinating a young people's network in resistance to oil extraction projects in the Ecuadorian Amazon region. The members had decided to name the network as 'Palate-Jumandy wayra churi', literally the children of the wind of Palate and Jumandy. The naming of this network reflected the counter-hegemonic position taken by these young people, making an explicit connection with Palate and Jumandy as historical figures of indigenous resistance and significant to their group identity at that moment. I was therefore excited to discover this nineteenth-century first-hand account of the encounter with Palate. What is more, I could relate and envisage Father Pierre's recounting travelling by canoe for days to reach this territory, which continues to be accessible only by a minimum 6-hour journey downstream crouched in a motor canoe or 45 minutes in a small propellor airplane. I was

drawn in by Father Pierre's rich description and style, whilst highly aware of my own ethical and ideological responsibility in developing my own narrative.

Father Pierre sets the scene by explaining the context of this encounter just at the moment he was about to start Communal Mass describing Palate's entry as follows:

> Dear reader, even if I lived 900 years like Matusalem, I would never be able to forget the spectacle I then saw. Two steps away next the narrow step that leads to the alter, space previously occupied by the Indians, I contemplate the most extravagant and clownish being imaginable (Pierre, 1988, p. 117; author's own translation)

According to Father Pierre, Palate has very much planned this entry with the intention of achieving maximum dramatic effect to establish his important social standing, going on to intricately describe Palate himself:

> Palate is small of stature, but he has compensated this defect by finding an enormous stool on which to stand on, like a statue on a pedestal. The great man is in his rightful place; nothing of his formidable person is hidden from view: nor his long hair plated in the Chinese style and adorned with humming bird feathers, he has placed onto his back, nor his eyes which, in the middle of a border of red lines, flicker like flames; nor the long horns, formidable defence of the wild pig that pierce through his earlobes to reach his nose; nor the triple collar made of jaguar teeth, like floating amulets; nor the fantastic paints; nor finally, the garish varnish which he has painted himself from head to toe (Pierre, 1988, pp. 117–118; author's own translation).

There is here a constant mixture of awe and fascination mixed with condescendence. Whilst Father Pierre describes Palate as 'a great man' he also notes Palate's small stature and assumes his standing on a 'stool', is to compensate this 'defect'. Similarly, in describing Palate's attire Father Pierre's admiration is palpable, though easily identified from a critical reading as the exoticization of the 'other' assuming Father Pierre's contemporary European audience. The implication of Palate's entry and attire is that this is an exaggerated performance, expressed with an ironic undertone revealing Father Pierre's own incredulity of what he sees as a ridiculousness spectacle:

> But this is nothing; it is only trinkets and child's play; many other Indians paint and embellish themselves in the same manner. Palate, like all illustrious men, have to mark their distinction from others by some type of insignia, some attribute, in other words, by something that at a glance makes visible the importance of his person. And what may be this distinctive attribute? Maybe Napoleon's famous grey cape? No; Palate does not wear a cape; too prosaic. Perhaps, a white crest like Enrique IV? Not this either; Palate does not wear a hat or a crest, which is far too effeminate. Well then, a helmet like Alexander. Impossible; Palate wears no helmet which is too annoying. Most probably he carries a sword, whose hilt he grips with his right hand and whose blade he threatens to pierce us with. Absolutely not, the bayonet sword went out of fashion with the old armour. What then can it be? Do you want to know? It is an umbrella and tie! The umbrella of alpaca which with his left hand he splendidly displays and twists like a halo above his head; the red tie's wrinkled bands fall on his chest; it is this, never before seen among Indians. It is this that positions Palate much above all other great men, present, past and future and what makes him unmistakeable in prosperity. My God, what a spectacle! A nude man with a tie and umbrella! (Pierre, 1988, p. 118; author's own translation)

In making use of the motifs of 'great European captains' whilst directly speaking to his reader, Father Pierre's is quite literally constructing his readers as the 'civilized' subject observing the not quite/not yet civilized other. The hierarchical distance is explicitly marked between Palate's relative social standing as an indigenous leader and the 'real' social standing of European leaders. Palate's 'performance' is literally presented as childlike, the implication being that this is equivalent to when a child attempts to copy and play at being an adult and therefore ridiculous but nevertheless admirable in its attempt:

> But, where or how has this ridiculous original made himself with an umbrella? Who has inspired this absurd idea of having this as a sign of distinction and dignity? The speculation is easy enough. Palate, who is very intelligent, likes to learn and as nothing teaches more than travelling, he has a passion for travelling. He is the most intrepid wanderer and fashionable of his race; … (Pierre, 1988, p. 118; author's own translation)

Analysing this depiction as an uncontrolled equivocation conducted by Father Pierre by generating equivalence between Palate's 'attire' and that of famous European military leaders, enables the infantilization of Palate's performance and relativization of Palate's intelligence as inherently inferior. This

is a clear example of what Charles Taylor (1994) describes as '*mis*recognition' of others of which ' … Western liberal societies are thought to be supremely guilty in this regard … ' (p. 63).

