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THE NAWAT LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IN EL SALVADOR AND HOW ITS
DIGITAL ACTIVISM TRANSCENDS BORDERS

By

SERGIO JOSÉ MENDOZA GALLARDO

A master's capstone project submitted to the Graduate Faculty in International Migration Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, The City University of
New York.

2023

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APPROVAL

The Nawat Language Revitalization in El Salvador and How its Digital Activism Transcends
Borders

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Sergio José Mendoza Gallardo

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in
International Migration Studies in satisfaction of the capstone requirement
for the degree of Master of Arts.

Approved:

Phillip Kasinitz, Thesis Advisor

Richard Ocejo, Program Director

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT

THE NAWAT LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION IN EL SALVADOR AND ITS DIGITAL ACTIVISM THAT TRASCENDS BORDERS

By

SERGIO JOSÉ MENDOZA GALLARDO

Advisor: Phillip Kasinitz

In this research project I seek to show how digital activism for Nawat revitalization can transcend beyond the Salvadoran borders. The goal is to show how the revitalization of Nawat can have a better chance to be successful thanks to technology. Nawat is the last indigenous language in El Salvador, and its position within Salvadoran society has been uncertain for many years. Thus, I aim to show how technological efforts can help revitalize Nawat language with the efforts that are already being done. Although El Salvador has had a dark ethnic history regarding indigenous people, there are actions being taken by the government to amend mistakes from the past. The main text documenting Nawat will be briefly discussed along with the most recent writing system for Nawat to become a written language. Additionally, the efforts made in different Latin American countries to maintain and revitalize indigenous languages will be compared and discussed along with those efforts being done in El Salvador so Nawat –a language with 200 speakers- can thrive.

Keywords: El Salvador, Salvadoran, Nawat, Mesoamerica, indigenous, language, border, digital activism, revitalization

Acknowledgments

First, I am very grateful to God who has given me the fortitude and the wisdom to learn new information and for giving the words necessary to write this Capstone Project. My life will not be enough to express gratitude to my mother and my father who have inspired me and have sacrificed in life for me to get this far. I also want to thank my beloved wife, my dear son and my dear daughter who have supported me and yet have felt my absence when I had to spend hours working on this project. I want to thank my advisor Philip Kasinitz and the International Migration Master's Program director Richard Ocejo. Finally, I want to thank my immediate family who made it possible for me to be in this country, all the professors who have inspired me, the Salvadoran indigenous people who have been resilient enough to help us change the course of history, my beloved country of El Salvador and the United States which is my new home.

This project is dedicated to all those Nawat speakers who have made it possible for the language to thrive and be documented to avoid its extinction.

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Introduction

Nawat is a language that belongs to the family of Yuto-Nahua languages from Mesoamerica that departed from the Northern part of Mexico to the South, passing through the Central American isthmus all the way to Nicaragua. Nawat itself is a result of a migratory phenomenon and it got to what today is El Salvador with indigenous peoples that immigrated from the North to the South centuries before the Spaniards arrived to the American continent. The Nawat, as the last indigenous language that remains alive in El Salvador, is spoken mostly in the West of the country. Within the academic circles, is called Pipil Nawat or Nawat to distinguish it from other Nahuatl languages from Mexico; though they derived from a common root, they are different languages. Nawat, catalogued as a language in severe danger of extinction, is (still) a living language that presents varieties with subtle differences where dialects or variations emerge in some municipalities -in Sonsonate, El Salvador- (Gálvez Guevara, 2017). The information available about the Nawat spoken in El Salvador contemporarily comes from books published by the Salvadoran government in the last decade and from linguistic research done in the mid and late 20th century by Nawat pioneer linguists like Leonhard Schultze Jena, Próspero Araúz, and Lyle Campbell. The most recent linguist who published a book about Nawat was Alan Roy King in the beginning of the 21st century in 2011. El Salvador, situated in Central America, has a territorial extension of around 20,720 Km². It has a high population density with 313 people per Km² (811 people per mi²). It has a population of 6,557,687 based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data. On my thesis I seek to show how digital activism regarding Nawat language revitalization in El Salvador can transcend borders through internet and social media platforms. I will also talk about the efforts being made in schools to preserve Nawat by teaching it to new generations, possible backslashes because

Nawat has to compete with other languages commonly taught, the racial composition of El Salvador's population, and the efforts being made by the government to preserve Nawat; and the diffusion of Nawat language on social media networks. This research is intended to be the first one of several research regarding Nawat revitalization. In the future I plan to gather information from Salvadorans in El Salvador and then from Salvadorans in the United States and consider the countless variables to understand their stance and perception regarding Nawat language and its revitalization. This project is focused in the efforts to revitalize Nawat, the last indigenous language in El Salvador, its position within Salvadoran society and how strategies used in other countries to help indigenous languages thrive and be revitalized can be applied in El Salvador.

Most Salvadorans may know about the existence of Nawat. There is great difference between knowing about the existence Nawat language and attempt to learn it and promote it. Many Salvadoran people may embrace the idea of indigeneity in El Salvador, women may be more accepting of that fact, this could be because of the role that women have in Salvadoran society in which most are housewives or perform domestic jobs, while men go to the job market or perform more physical agricultural jobs and worry more about fitting in in society and the progress of the next generations. Men may receive more pressure from the job market and may have a different understanding of the skills demanded to gain upward mobility. Salvadoran history may also be a phenomenon that could be associated to the stigmatization of indigenous culture and therefore indigenous language in El Salvador. In most of the low income developing countries, the poor and weak speak a language different to the one spoken by the rich and powerful (Nickson, 2009) Many people fear being associated with indigeneity, anything that relates to the term "indio" -inherited from Columbus mistaking America with India-. Many may

think that revitalizing an indigenous language would represent a step backwards in the effort that they have made to get where they are as individuals and as a family in the Salvadoran society. Thus, always associating, in this case, Nawat language to the rural, the ancient, and the obsolete. Likewise, historical events like *La Matanza* had a great impact on the Salvadoran society and the topic of Nawat language revitalization and diffusion. Many may fear to be discriminated or rejected from the main stream society. It seems that after suffering the traumatic experience of physical and cultural repression that lead to *La Matanza*, the indigenous population was forced to hide their identity and any kind of protest. (Rodriguez, 2002). The sentiments of resignation to marginalization could have transcended after a century of deplorable events where many indigenous lost their lives. The people may want to avoid being target of ethnic violence that has sadly been part of Salvadoran history. However, it is important to highlight that we are living in a new century and many aspects of life have changed in about twenty years. The world has become smaller due to the internet; people know and learn more about their rights every day and make public any kind of repression. Salvadoran people should trust the will to repair the damage caused throughout El Salvador's history and understand that Nawat is part of El Salvador's cultural patrimony.