The result of this historical process of misrecognition of the indigenous subject results in serious harm (De la Cadena & Starn, 2007). Unstated, but implicit throughout the above extract is how Palate's entry and attire is a performance directed at the missionary as a significant person of social standing. The reality of this situation should not be underplayed, since as explained above, Father Pierre is entering this territory under the auspices of the then government and official church of the Ecuadorian state for a recognizance mission to establish permanent missionaries that represent the authority of these institutions in these territories. In this way, Father Pierre's interpretation of Palate's aim to present *his* authority as a local leader is highly convincing. The fact Father Pierre ridicules Palate's authority reflects the political confrontation taking place as both a battle and negotiation over territorial control between two opposing authorities. The process of misrecognition of the indigenous subject in this text can be easily identified from a contemporary subjective position, it can be understood that for Palate and the community this was no 'child-play'. The infantilization and inferiorization of Palate is easily recognized and is one which I could easily distance myself from, as representing the dominant 'white-European man's' voice from the nineteenth century, however, the depth of epistemic violence represented here may be less obvious and easier to reproduce as a researcher.

Reading this text as an uncontrolled equivocation, implicit in Father Pierre's description is his own certainty of having full knowledge of what he is seeing. As with Palate's nudity, there is nothing of this encounter that is hidden. There is nothing of this performance that Father Pierre cannot explain and interpret. Palate is not only physically fully revealed to him, but everything about this encounter is also fully transparent. Father Pierre's subjective position as knowing subject assumes a universal perspective, not only ignoring any other alternative interpretation but in doing so, ignores his own limits to know. There is no *différance* (Derrida, 2016) here, no recognition that the *sign* may not be fixed as if from a universal perspective in correspondence with the world. Father Pierre's translation of this event can be argued reflects the dominant Cartesian model of thinking, whereby his capacity and process of rationalization corresponds to the actual naming of the world, i.e. the hummingbird's feathers, the wild pig's tusks or the jaguar's teeth *are* 'amulet's' and so equates to signs of distinction and therefore the 'tie' and 'umbrella' are also the same thing.

In taking Amerindian perspectivism seriously, however, the perspective, i.e. the point of view is 'the world in general' (De Castro, 2004, p. 11). For De Castro, Amerindian perspectivism implies an understanding of the world in which humans and non-humans share the same culture though each from their own corporal perspective. In other words, De Castro proposes that Amerindian perspectivism assumes culture as universal between beings whilst the physical form is relative:

> … animals and spirits see themselves as humans: they perceive themselves as (or become) anthropomorphic beings when they are in their own houses or villages and they experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture - they see their food as human food (jaguars see blood as manioc beer, vultures see the maggots in rotting meat as grilled fish, etc.), … (De Castro, 1998, p. 470)

The notion of perspectivism is also described as the ability to transform between different corporeal forms (Uzendoski, 2004),[4] expressed through oral narratives of Amazonian Kichwas. Khon (2013) similarly describes how people in this region explain events expressing this ability of the power to know, through the corporal form of the hummingbird, jaguar, etc.

However, care needs to be taken in moving from an uncontrolled to a controlled equivocation following De Castro's proposition of translation. In a controlled equivocation, the generating equivalence between the umbrella and tie with that of 'Napoleon's famous grey cape' is not wrong, they are *representing* a sign of distinction. Given the context there is little doubt this is correct. The resulting equivocation occurs fundamentally because Palate's 'tie' and 'umbrella' as things that are unknown to Father Pierre and which he is unaware/unable to acknowledge.

Making use of De Castro's proposition of translation as uncontrolled equivocation for acknowledging the existence of diverse ontologies, Blaser (2016) applies this to the political arena to enable

the recognizing of a radical alterity, creating an opening for the possibility of a Cosmopolitics. Blaser (2016) following Stengers' (2005) critique of Kant's 'cosmopolitics' in formulating 'a common world' by leaving parochialism to one side, extends this to acknowledging a radical alterity. Stengers suggests that the building of the 'common world' may not be very common since what is of legitimate concern is already delineated within the existing political debate (Stengers, 2005, p. 996). Stengers' proposal as an ethical political position is one of 'slowing down' acknowledging … the limits of the starting point of the debate (Stengers, 2005, p. 1003). This aims to recognize cultural plurality in accounting for differences in what is being position as the matter of concern. Blaser (2016) proposal takes this further by shifting the focus from cultural plurality to multiple ontologies stating:

> … humans do not go into conflicts with their perspectives on things; they go into them along with the nonhuman things that make them act. In this sense, caribou and *atîku* would not refer to different cultural perspectives on the same 'thing,' but to altogether different (albeit not unrelated) things. (p. 546)

The brackets (*albeit not unrelated*) in Blaser statement above are central to the proposition of acknowledging that different *things* are brought into the political arena making possible a political ontological by insisting in an '*as well*, for it is not a matter of either/or but of both/and' (p. 565).

To summarize, I read Father Pierre's description as reflecting the historical process of establishing a (mis)recognition, position Palate as the exotic 'primitive' other. This is done by conducting an uncontrolled equivocation, generating equivalence between the wearing of the 'tie' and 'umbrella' as signs of distinction in contrast and in a parody of signs of distinction of European military leaders. Epistemic violence resulting in misrecognition occurs in positioning a hierarchy between these representations of distinction through infantilizing Palate's performance. This form of epistemic violence I felt relatively confident in not reproducing, occurring because Father Pierre assumes absolute knowledge and complete transparency over Palate's performance. Father Pierre is unable to recognize difference. Avoiding this form of epistemic violence therefore requires recognizing difference whilst at the same time acknowledging one's own limits to know. This is almost a contradiction and requires tools, for which I turned to Blaser's reading of De Castro's proposition of translation as controlled equivocation. In this sense, Father Pierre does not acknowledge the equal worth in the representation of the jaguar teeth and 'tie' and 'umbrella' as signs of distinction and authority (after all it would have been completely contradictory for Father Pierre to do this given the historical moment unfolding) however conducting a controlled equivocation requires recognizing the 'tie' and 'umbrella' as also different things to that which Father Pierre or I could have full access to. The 'tie' and 'umbrella' were significant and being put into play in this politically significant moment as signs of distinction precisely but also because they were not the same thing as what a tie and umbrella is, as Father Pierre or I could experience them to be.

Uncomfortably following the footsteps of Father Pierre, I aimed to explore recognizing difference and acknowledging my own limitations to know, by attempting translation as a controlled equivocation in my own research to avoid reproducing epistemic violence. Before moving onto the second case of my interpretation of an uncontrolled equivocation from a subaltern position occurring in the classroom of this indigenous territory, I briefly discuss the broader political context this classroom belongs to as part of establishing a bilingual intercultural education system in Ecuador.

Challenging misrecognition and epistemic violence through intercultural education

For Taylor (1994), at the heart of the rise of multicultural politics is the concern over violating the conditions necessary for all individuals to develop as autonomous individuals:

> The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by *mis*recognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them confining or demeaning a contemptible picture of themselves. (Taylor, 1994, p. 25)

Taylor reflects that multicultural politics aims at avoiding this form of discrimination since the philosophical debate from a liberal perspective has acknowledged that misrecognition is a fundamental act of violence against the integrity of the individual. At an international level, the need that modern states address this historical process of misrecognition through legal and institutional mechanism was established in the political arena from the 1980s onwards. This is reflected, for example, in The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples convention No 169 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) ((ILO, 1986), which moves away from the notion of incorporation and assimilation of indigenous populations into the nation-state, to that of self-determination as central to the recognition of collective rights, including the right for indigenous peoples to have a central role in the development of their education plans and programmes. This could be said to go some way towards addressing the historical marginalization from decision making and challenging the principally assimilationist role education has played at a national level towards indigenous peoples. At this level, intercultural education is framed as an individual right, in other words, as the equal right to ascribe to a specific cultural identity without harm. Whilst international conventions and national governments tend to frame recognition of cultural identity and therefore intercultural education as an individual right, many have highlighted that indigenous politics and the demand from indigenous communities and organizations runs deeper. Taylor (1994) from a liberal philosophical perspective already points to the fact that interculturalism is not simply a recognition of sameness encompassed by individual cultural rights, but a 'further demand' that sits uncomfortably in liberal philosophy since it is a demand for recognition of difference, not simply at an individual level but the equal recognition of the product of this difference (pp. 42–43). Taylor resolves this by proposing *a priori* recognition of cultural knowledge grounded on Gadamer's proposition of the broadening of horizons (1994, p. 67). However, this proposition can be critiqued as keeping the subaltern on the margins, awaiting a broadening of horizons from a dominant subjective position. The existing racialized hierarchical structures are underplayed, and a universal epistemology is fundamentally left challenged.

Aman (2023) acknowledges how attention needs to be paid to the discursive construction of interculturality/interculturalidad from differing subjective positions. Aman (2023) highlights that in contrast to interculturality framed by transnational organizations, indigenous actors involved in education in Ecuador construct interculturalidad in the context of power relationships and as a political counter-hegemonic struggle. From a decolonial perspective interculturalism can be understood as fundamentally an epistemological concern towards a social transformation challenging the dualist construction of dominant vs subaltern to position epistemological pluralism. For an intercultural education, this is a tall order and as decolonial scholars describe it about finding and creating 'cracks' that do not exclude but challenge a single episteme (Walsh, 2012, p. 16). It is therefore the legitimization of alternative epistemologies as part of these struggles enabling an intercultural dialogue, i.e. a dialogue between ways of knowing (Santos, 2018). The positioning of the indigenous subject as social/political actor in the struggle to claim and construct 'our own' education in the case of the Nasa People of Colombia (Rappaport, 2005) and in establishing an intercultural university by indigenous organizations in Ecuador (Sarango, 2009) is a significant act in the process of a decolonizing education. Broadly, the implication for an intercultural education is finding and creating spaces that reveal and challenge the continuation of epistemic violence, positioning subaltern ways of knowing and being and developing mechanism for a critical dialogue with that understood as 'universal' knowledge, which in schools is represented as official knowledge. It is not a process of reverse exclusion as Mignolo and Walsh (2018) are at pains to highlight.