Nawat language and European languages

Teaching Nawat along European languages could be a good step to bring Nawat back. This initiative can help to amend the mistakes of the past, like undervaluing that culture that was already there before the arrival of the Spanish. Many Salvadoran people may support Nawat teaching alongside European language, but of course there may be some people that is opposed to that. A reason that can be considered for those who may oppose can be that Nawat may not be seen as a profitable language compared to the possibilities that a European language offers, especially the English language. That is the case in communities in other countries like Ecuador in which most of the people in the Chiriguasi community do not wish to have bilingual education in Quichua and Spanish. They prefer Spanish-English bilingualism and regard these two languages as important and necessary for leaving their community and traveling to other cities and countries in order to study or work because communication in the cities is only in Spanish or English. (Hornberger, 2012). In El Salvador, just like in this Ecuadoran community, English language may be seen as way to achieve upward mobility due to the prestige and competitiveness that it could add to a resume in El Salvador. However, learning Nawat language would reaffirm Salvadoran identity and pride in a modern era in which Spanish and Nawat could be the national languages and coexist with foreign languages. It is important to focus on examples like the one in Paraguay and Guaraní language in which both Guaraní and Spanish coexist along with the teaching of foreign languages.

The presence of Nawat language in schools has great importance if people want to revitalize and pass it on. Having children learning Nawat at an early age may give some hope to the language. The efforts should be made by the educational institutions to motivate the children to learn this language as part of their identity. The indigenous educational process is in a position

to cultivate and recuperate the mother tongue and to learn the second language as a tool of intercommunication. (Hornberger, 2012). In the case of El Salvador, there is no data that talks about children who learn Nawat as their first language, but they can definitely learn it as a second language to build a bilingual society for the sake of having Nawat as a national patrimony and cultural identity.

It is important to talk more about the ethno-racial composition of El Salvador. According to the last census that was done in El Salvador in 2007, the ethno-racial composition of El Salvador was the following: 86.3% *Mestizo*, 12.7% European, 0.23% Indigenous, 0.13% Afro-descendant, and 0.64% others (mostly from the Middle East). El Salvador has no racial divisions compared to the importance of race in the United States, but there may still be stigma when talking about indigenous language, especially when people have suffered discrimination because of their darker skin color. Some people may be against a project to revitalize Nawat, those could be the ones who plan to emigrate or those who have relatives abroad that may advise them to learn the language of the country receiving immigrants. By looking at the census data, one could say that the low number of people identifying as indigenous reflects the endangerment of Nawat because language shift from Nawat to Spanish is for the most part complete. It is a reality that El Salvador does not have that many indigenous people within its population compared Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay or Peru.

Resources available online, promotion and digital activism for Nawat revitalization

The internet and social media networks have given a voice to many causes that hardly got to a few people before, but now these go viral. This technological determinism has fuelled many revolutions worldwide and can surely boost the Nawat learning and awareness among Salvadorans. Realistically, In El Salvador there is still a long way to go in regards to internet connectivity because it is not widely available to the general population although many have the domestic or the mobile internet service. At the same time, that educational content has to compete with banal entertainment that exists within the World Wide Web and social media networks. It is important to mention that the linguist Alan R. King published the most actual reference book to Nawat learning, *Timumachtikan!/: Nawat language course for adult beginners* in 2011. Furthermore, the professor, Héctor Martínez who leads the initiative “*Timimachtikan Nawat!*” got prepared so that the Education Ministry certified him as a teacher specialized in Nawat and cultural identity, goal that he accomplished in 2018 and one year later he became a Nawat language professor in higher education. Then in 2019, Martínez started creating multimedia content in the different social media platforms in the internet. (Chicas, 2021). This is an example of technological determinism and this initiative is promoted so that it acquires the momentum necessary to get young people to learn Nawat language. Of course the people learning Nawat as a second language do not necessarily have to perform all the customs of the Nahua peoples of El Salvador because syncretism and the fusion of indigenous culture and Catholicism are practices well accepted in the Salvadoran mainstream. When it comes to authenticity, Martínez does not only base his teaching and multimedia lessons on the book, but he is in constant contact with the last Nawat speakers, who are less than 200 according to the 2007 census. By visiting indigenous communities, Martínez has documented unique information

about Nawat that is not found in other sources, for example: the word for one thousand, that as of 2019 its name was unknown in Nawat. (Carlisle, 2022). Most of the Nawat speakers are elders, but do know many words had not been documented before. There is a very small number of people who learned Nawat before Spanish. As of now, the *Timimachtikan Nawat* initiative has multimedia Nawat educational content on YouTube, on Facebook, on Instagram, on TikTok. Through this modern ways to communicate and reach the masses it can be shown that Nawat is alive and that it is compatible with contemporary times. It is important that Nawat language gets divulged among Salvadoran people and scholars to avoid its extinction so that more Salvadorans can inherit this patrimony that was neglected for many years. Martínez creates and posts multimedia materials in the different social media platforms, the main objective is to document, raise awareness, and revitalize Nawat. (Carlisle, 2022). Even though Martínez is very involved and advocates for Nawat language, it is important to point out that Martínez does not embody the indigenous identity with excess, on the contrary, he tries to expose a new generation of Salvadorans that seek to preserve the Nawat language as a patrimony in a modern Salvadoran society where people can reconnect with their heritage without excess. As linguistic anthropology developed as a tradition distinctive from both linguistics and other subfields of anthropology, it often focused on those communicative practices believe to be most “traditional” despite dramatic cultural change, such as ritual speech and performance. For these reasons, linguistic anthropologists as well as other kinds of sociolinguists working with minority language groups often viewed speakers’ shift away from their language of heritage as a shift away from an authentic past. (Bucholtz, 2003). Trying to maintain Nawat language in Salvadoran culture as a diffusion of the indigeneity and hispanicity would not implicate to shift away from an authentic past because languages and cultures are alive, they never remain static. The language and culture

remain static only when these disappear. The point is being realistic and understand that much of the indigenous culture in El Salvador has blended through syncretism with catholic practices, almost all Salvadorans have become a homogeneous population of *Mestizos*. Nawat language would play a role within modern national identity without having to dress or live as indigenous people once did.