In the Ecuadorian context, since the establishment of formal intercultural bilingual education in 1988, there has been growing criticism that at best formal education has only superficially readdressed the representation of indigenous peoples and cultures, and at worse continues to be a neo-colonial assimilationist education (Altmann, 2017; Aman, 2023; Granda Mechan, 2019; Martínez Novo, 2014a). The implementation of bilingual intercultural education portrays

a complex picture not least due to the diverse social and cultural contexts existing on the ground. Continued language shift from indigenous languages to Spanish at a social level, means younger generations are either Spanish monolinguals or passive bilinguals with an understanding of their indigenous language but limitations in speak it (Haboud, 2019). In combination with these findings, empirical research in the classrooms of bilingual intercultural schools reveals that by and large education policy has been ineffective in inserting indigenous languages as languages of transmission of knowledge, and content continues to be textbook driven, reproducing dominant 'universal' knowledge and essentializing indigeneity (Granda Mechan, 2019; López, 2021; Martinez Novo, 2014b).

In the school of the indigenous Kichwa territory, I interpret the second case of uncontrolled equivocation, which as I shall develop below reflects some of the challenges mentioned above and could be said represents the continued struggle of establishing a bilingual intercultural education as a formal and institutionalized system. The indigenous Kichwa territory is approximately 200,000 hectares of mostly ancient Amazon Forest along a main river estuary that leads to the Amazon River, composed of a population of between 1500 and 2000 individuals. Most families live from self-subsistence farming and hunting, with intermittent salary paid work. Recognition of this as a collective ancestral territory was only obtained in 1994 as part of the struggle for land reforms.

At the time of my research (2015), five primary schools functioned, one in each of the communities sharing one secondary school next to a river and grass runway from which the small propeller airplane regularly and precariously arrives and leaves. Approximately four hundred students were receiving formal schooling with a total of 32 teachers. Of these 32 teachers, only 3 considered themselves as non-Kichwa speakers, 28 being direct family members within the communities. The possibility of having five primary schools and one secondary school led almost entirely by local teachers must be understood as gains achieved through indigenous politics, enabling the professionalization of indigenous rural teachers. All the teachers held a certification equivalent to a teaching bachelor's degree which will have been conducted in Spanish. The 28 local teachers were therefore bilingual in Kichwa and Spanish though not all felt that Kichwa was their dominant language. It could be said all the teachers including those that identified as non-Kichwa speakers were bilinguals since the later had very good levels of oral understanding and from what I observed could communicate in Kichwa/Spanish in general conversations. The linguistic repertoire of both students and teachers reflected a high level of code-switching between Kichwa and Spanish as a translanguaging communication practice (García, 2009).

National education language policy, however, does not account for the bilingual and translanguaging communicative reality on the ground, instead reflecting a monolingual perspective of bilingualism, assuming the corresponding indigenous language as mother tongue or first language of acquisition (L1) and Spanish as second language of acquisition. It sets up a bilingual progression in primary school starting with 75% use of the indigenous language with Spanish introduced for 25% of the curriculum, moving towards an equal proportion by the start of secondary school (MOSEIB, 2014). As García (2017) has highlighted bilingual education tends to reinforce the notion of linguistic separation. In the context of my research, this translated to odd practices on the ground, with teachers attempting to conduct some lessons exclusively in Spanish and others exclusively in Kichwa at the primary school level. From my observations in the classroom, this was mostly unsuccessful, with teachers predominantly using Spanish for formal instruction and following the content of standardized Spanish textbooks in Spanish, switching to Kichwa and translanguaging for explanations and more organic communicative practices. This is exactly the case of the lesson I partially transcribe below. However, before presenting this transcription is important to note, that due to the context described, translanguaging is perceived by the teachers as 'mixing' languages and framed as a linguistic deficit. Most teachers who identified as predominantly Kichwa speakers and that included Carlos, the teacher whose discourse I presented in the transcript below, stated they found it very difficult to read and

write in standardized Kichwa, preferring Spanish and expressed concern and even shame in translanguaging communicative practices saying that they felt they did not know either Spanish or Kichwa 'properly'. At the time, teachers were having to undergo national standardized competence tests including their competence in oral and standardized written Kichwa. Teachers' linguistic attitudes were not surprising since the mismatch between policy and linguistic practice was evidenced by the fact that during my research none of the 32 teachers had passed the official language Kichwa test to accredit positions within the bilingual intercultural education system. Other multilingual research involving minoritized languages in the school contexts report similar issues, showing that whilst teachers and children commonly use their full linguistic repertoire relatively flexibly, teachers tend to follow the dominant discourse in language policy considering that languages should be kept separate (Creese & Blackledge, 2011; García & Velasco, 2012; Manresa, 2022).

Case 2 – Explaining the earth's crust as an uncontrolled equivocation

The transcript of the lesson reproduced here was in the central and oldest primary school which members of the community explained they had built with the funding and auspices of the Dominican mission in the 1960s. The school is a single-story row of breeze block classrooms, with aluminium sheets roof and high set metal framed windows, very typical of rural school buildings across the region, to this day.