Government efforts: mass media and educational system

The current government of El Salvador (2019-2024) has given more relevance to the topic of learning and Nawat language representation. Both Nawat and Spanish are heard every time the national anthem is transmitted through national radio and television every time transmission starts or ends for the day. Seeing children using the language gives hope for the diffusion and acceptance of it as national patrimony. Television still prevails as the strongest mass means of communication to get informed in El Salvador regardless of the gender people identify with. It also shows the potential that it has to reach all the Salvadoran people and to promote the existing initiatives and design new ones to revitalize Nawat. If Nawat gets to gain political relevance as Spanish in the USA and Guaraní in Paraguay, it would reach a new whole level of relevance in El Salvador. A shocking example was the televised debate during presidential campaigns on April, 2003, when for the first time, the three main contestants tried to show off their linguistic competence in Guaraní. (Nickson, 2009). This is a clear example that the language can acquire more relevance when politicians that compete for a high political position get interested in it. They become the example for the rest of the people and establish precedents for future politicians so learning the language becomes an important asset for national promotion. International events can also be of great help to diffuse and create awareness of Nawat language, the following is another example related to Paraguay and Guaraní language. The most dramatic example of this new visibility happened on July, 1999, when Paraguay was the host to a Latin-American soccer championship... in the opening ceremony the president Gonzales Macchi welcomed all the foreign guests in Guaraní (Nickson, 2009). International events are windows to the world so the people can learn that aboriginal languages are still alive

and above all for the nationals to realize that the language represents their country, that it has international relevance and that it is something to be proud about.

There are many ways in which Nawat can be strengthened in El Salvador through the use of the different technological tools and means of communication, specially TV and the internet. The current Salvadoran government has not only aired Nawat lessons on mass media through the TV program *¡Aprendamos en casa!* (Let's learn at home), in 2019 the book of memoirs written in Nawat by Eugenio V. Hernández, *Nikmati ume taltikpak: Conozco dos mundos* (I know to worlds) was published by the National Institute of Teacher Formation. One year before, in 2018, the Salvadoran government had published *Titajtakezakan, hablando a través del tiempo* (Talking along the time). This book is an inventory of the oral tradition in Santo Domingo de Guzman which is the town with most of the remaining Nawat speakers. There is a set of six books titled *¡Titaketzakan Nawat!* (Let's speak Nawat) which represent six modules of Nawat teaching in public schools. These books along its audios are also available digitally on El Salvador's MINED (Education Ministry) website. These books were published between 2017 and 2019 by the previous and current government of El Salvador. In addition to the didactic book publications, previous government administrations along with the current one have been supporting the Cuna Nawat Program in different schools within the Western Departamento of Sonsonate, for example: The Complejo Educativo Eduardo Salaverría of Santa Catarina Masahuat, develops a policy of inclusion and equity with girls and boys in the program Cuna Nawat. More than 50 students receive classes in the mixed system, basically, mixing Spanish (instruction) with (instruction) in the mother tongue, Nawat. This effort from the Education Ministry MINED has been recognized by the United Nations Organization for Education Science and Culture UNESCO for linguistic revitalization (MINED, 2020). This dual language program

has been implemented to create biliteracy among children in kindergarten age to promote Nawat language at an early age. The Education Ministry seeks to preserve our indigenous ancestors' language of origin done, mainly, in the municipalities of Santo Domingo de Guzman and Santa Catarina Masahuat, both in Sonsonate. The infancy program Cuna Nawat has as its main goal protect the cultural identity and expand learning of the aboriginal language. The little ones are potential to preserve the mother language -of El Salvador-. (MINED, 2020). In this way, it is evidenced that lately the governments of El Salvador have been committed to support, promote and revitalize Nawat through literacy and education with pedagogic books, emphasizing that Nawat is the last ancestral language surviving in El Salvador.

Salvadorans do support the efforts and initiatives to learn, promote and revitalize Nawat language in El Salvador. It is important to mention that revitalizing Nawat may depend mostly on Salvadoran women. Women are the principal and most influential carriers of culture. This is a role developed over centuries. Women are the base for the cultural evolution of a community. (Hornberger, 2012). The Salvadorans people are proud about their *Mestizaje* which is a good sign for the present and future efforts to create a stronger national identity that includes Nawat as another cultural element that means being Salvadoran. When it comes to the diffusion and revitalization of Nawat, there are many initiatives and resources available online and in social media and the government is doing its part by promoting Nawat through television. There is still a lot more research and initiatives that can be carried out to spread awareness and have more Salvadorans learn the aboriginal language of El Salvador, Nawat.

Nawat in El Salvador: discrimination, language abstinence, and negation.

The encounter between the Europeans and the Indigenous people in the continent that today is known as America marked a drastic change on the ethno-racial makeup of these peoples. The indigenous people and their culture found themselves sentenced to a life of subjugation and undervalue of their languages, practices and customs. The Europeans did not only looted precious metals and resources, but also denigrated, barbarized and dehumanized indigenous people. In addition to that, the Europeans also imposed their religious beliefs, their customs and their language.

There were many different migratory movements in Mesoamerica throughout the pre-Columbian centuries. Many indigenous civilizations settled in the territory that today is known as the Republic of El Salvador. El Salvador is located in the corner of the cultural and linguistic area that many scholars call Mesoamerica. (King, 2011). Even though what today is El Salvador has a small territorial extension and it is located on the margins of such a culturally rich geographical area, people preserved their own indigenous language and practices during the pre-Columbian period. There were Mayan settlements and then there were Nahua settlements that had come from the North centuries before colonization. The Nahuas are also known as Pipiles because of the imposition from the Spaniards and the Mexica indigenous from the North guiding them during the invasion.

According to today's most accepted reconstruction of the events, before the Spaniards came, the Pipiles' ancestors moved within this big area (Mesoamerica), from the Northeast to the Southwest. They departed from the South of Mexico all the way to Nicaragua. (King, 2011). The Pipiles were the last civilization and the one the Spaniards got in contact with. During the colonial period, the indigenous were not exploited in the mining industry as it happened in other

countries because the territory of El Salvador did not have abundant precious metals to invest on such an industry compared to parts of Mexico and Peru. Nonetheless, many indigenous were dispossessed of their lands and sent to mountains where it was hard to work the land. Later on, these same indigenous were deprived of their land again because the coffee industry started in the highlands. There had been *mestizaje* (racial mixing) before independence, and by 1821 El Salvador won its independence; the racial makeup of El Salvador homogenized much more and today El Salvador has the biggest *Mestizo* population of all the Central American countries. (Rodriguez, 2002). However, the anti-indigenous ideas have prevailed along El Salvador's history as a result of colonizing thoughts that undervalued anything that was indigenous. Thus the Salvadoran population, despite their *mestizaje*, rejected the indigenous identity. Throughout the history there were indigenous uprisings that did not agree with the ways in which the oligarchy ruled in El Salvador. Subsequently, after more than a hundred years as an independent republic, *La Matanza* (The Killing) happened to the West of the country. The massacre was a reaction from the government to the peasants' uprising that resulted from the difficult conditions in the country while the rest of the world was going through the fall of the stock market since 1930. (Rodriguez, 2002). This ethnocide has had a great impact on Salvadorans' perception of indigeneity and their ethno-racial heritage itself. As a result of that, many Salvadoran indigenous abandoned their ancestral practices, attires, customs and their language. They feared to become the target of violence coming from the governments established during those decades. Many Salvadorans limited unaccepted indigenous customs to intimate and private spaces. For many years Salvadorans lived with the idea that there were not indigenous people in El Salvador anymore, either because of racial mixing or because they had all been killed in the ethnocides.

It is important to mention that abstinence of certain indigenous practices and Christianisation, made people become devoted to Catholic Church in which they found a way to maintain some of their indigenous practices in a sort of syncretism with Catholic practices. This same syncretism has also created stereotypes related to the idea that people performing such syncretism practiced witchcraft. In her investigation Cecibel Rodríguez asked Elena (a catholic lady with indigenous background from the West of El Salvador) if she could take some pictures of the altar and the saints; Elena said yes. While Rodríguez was taking the pictures, Elena started telling her how one time some people had visited her because they wanted to learn more about the traditions of Nahuizalco (Sonsonate, Western El Salvador). They also asked her if they could take a picture of her beside the altar. Elena accepted without knowing their real intentions behind their request. The following Sunday, to her surprise, Elena found out that her picture had been published in the cover page of one of the national newspapers with an overhead title; “The witches of Nauizalco.” (Rodríguez, 2002). Examples like these have created stereotypes over time. Stereotypes, violent government repression and the unpopularity created by unscrupulous journalists have affected the Salvadorans’ perception of indigenuity and often associate the word “*indio*” with ignorance and poverty. Situations like these have made Salvadoran people negate and avoid being associated with indigenuity despite the fact that Salvadoran population is mostly *Mestizo* with different body shapes and colors resulting from the indigenous and Spanish blood.

Notwithstanding, nowadays there is a factor that could give a voice to the indigenous culture and their language that has not been defended or well represented historically. This factor is the internet, which is the engine of social media. There are many aspects that can represent indigenuity, but the focus will be on a vital element of these peoples, their language. There has been people who have made admirable efforts to maintain El Salvador’s Nawat language alive,

but in the 21st century stands out the British linguist Alan Roy King (1953-2019). King published *Timumachtikan! Nawat language course for adult beginners*. This book is the current reference to teach Nawat language in El Salvador. This same book is used by the activist Héctor Martínez who also keeps close contact with the last people who speak Nawat as a mother tongue. Nowadays technology and social media has had great impact on political issues, but Martínez has been using it to promote Nawat language, this is considered technological determinism. Technological determinism is the “idea that media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, act and how our society operate as we move from one technological age to another (Asogwa & Esimoka, 2015). Martínez has realized how much potential there is on social media and he has given Nawat a new voice and a new hope. Martínez teaches and does digital activism for Nawat language and the people who speak it, on diverse social platforms to avoid that the last indigenous language in El Salvador dies. *Timumachtikan Nawat* (Let’s learn Nawat) is a digital project created by the teacher specialist in Nawat and cultural identity (Chicas, 2021). Martínez also carries out virtual meetings with people from Mexico who are also making efforts to maintain their indigenous languages alive. However, one must be very careful when talking about Nawat from El Salvador and Nahuatl from Mexico. The Pipil Nawat is not the same as the modern Mexican dialects, neither is it evidently the same as the classic Aztec language though these have many shared elements (As for example Spanish, Italian and Latin have many shared elements). It is a frequent error thinking that Nawat and Nahuatl are the same and that one language can be substituted by the other. Also, people sometimes talk about Nawat as if it does not exist anymore or as if it could not be reconstructed and therefore words and phrases from Mexican Nahuatl could be “used” as if that was the Pipil’ language. (King, 2011). Martínez does a great job creating those connections with people interested in indigenous language

preservation. He seeks to compare and contrast Nawat spoken in El Salvador with dialects from Nahuatl spoken in Mexico. However, there are always those who think that Salvadoran Nawat can be easily absorbed by Nahuatl as just another dialect, but that should not be permitted. As a Salvadoran I had always thought that our indigenous languages had disappeared and were just part of our remote past, but after I found out about King's book about Nawat teaching and the Timumachtikan Nawat initiative, I felt so moved and proud about our indigenous background. As I studied the language with the help of the book, I discovered how much Salvadoran Spanish has been influenced by Nawat vocabulary. Later on, I learned about the content that was being posted by Martínez on social media platforms. I believe that many Salvadorans and even non-Salvadoran scholars can get inspired to learn and study Nawat and its linguistic richness with these initiatives and King's book. So once and for all Salvadoran people can leave behind part of the dark history and reconcile with their native roots without the fear of being discriminated against.