The school day starts early, by 7 am children are settled in the class and after a quick chat with the teacher Carlos and greeting the children, I settle in a seat to one side, to take notes, audio record sections of the lesson and help if called to. Carlos, at the time aged in his mid to late 40s, is a community member and has regularly formed part of the leadership council. He had 24 years' experience of teaching obtaining his university teaching degree in 2010 as part of collaborative educational initiative with the University of Cuenca (Ecuador) and University of Leida (Spain). The class is composed of 14 children, aged between 9 and 11 in grade 5 equivalent to the penultimate year of primary school. The first lesson corresponds to '*Ciencias Naturales*' (Natural Sciences) and Carlos whilst opening the textbook asks the children to do the same on the page titled 'Las capas de la tierra' (The layers of the earth). Carlos drew three concentric circles on the board representing the transect image of the earth, labelling the three layers described in the textbook in Spanish: *Núcleo, Manto, Corteza* (Core, Mantle, Crust). He then told the children that they were going to talk about the top layer (the earth's crust).

The transcription and translation were conducted as a collaborative process with a professional Kichwa language teacher, Rumi, enabling a sharing of our 'linguistic and semiotic resources' (Martin-Jones & Martin, 2017, p. 190). Below, I incorporate the description of this process and significance of sharing our linguistic and semiotic resources as intrinsic to the research itself, thus, aiming to show 'there is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed' (Wolf, 2011; in Copland & Creese, 2015, p. 119). I had known Rumi initially as my long suffering Kichwa teacher, however, though I had a basic understanding of Kichwa at a communicative level, I lack the competence to transcribe and translate the nuances and complexity of real-life conversations. Having said this, I did have particular linguistic skills that enabled me to identify potentially 'rich points' (Agar, 2008; in Copland & Creese, 2015, p. 48), that then Rumi and I spent hours transcribing and translating together. I was very accustomed to a similar linguistic repertoire and local discourse from my years living in the Kichwa-speaking Amazon region and being a bilingual (Spanish/English) from birth myself, regularly translanguaging in my family context. This meant that whilst I could not pick up all the words, I could mostly understand the overall conversation and pick up on potentially interesting concepts. The reason for not transcribing with the teachers themselves was firstly the time involved would have been unfeasible and as described above would likely have caused unnecessary discomfort.

In contrast, Rumi in his late 40's originally from the Ecuadorian highlands of Chimborazo is part of a minority of Kichwa speakers who is highly knowledgably of standardized Kichwa having trained as a Kichwa language teacher with a well-known Ecuadorian university linguist as part of grassroots initiative to revitalize Kichwa in the capital city of Quito. Rumi was also studying linguistics for his bachelor's degree at university, which meant he understood and felt comfortable with linguistic variability and had exceptional analytical linguistic skills. What is more, Rumi has a particular interest in Andean cosmologies producing bilingual poetry in Kichwa and Spanish and was interested in the research, even accompanying me later to conduct several workshops with the teachers of this Amazonian Kichwa territory. In transcribing the oral speech to written Kichwa, after some discussion we decided to aim to balance between reflecting the speaker's linguistic repertoire whilst broadly follow the standardized grammatical Kichwa norms.

Here, I reproduce and analyse sections of this lesson's transcripts. The English translation is my own, conducted separately and at a later point. I decided to keep as close correspondence with the transcribed syntax as possible, aiming to reflect the opening of ambiguity in meaning making through the double process of translating.

	Transcription	First translation (Spanish)	Second translation (English)
T	Pachaka kaymi kan. Yachangapak chaypimi tiakun. Pero nukanchikka kaypi kanchik. Imatak kaypika tiyan.	Esto es el mundo. Aquí existe con el fin de que aprendamos. Pero nosotros estamos aquí. ¿Que cosas existe aquí?	This is the world. It exists with the purpose that we learn. But we are here. What exists here?
S	Aycha, Runa	Carne, Personas	Meat, People

(T = teacher speaking, S = Student(s) speaking).

Kichwa is described as an agglutinating language, so 'Pachaka' is composed of the root of the word, *Pacha* and *ka* that is described as emphatic (Ministerio de Educación, Ecuador, 2009). *Pacha* is a term highly discussed in the literature relating to Andean cosmology as undifferentiated 'time/space' broadly referring to the notion of 'the cosmos' (Estermann, 2009). Mannheim, an anthropological linguistic scholar, states how the Dominican missionaries, who through the colonial evangelization working on early translations, had identified the use of 'pacha' as denoting 'world', 'universe' and 'sky', but strangely in some regions denoted clothing, in reference to covering (Mannheim, 1991, p. 135). In everyday speech, 'pacha' can be used to refer to specific time and specific space or broadly as above seems to refer to 'the world'.