Documentation of Nawat: linguists' efforts to take Nawat language from oral tradition to a written language.

Many indigenous languages in the American continent had an oral tradition and no writing systems. The only way to keep these languages alive was through the speakers of such languages. When deplorable events like ethnic genocides take place, these languages become vulnerable because the language dies with the speaker. Here is where linguists in linguistic anthropologists make an effort to document these languages on writing. In the case of Nawat language, there were some manuscripts that documented writings in Nawat using the phonemes associated with the graphemes used in Spanish, an example is a folio belonging to the documents saved by the San Lucas of Cuisnahuat association, dated in the year 1673... that was written in the 17th century in this region of Sonsonate (Valencia Henández, 2019). That document was about a note that a religious administrator left explaining how the charity was going to be administered. However, there were not enough documents to have a reference to a written Nawat. Pioneers of Nawat language writing in the 20th century were: Leonhard Schultze Jena, followed by Próspero Araúz, and later on Lyle Campbell, The most recent linguist who published a book about Nawat was Alan Roy King in the beginning of the 21st century. The following will be a brief description of each of the books published by the linguists and anthropologist above mentioned. The linguists and anthropologists, and their books will be listed in a chronological order.

The first scholar is Leonhard Schultze (1872-1955) who was a German zoologist, geographer, philologist and anthropologist (Berthold, 1945). Among his countless written works, the one published in 1935 related to Nawat is: *Indiana II: Mythen in der Muttersprache der Pipil von Izalco in El Salvador*. This book was written in German and Nawat, it was almost half a

century later in 1977 that it was translated into Spanish by Gloria Menjivar Rieken and Armida Parada Fortín and published in El Salvador as: *Mitos y leyendas de los pipiles de Izalco* -Myths and legends of the Pipiles from Izalco-. The book is a compilation of narrations that belonged to Nawat oral tradition that were recorded on paper recreating the *originario* Salvadoran man's thought preserved until then only within his mother tongue. (Schultze, 1935). This book did not only started the preservation of Nawat language and culture in writing, but it also established a precedent of an alphabetical writing system for it. The book has four main chapters that seek to tell the story about the Pipiles' life and thought, these are titled: The four universal columns of their philosophy, Nature seen through a mirror of unbound fantasy, About life in the community, Contact with the Old World culture (Schultze, 1935). Within this main chapters there are fifty four texts as subchapters. Schulze of course used the Roman alphabet to write the oral traditions that the Nawat speakers shared with him. The different ways in which the researchers transcribed Nawat language will be discussed and contrasted all together once all the books have been described.

The linguist following Schultze is Próspero Araúz. The little information that could be gathered about the author say that it was a school teacher, with Panamanian origin that lived many years in the Nahuizalco region. He dedicated his life to teaching elementary school and the study of aboriginal languages (Araúz, 1960). His book titled *The Pipil from the region of the Itzalcos* was published in 1960. It is basically a linguistic analysis of Nawat language, its chapters are: Syllabification; Vocabulary lists; Adding, subtracting and multiplying; Hispanized terms; Etymologies; and Grammatical summary (Araúz, 1960). Araúz assigned different phonemes to the graphemes that he used to transcribe Nawat, the sounds that are not present in

Spanish are not represented with the same letters that Schultze used and some are ambiguous at first glance.

The third scholar who published another book related to Nawat is the linguist Lyle Campbell who was born in Oregon, USA. Campbell published *The Pipil language of El Salvador* in 1985. His book has seven chapters which are the following: chapter 1 Introduction, chapter 2 Phonology, chapter 3 Lexical categories and morphology, chapter 4 Syntax, chapter 5 Pipil-Spanish-English dictionary, chapter 6 Spanish-Pipil dictionary, chapter 7 Texts (Campbell, 1985). The linguistic description and analysis done by Campbell was more robust and had a denser lexical corpus to write dictionaries. None of the writing systems used to document Nawat match each other and show letter-sound discrepancies that make it difficult for Nawat speaker and Nawat students to learn the language from these. Campbell used the transcription system used for Mexican Nahuatl that dates from the encounter and colonization era in which the letter “x” represented the sound /j/ in modern times with no representation in Spanish and represented by the digraph “sh” in English. Even though these are eminent books in the documentation and study of Nawat, the writing systems used to transcribe create ambiguities for both the native speaker of Nawat and the monolingual Salvadoran Spanish speakers. Keeping these discrepancies in mind, the next one is a summary of the book written by Alan R. King.

Alan Roy King was a British linguist who published in 2011 the most actual reference book to Nawat learning, titled *Timumachtikan! : Nawat language course for adult beginners*. His book is purely didactic and is intended for a Spanish monolingual audience, it presents a brief history about Nawat, the alphabet and pronunciation guide, a learning guide, grammatical tables, vocabulary lists and fifty lessons to be learned in three different levels. King was well aware of the writing system discrepancies. Nawat does not possess any traditional alphabet because it had

not been used as a written language until now, to write some words or phrases the conventions of Spanish language were employed which are not ideal to write Nawat, but little mattered because generally it was not written. When we say 'Nawat alphabet' we are not referring to something traditional but to the alphabet that is starting to get used from now on, and that practically is being established right now. But this one and many other new things are necessary to use Nawat as a written language, in addition to be used as a spoken language to strengthen it as a means of communication, to teach it and to promote its revitalization. (King, 2011). In order to create didactic and literary material in Nawat it is necessary to reach a consensus and standardize a writing system that favours, the Nawat native speakers, the bilingual Nawat-Spanish speakers and the monolingual Spanish speakers who will learn Nawat.

Seeking a unified Nawat writing system: why the writing systems employed by the pioneer linguists do not facilitate Nawat revitalization, and the writing system proposed by the Nawat Language Recovery Initiative.

Nawat is a language in severe danger of extinction. As many indigenous languages, it was transmitted through oral tradition. Some extreme indigenist think that in order to revitalize a language it is necessary to “decolonize” it by not using the colonists’ writing system. However, the fact of the matter is that a writing system for an indigenous language without one should be planned thinking in a bilingual context. Speakers and future learners of indigenous languages will be expected to be bilingual in order to navigate the society by using the administrative language and maintaining the indigenous language. The graphemes and phonemes used to write an indigenous language should resemble the administrative language as much as possible to facilitate the literacy process. Letter combinations should be used to fulfil letter gaps for particular sounds. In Nawat, there are three phonemes that stand out in works written by Schultze, Araúz, Campbell and King: /tʃ/, /h/ and /ʃ/ which correspond to ‘ch’, ‘h’ and ‘sh’ in English and ‘ch’, ‘j’ and the borrowed letter combination ‘sh’ in Spanish. These three sounds were represented in writing with the following letters:

To represent /tʃ/ Schulze used letter ‘č’; Campbell used ‘ch’; Araúz used ‘c’; and King ‘ch’. With these discrepancies, the word for red color in Nawat could be written in the following forms: 1) čiltik 2) chiltik 3) ciltik 4) chiltik (in current use).

To represent /h/ Schulze used letter ‘x’; Campbell used ‘h’; Araúz used ‘h’; and King ‘j’. With these discrepancies, the word for path in Nawat could be written in the following forms: 1) uxti 2) uhti 3) uhti 4) ujti (in current use).

Finally, to represent /f/ Schulze used letter ‘š’; Campbell used ‘x’; Araúz used ‘x’; and King ‘sh’.

With these discrepancies, the word for eye in Nawat could be written in the following forms: 1) -iš 2) -ix 3) -ix 4) -ish (in current use).

As demonstrated above such letter discrepancies make it difficult for native Nawat speakers to acquire literacy in their mother tongue, and for Nawat language learners to learn the language. For this reason, the Nawat Language Recovery Initiative known as IRIN (*Iniciativa para la Recuperación del Idioma Nawat* in Spanish) was created. IRIN has been an independent association in El Salvador that supports Nawat, it was founded by Nawat speaker indigenous people, linguists and Nawat neo-speakers in 2003. (Valencia, 2019). The simplified alphabet proposed by IRIN is intended to be intelligible for Spanish-Nawat speakers. The orthographic recommendation of IRIN facilitates reading for native speakers and students of Nawat. (Valencia, 2019). Considering the consensus and versatility of IRIN and the writing system for Nawat, this orthographic codification was taken by Alan King who incorporated certain changes suggested by the Nawat speaker Genaro Ramírez, where he proposed the grapheme ‘j’ for the aspirated glottal sound /h/. (Valencia, 2019). The alphabet used by King is widely accepted within the Nawat speaking community and fits well with the contemporary efforts to revitalize the language. This method is also used in Nawat classes imparted in the University of El Salvador, in the language faculty in the Central American University, in learning spaces in different parts of El Salvador... (And) Finally, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology of El Salvador has used this orthography (Valencia, 2019). For the many reasons presented above the orthography used by King which was inspired by IRIN seems to have the most acceptance. It provides plenty of hope for Nawat revitalization and diffusion among Salvadorans no matter where they are. This writing system is Spanish speaker friendly and

respects Nawat phonetics, making it easier to promote biliteracy among the two groups, the Nawat native speakers who learned Spanish and the Spanish native speakers who are learning Nawat as a new language.

Indigenous language preservation and revitalization in America: efforts and ways to maintain and revitalize language.

Among the efforts done by linguist, governments, and groups of people in El Salvador, many resemble efforts done in other Latin-American countries with higher indigenous populations and indigenous languages not as endangered as Nawat. Among recommendations from linguists and examples to consider and strengthen in El Salvador regarding Nawat are: making sure that it goes from an oral language only to a written language; creating literary works to compile a natural repertoire of words instead of dictionaries coming from fieldworks; implementing new technologies to promote, learn, and create literally works; promoting biliteracy in schools starting at an early age; lastly, working with those who may be against any initiatives to maintain and revitalize indigenous languages. All languages are vehicles of culture, transmitters of civilization, and instruments for teaching. They can also be the media of acculturation, deculturation, and alienation. Up to now, colonialist thinking has rejected the idea that native languages are real languages. But native languages carry the contents of the long lives of the people who speak them. (Hornberger, 2012). The importance of language revitalization and maintenance is imperative to preserve many of these aspects. In the case of Nawat, it will be almost like reclaiming that space that it deserves within Salvadoran people.

As of today, we can say that Nawat is a written language. The writing system implemented by King seems to have many hopes to standardize Nawat writing. His pedagogic book is a great first step for learners and for Nawat speakers to write down their stories. It is simply not necessary to find the perfect orthography to begin developing a literary corpus. (Hornberger, 2012). The documentation and enrichment of the Nawat language can be done by creating a literary culture. There is a lot more that needs to be done to strengthen it as a written language, there is a need for speakers and learners to create written literary work to build a

corpus of the language. If a language has no literary tradition, then making a dictionary can only come from taking down oral text and combing that text for words and usages. (Hornberger, 2012). There are different stages that Nawat needs to go through as the efforts to be preserved and revitalized are done. Enough people has to learn it to promote intercommunication and design literary work that goes beyond school pedagogical books. It is a gradual process, but the first bilingual Nawat-Spanish short story book was published by the Michael Raymond Astle publisher on April, 1st, 2022. The book titled *Ne Lujlun Takamichin wan Ne Siwatatuktiani El Tabudo y la Reina* has 68 pages and was written by Jessy Carlisle and translated by Héctor Martínez. It is also the first audiobook in Nawat available on the Amazon marketplace. In the aspect of writing and creating literary work, Nawat is on the right course, as it is having a good start in this boom of promotion and revitalization. The online stores make the books in Nawat more accessible to a wider audience within El Salvador and abroad.