Here, in the context of a natural science lesson, there seems little doubt Carlos is referring to the concept of a physical world by drawing a diagram of the earth and then pointing to it. Therefore, 'pachaka' appears to correspond to pointing to the physical planet Earth. The next sentence is a little more obscure since in reference to the Earth, Carlos states: 'Yachangapak chaypimi tiakun' (It exists with the purpose that we learn). I found this statement curious and in the process of translation felt it required some care in interpretation. My own disciplinary background in natural sciences of course influenced my interpretation. So, whilst Rumi did not stop at this statement, I did and questioned whether this statement referred to the notion of 'learning about the earth'? Or was the teacher making a statement in terms of embodied learning through our lived experience of the earth? In this context, Carlos then asked; 'what exists here?', pointing specifically to the outer layer of the diagram, i.e. the earth's crust. In response, the most audible child said; 'Aycha, Runa' (meat and person). Again, *Runa* is a significant term which is not only discussed in terms of a literal translation as a person, but as a specific Andean conceptualization of personhood. Both Rumi and I found the child's response significant reflecting the lived experience of this child in this context, whereby here on the earth's crust 'meat and people' are most definitely things that exist. Carlos continued to ask what else they knew exists, with some of the children replying by naming local animals and commonly found tangible objects. It appeared that the class considered the earth's crust in terms of what was familiar and significant to them locally. This is a common and evidently appropriate pedagogic

practice. From here however, a curious turn takes place. Carlos, having acknowledged the previous response of the children did not seem satisfied with this and so reformulated the next set of questions as follows:

	Transcription	Spanish Translation	English translation
T	Chaypash kawsan. Pitak kangunaman kawsayta karawarka?	Viven otros también. Quien, brindo/ compartió la vida a ustedes?	Others live too. Who, granted/shared life with you?
T	Imawantak kawsanchik? Sachawan? *Sami muyu* tiyan.	¿Con que vivimos? ¿Con la selva? Existe *sami muyu*.	With what do we live? With the forest? *Sami muyu exist.*

(T = Teacher speaking, S = Student(s) speaking).

Carlos is prompting for a fuller explanation, stating: 'Chaypash kawsan' (Others live too). He then asks: 'Pitak kangunaman kawsayta karawarka?' the literal translation being 'Who with you life is shared', which we translated to 'who granted/shared life with you?' Again, Rumi and I had to slow down to interpret this sentence. From, a biological perspective, the appropriate response could have been our parents. However, Carlos continues, asking 'Imawantak kawsanchik?' (with what do we live with?). Since there are murmurs and no clear response from the children, Carlos proposes: 'Sachawan?' (with the forest?). This means that the previous question cannot be translated in reference to a biological category, but instead refers to a different notion of 'who' can grant life. If the answer as the teacher proposes is the forest, then the forest is being enunciated as a 'who' or as an Other. Framed within a natural science lesson, this appeared to me as discordant with biological or geological categories for describing the earth's crust, since the forest, *Sacha* as it is being enunciated here, refers to a form of agency, i.e. a subject, not an object of study. This can be understood in terms of Holbraad and Pedersen's (2017) proposition that:

> the ethnographic encounter with a *nonsense* demands an openness in formulating a different type of description; one that forces a shift of the ethnographer's means of categorizing in terms of a subject/object divide, in making sense of what things are present. (pp. 4–6, my emphasis)

From my own subjective position, Carlos' enunciation requires an openness, to avoid repeating an uncontrolled equivocation that re-establishes epistemic violence. In other words, it requires attempting translation as controlled equivocation following Blaser's (2016) proposition to extend the Cosmopolitics to an ontological diversity acknowledging that what is being brought into the political debate, along with human agents are non-human agents.

In this way, Carlos' follow-up statement to what also exists '*Sami muyu tiyan*' causes Rumi and I to 'slow down' further and it is at this point I consider we were attempting translation as a controlled equivocation. Rumi questioned what exactly Carlos may be referring to with '*sami muyu*'. 'Muyu' in kichwa can refer directly as a noun to a seed, or bud.[5] However, as a verb 'muyuna' more abstractly refers to a circular action. Mannheim in analysing the significance and complexity over reciprocity as a cyclical process, describes the connection often made with a circular motion referring to various terms, stating: 'One of the pre-Colombian epithets for the deity *Wiraqucha tiqsi muyu* as "beginning or root circle" and describes that making a circular motion with the hands is a common expressive action for Quechua speakers' (Mannheim, 1991, p. 91). 'Sami' according to the updated Kichwa/Spanish Ecuadorian dictionary is translated as 'varieties' and, also refers to 'happiness, fulfilment and energy' (Ministerio de Educación, 2009, pp. 122–123). For Rumi *sami muyu* could be literally translated as 'varieties of seeds' and so pointing to biological plant diversity. However, Rumi was adamant that *sami muyu* is not equivalent to 'varieties of seeds' in a biological sense but *is* something quite different. Like the reference described by Mannheim, Rumi drew a spiral on our notebook and explained, *sami muyu* is the seed at the centre of a spiral saying: 'con la existencia de la fuerza inicial' (with the initial force of existence). We both got excited about this, Rumi going into depth explaining to me how *sami muyu* is a point of origin, and I trying to grasp this explanation as a form of undifferentiated life-giving energy. In summary, this process of transcribing and translating led to an opening

up of categorizing the matter of concern in terms of object/subject (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017), by slowing down (Stengers, 2005) for constructing 'partially connections' (Strathern, 2005), as a continuous and dynamic process of explaining and understanding. Recognizing the partial connections in constructing what *sami muyu* could be denoting, we settled for something like: 'the seed of life-giving energy'. Rumi seemed relatively satisfied with this, however, we both decided that consequently we should leave the term in Kichwa in the translation.