El Salvador and Mexico

Indigenous people and their languages have been stigmatized in many countries, Mexico is an example. In many parts of the Mexican Republic, as in other countries, indigenous people suffer racial discrimination. Their cultures are considered inferior to the cultures of the powerful societies, and the multicultural character of those nations is denied by the people in power. Many ethnic groups have accepted the views of the government authorities. (Hornberger, 2012). The case of Mexico is not different from what has happened in El Salvador historically. But, despite the marginal status to which indigenous languages have been relegated, many people still speak those languages. For many, those languages are their only means of communication. (Hornberger, 2012). People in Mexico have continued to speak their languages that could be contrastive with people in El Salvador and how many decided to stop speaking after heinous

events like *La Matanza*, indigenous people in El Salvador had to decide between speaking the language and living. In Mexico activists willing to preserve indigenous languages and culture have promoted the creation of literary work and normalization of the language among the speakers. The use of computers in the project is a technological victory that narrows the gulf between developed and developing peoples. Bilingual participants use computers to write in their own languages about their lives, their customs, their legends, histories, natural medicine, and so on. The object is to normalize the use of indigenous languages—that is, to make the use of indigenous languages a normal, everyday thing. (Hornberger, 2012). This initiatives that implement the use of technology, in this case computers, alludes to technological determinism. Computers and devices that connect to the internet are great assents to record everyday experiences and to reach out and create audiences to spark interest in the language. The method of computer-based reading and writing is both possible and necessary for the production of educational materials and for the production of all native literature. There is need for more centers like the one in Oaxaca (Mexico). This will expand the possibilities for education while allowing for the historical, social, cultural, and linguistic norms of our communities. (Hornberger, 2012). The population of Nawat speakers is extremely low compared to the speakers of other indigenous languages in Mexico, in addition, most of the speakers in El Salvador are elders. However, these centers in which people write to create literary works can be modified in El Salvador for native speakers wishing to write and for the Nawat neo-speakers to build a generational bridge in which Nawat has visibility in Salvadoran society as the generational and technological gap gets closed.

El Salvador and Guatemala

Guatemala has a higher indigenous population than El Salvador. Approximately one half of Guatemala's ten million people are Maya Indians who speak one of at least twenty different Mayan languages. (Hornberger, 2012). Guatemala has a history similar to that of El Salvador, but it is territorially larger than El Salvador, as a result of that when prosecuted and during conflict indigenous populations had more jungle forest and mountains to retreat to preserve their personal integrity. Indigenous populations in Guatemala received some support from the government regarding literacy and biliteracy. In 1986, the government passed the newest Literacy Law which mandated the use of the mother tongue - Spanish or the indigenous languages - for the literacy training of monolinguals, with the possibility that once Mayan language speakers were literate in the mother tongue, they could transfer the literacy skills to Spanish. For bilinguals, the law left open the option to be trained in either language. (Hornberger, 2012). These laws that promote biliteracy are necessary to help speakers of indigenous languages acquire knowledge and maintain their language skills at the same time that they progress in the education system. In the case of El Salvador, literacy will happen in Spanish so Nawat should become a subject in schools to make students become bilingual speakers. In this case the literacy skills will transfer from Spanish. In addition to laws related to education, in Guatemala there has been a boom of indigenous languages in the modern music industry. The emergence of indigenous hip hop challenges dominant ideologies of language and identity in several ways. The participation of indigenous artists in global hip hop is in opposition to ideologies that view indigenous languages as incompatible with contemporary global culture. The very idea that one could be Maya and be a rapper is in itself a strong challenge to hegemonic understandings of Maya identity in Guatemala. (Barrett, 2015). The arts are part of the language

inclusion that indigenous languages should have. Music is a very important vehicle to promote, value and maintain these languages alive. In El Salvador, the *Timumachtikan Nawat* publishes musical material performed by Nawat native speakers and recently by Nawat neo-speakers in collaboration with international artist from other indigenous communities in other countries. The creator of this initiative has also dubbed famous movie trailers in Nawat. The next steps would be creating cartoon clips and more entertainment in which only Nawat is spoken.

El Salvador and Ecuador

Just like in El Salvador, in Ecuador the people and the government lived a long time under the notion that there was a homogenous population ignoring the indigenous peoples. Based on the European notion of an ethnically homogenous and historically evolved nation-state, the Ecuadoran government has either downplayed or flatly denied the existence of other, non-Hispanic members of the national community. Governmental agencies continue to systematically minimize and underestimate the size of the indigenous populations. (Hornberger, 2012). Humans seek refuge on the idea of ethnic homogeneity, when in reality there is no such thing as a pure ethnic group, the question would be: what makes an ethnic group pure? Many countries in Europe dream about keeping their countries ethnically 'pure', but that is impossible even for European countries. Now coming back to the American continent, specifically Ecuador, taken together, indigenous people constitute between twenty and forty-five percent of the Ecuadoran population. (Hornberger, 2012). In El Salvador many people feared to be associated with indigenous groups demanding from the government because of bloody repressions. In contrast, indigenous people in Ecuador are a large part of the nation's population to demand more comprehensive government policies regarding education and antidiscrimination laws. The indigenous organizations worked for educational reform on two levels. They demanding policy

change regarding language and education at the national level and locally groups also began to implement their own native language literacy and education programs within their community. They not only pushed to improve their children's educational experience by calling for a use of a language which was intelligible and a content and a cultural orientation that was relevant and self-affirming, but also began using their languages in new domains, challenging the state policy in terms of both functional and formal role of their language. (Hornberger, 2012). As mentioned when talking about Guatemala, countries that have more territorial extension have kept more indigenous people because there has historically been less population density compared to El Salvador which has one of the highest population density because it is the smallest country in the American continent. Most people identify themselves as *Mestizos* and the population of children who speak Nawat as a first language is virtually null. In Ecuador, certain demands regarding education from indigenous groups have helped to create biliteracy. The indigenous educational process is in a position to cultivate and recuperate the mother tongue and to learn the second language as a tool of intercommunication with other cultures. (Hornberger, 2012). These should be the same goals in El Salvador, to preserve and revitalize Nawat intergenerationally, but of course that can only be achieved through literacy in both languages. However, there is yet another similarity between Ecuador and El Salvador, and it is there may be enough pedagogical material to impart these indigenous languages in schools, but there is little to no literature in those languages. A challenge in any attempt to expand and cultivate native language literacies is the development of sufficient reading materials. While numerous scholastic texts exist, there are relatively few materials other than these in Quichua and even fewer in other indigenous languages of Ecuador... If indigenous literacies are to be sustained it is a simple, yet crucial requirement that there be available reading material in the native languages. (Hornberger, 2012).