Of course, this raised the question, what *was sami muyu* in this lesson. On my next visit during a small social gathering, I took the opportunity to ask one of the local 'curanderos' (healers) in Spanish what *sami muyu* is? I did not provide a context; beyond that I had heard *sami muyu* spoken and did not know what it was. He did not hesitate, pointing to the horizon he said 'alla en el monte,[6] es *sami muyu*' (over there in the forest is *sami muyu*) whilst making a circular motion with his hand. He then walked away, granting no further explanation. Excited and feeling confident, the following day I had the chance to ask Carlos about what he had meant by *sami muyu,* explaining only that Rumi and I had been transcribing part of his lesson and we were not sure. Carlos without hardly any hesitation replied 'variedad de semillas' (variety of seeds). I was struck and must admit conflicted by this answer. What was I to do? I thought Rumi and I had developed a rich exploration, potentially revealing the enactment of a way of knowing that differed from the textbook's intended scientific categorization of the earth and discourse? I explained to Carlos the discussion over the transcript I had with Rumi as to the meaning of *sami muyu* and what the local healer had expressed. Carlos seemed interested, but to my dismay responded only saying '*si, eso tambien*' (yes, that too) and then similarly to the healer walked away.

On the one hand, the process of transcription shows that *Sacha* and *sami muyu* are enunciated by Carlos as entities in their own right, commonly described in the literature as referring to a more-than-human agency (Blaser, 2014) or earth beings (De la Cadena, 2015). However, Carlos is inserting this in a natural science lesson, supposedly aimed at learning a scientific categorization of the earth as a physical object. The discourse that names the forest as life granting creates a disjuncture with the discourse of school subject knowledge the textbook is embedded in, i.e. a basic scientific characterization of the earth as an object of study. In other words, *Sacha* and *sami muyu* may not be the same things as 'forest' or 'varieties of seeds' as physical objects. On the other hand, Carlos said *sami muyu* was *variedad de semillas* variety of seeds alluding to a notion of biodiversity.

Reproducing epistemic violence?

My interpretation for a long time was that Carlos is unaware that his way of describing the earth's crust does not correspond to official subject knowledge, and so in fact is conducting an uncontrolled equivocation, similar though notably different since it occurs from an opposite subjective position to that of Father Pierre. My analysis was that Carlos and Father Pierre across time do not recognize they are conducting an uncontrolled equivocation creating equivalence over what is. Carlos' discourse of the earth crust provides the opportunity for non-human agency to be present, whilst textbook scientific knowledge is categorizing the earth's crust as a material object of study. Positioned from a critical anthropological debate aiming to acknowledge ontological diversity moving beyond conceptualizing difference defined only in terms of cultural perspectives, leaving the *world* untouched, (Blaser, 2014; De Castro, 2004; De la Cadena, 2015), I suggest this lesson is an example whereby a radical alterity is unexpectedly made present in the official space the school classroom represents. In this way, Carlos is making non-human agency present in a 'geography' lesson, where the official textbook is firmly reproducing school-based scientific knowledge. From Rumi's interpretation of s*ami muyu*, I interpret that Carlos is creating a rupture with dominant 'universal' knowledge from a subaltern subject position that enables a non-permitted Other to enter the space of the classroom. I argue that Carlos' lesson about the earth's layers, equates with that of Father Pierre's equivocation of Palate's, 'tie and umbrella' as 'amulets' the key difference is that Father Pierre conducts his equivocation from a dominant subject position and here Carlos is doing so

from a subaltern subjective position. The result is a potential disruption in the hierarchical relationship between 'universal' and 'local knowledge'. In this lesson, what De Sousa Santos (2007) describes as positioned in the 'abyss', and is potentially made present.

A *slowing down*, conducted between Rumi and I, made possible in this collaborative process of co-transcribing and translating opened the possibility of altering, as Blaser proposes what *was* the matter of concern in terms of the earth's crust. Similarly, this could be understood as a '*theory-and-as-praxis and praxis-and-as-theory*' (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 7) that recognizes and disrupts epistemic violence.

My dilemma comes because Carlos did say he was referring to 'variety of seeds'. So, in the above analysis, am I closer to reproducing Father Pierre's dominant position and consequent epistemic violence, than not? After all, I am similarly to Father Pierre describing an encounter and presenting an explanation about the other. As with Father Pierre, I am certain from my knowledge of science, that the textbooks' scientific discourse and Carlos' are incompatible. The epistemologically incompatibility represented in the discourses, for me is very real. I am sure that two ways of knowing are present, one in the textbook that is open but ignored and the other in the dialogue and explanation between teacher and children. My argument is that the latter is a subalternized way of knowing that enables the presence of non-human agency in the understanding of what the earth is. I conclude, this enabling only occurs because Carlos conducts an uncontrolled equivocation since he is unaware of the epistemological contrast expressed in these discourses. Carlos assumes his discourse is compatible with the discourse in the textbook. In this way, epistemic violence is disrupted but not in the form that reveals and questions the hierarchical relationship between dominant knowledge and subalternized knowledge. This power relationship is left unchallenged. For me, this created a dilemma, on the one hand, the discourse in this classroom enacts subalternized knowledge in this official space, but on the other, the school textbook's dominant position representing official knowledge is left undisturbed. It is true to say that the textbook in this event is left on the tables open and ignored, but its position as representing what counts as knowledge is not altered. In other words, the existence of plural epistemologies in this classroom was potentially enabled by enacting diverse ontologies but did not correspond to a critical dialogue since power relationships were not revealed.

I believed that for Carlos it was important to be teaching natural science compatible with the textbook, precisely due to the existing power relations and so *sami muyu* had to correspond to variety of seeds in reference to a category compatible with biodiversity. I interpreted, Carlos was responding to me as a researcher observing his lesson and asking him, what *sami muyu* meant in the context of a natural science subject lesson. Secondly, teachers at the time were being measured and judged at a national level in relation to their level of '*competence*' in terms of 'basic' levels of knowledge and cognitive skills (as described to me by an official from the department of education). However, Rumi's interpretation is also present as suggested by the healer's response and Carlos' confirmation stating, 'yes, that too'.

Upon reflection, the problem with my above analysis is my implicit intention to *fix* the equivocation. By prioritizing a critical perspective in disrupting hierarchical power relations in challenging epistemic violence and towards a transformative process, I underplayed the significance of Carlos' 'yes, that too' and the situatedness of these dialogues, i.e. the non-settling, the non-establishing of a new hybrid in recreating meaning across difference. Instead, I read the equivocation from a bird's eye view and not as inserted in the dialogue. Following MacDonald and O'Regan (2013), critique of doing intercultural research from a critical-transformational perspective, in my own analysis I become unaware (since it is not that I don't know or forget, it is that in that moment I have not taken in into account) of Derrida's différance, aiming again to 'fix' the sign by constructing meaning as if 'outside' the dialogue and so commit an act of unintended violence (p. 1011/2).

More so, returning to Blaser proposition of making use of translation as a controlled equivocation, I had failed to acknowledge that whilst different discourses maybe embedded in diverse

ontologies these are not isolated, I had ignored the '*as well* … as a matter of a both/and' reproduced an 'either/or'. Unsettled and unable to recognize Carlos' 'that too' I had privileged and imposed my understanding of epistemological incompatibility by reproducing my dominant subjective position from within my own discourse. I had similarly to Father Pierre assumed Carlos' response was transparent to me. I had assumed I had recognized difference but had fixed this difference and in so doing so had insisted on and either/or from within my own discourse. I had not recognized my limits to know Carlos's 'yes, that too' and had in effect dismissed this, consequently reproducing epistemic violence. This does not mean I am not troubled that the textbook continues to hold symbolic power in this classroom and that these teachers' competence will continue to be measured in relation to its assumed universalizing 'truth'. However, as with the historical encounter between Palate and Father Pierre, it was not that teachers were unaware of the existing power relationships, reread as a controlled equivocation, Carlos' was acknowledging this in his response but whilst I could only accept *sami muyu* as an either/or, Carlos was stating *sami muyu* as a both/and, a powerful act enabling multiplicity and the potential for agency in a space that does not tolerate an 'as well'.

Notes

1. Father Pierre's encounter is described as a settlement of the Canelos people along the Bobonaza river but does not specify which one and at the time settlements were not geographically fixed. This means that the historical settlement that Father Pierre describes is part of a wider territory of settlements which Palate is recognized as historical leader. I conducted my research in one of these current communities along the Bobonaza river and so may or may not correspond to the same geographical location.
2. I use Kichwa since this represents the spelling promoted by Ecuadorian indigenous confederation and used officially since 2008. Within the discipline of linguistics, Kichwa is recognized as Ecuadorian Quichua part of the linguistic family of Quechua spoken widely across Andean countries and beyond.
3. See Rappaport (2005) chapter 2 on what it means to collaborate and be *colaboradora* within the context of indigenous politics as a diverse and dynamic sharing and creating of ideological positions.
4. For a detailed explanation of the notion of metamorphosis as the ability to change corporal form see Uzendoski (2004).
5. Kichwa: Yachukukkunapa Shimiyuk kamu (2009) Kichwa/Spanish dictionary published by the Ministry of Education, Ecuador.
6. *El Monte* is an Ecuadorian Spanish term that refers to uninhabited areas, the word *bosque* literally meaning forest is not usually used and mostly reserved for technical term.

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that brings together research and teaching practices promoting social justice within education. My interest in intercultural education arose from collaborating with Amazonian Ecuadorian community groups and local NGO's and coordinated various popular education programmes and networks with indigenous community and young people's groups of the Ecuadorian Amazon region.

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