Once again the importance of literary work is reaffirmed as an essential part of language maintenance and revitalization. Those who speak these languages have the task of writing to create literary work that will revitalize the language by making literature accessible for those learning the language and to build language corpus to strengthen the existing repertoire.

El Salvador and Bolivia

Bolivia has shown great commitment to its indigenous populations. The efforts done by the education system in Bolivia are worth to be admired and emulated. In terms of the goal of language revitalization, the inclusion of two modalities of bilingual education is a significant feature of the Bolivian Reform. In the monolingual modality, intended primarily for the dominant Spanish speaking population, children are taught in their Spanish mother tongue and receive instruction in (but not through) an indigenous language as a subject. The monolingual modality explicitly presents the opportunity for Bolivia's bilingual education to be truly intercultural and two-way. (Hornberger, 2012). These types of programs are not widely available in El Salvador and are limited to communities in which there are the most Nawat speakers, but these programs align with the idea of implementing bilingual education in which Nawat language is yet another subject in schools. Due to the fact that the majority of people has been educated in Spanish. The capacitation of teachers at a national level and the introduction of this bilingual program at an early age can open the doors to more acceptance and revitalization of Nawat. In Bolivia, the indigenous language classes provide the grounds with optimism with regard to reversing language shift in at least two respects. First, the enthusiastic participation of the pedagogical advisors suggests a genuine eagerness to deepen their knowledge of the language and thereby a likelihood that their use of the language, in both oral and written forms, will only continue to expand. Second the very existence of such classes and the availability of

personnel to teach them, is evidence of the progress already made in the last decade in expanding the knowledge and use of these languages in new, written domains. (Hornberger, 2012). The will coming from the government to create programs and incentives for teachers to learn and impart Nawat will be inspirational for the new generation of teachers that will also inspire the learners. The more widely available they become, the more likely Salvadorans will be to learn it. It is important to highlight that this programs should not be limited locally, otherwise it runs the risk of becoming a perpetuated local initiative. There is something to learn from each initiative that Hispanic countries with thriving indigenous languages have taken to consider the ones that will work in El Salvador keeping in mind its situation, regarding Nawat speaker population, age, literacy, and domains.

Conclusion and further research

The ethnic history of El Salvador has been very complex since colonization, the formation of the nation state, all the way to the contemporary times in which many efforts have been made to revitalize Nawat language. Means of communication like television and the different social media platforms on the internet are playing an important role to promote and preserve it. But, the ghosts of colonization, discrimination and ethnocides have left many scars in the psyche and the identity of many Salvadorans despite the fact that El Salvador has a population that is mostly *Mestizo*. The situation of Nawat in El Salvador is complex. On one hand, there are less than 200 native speakers, but on the other hand, many efforts to revitalize the language have been more evident in the recent years. Saddening historic events have eroded Salvadoran society in the ethnic aspect many times. Events like *La Matanza* have dissuaded indigenous Salvadoran communities and Salvadorans overall to abandon their indigenous language, but there is hope on contemporary initiatives and to reconcile as a nation rich in history, culture and language. By learning from other countries that have kept their indigenous languages, Nawat may have an opportunity to acquire relevance in El Salvador. Important factors are the diffusion and the relevance that politicians give it, not as a vehicle but as a need to promote national identity to prove the compromise with the people to preserve Nawat as a national patrimony. Technological determinism should play an important role on the diffusion and awareness of Nawat in El Salvador and beyond its borders. This is a starting point to establish a precedent for further research on Nawat revitalization and the phenomenon of digital activism to promote it. It is important to start studying Nawat in El Salvador to later study the perspective of those Salvadorans who now have their homes abroad, especially in the United States of America. In El Salvador there are many people willing to revitalize and protect Nawat as a patrimony, but many others are willing to do even more abroad. There was an estimated 2.3

million Hispanics of Salvadoran origin resided in the United States in 2017. (Bustamante, 2019)

From the beginning of times humans have been migratory beings, as any other specie they have sought better lands looking for shelter, food, water, overall resources to survive. That is how Nawat got to what today is El Salvador. Salvadorans have that innate migratory instinct and nowadays the Salvadorans living in the United States are more than a third of the actual population of El Salvador. This is why further research should be done with Salvadoran communities to learn about their perspectives and will to learn Nawat and provide resources to create programs to support its revitalization of the national patrimony. So far there is evidence and positive signs that digital activism to revitalize Nawat is transcending borders. Salvadorans living in the United States have a great commitment with Nawat revitalization. *Timumachtikan Nawat* has facilitated the coordination of *Ne Ichan Safoura* which is a recent scholarship program, it seeks to rescue the last indigenous language alive in El Salvador, awarding scholarships to all those interested to learn about Nawat culture and language. (Iraheta, 2022).

This program has been providing scholarships to learn Nawat for two years already and this is extremely relevant because this program is sponsored by the Salvadoran diaspora. This 2022 the sponsors are: Jonathan Rivas, who sponsored the previous year; Rivas is a Salvadoran who grew up in Washington DC and that currently lives in Argentina... (And) Natalia Mazariego who is a young Salvadoran living in Los Angeles, California. Both are Salvadoran and are truly committed with their roots and self-identified as part of the originary peoples of El Salvador... (With this initiative) for the first time, a Nawat speaking woman was hired as a virtual teacher for the development and validation of the (online) classes. (Iraheta, 2022). Here the importance to carry out further research with Salvadorans in the United States, and the Salvadoran diaspora overall. Technology plays an important function on this efforts and it is definitely an asset to

always consider on further research, promotion and the revitalization of Nawat in a global context as digital activism gives us the tools to transcend beyond Salvadoran borders.

Appendix: Nawat toponyms in El Salvador

Here are some of the Nawat toponyms and their meanings in El Salvador.

Current Hispanized toponyms and <i>Departamentos</i> (States)	Toponyms in Nawat – Meaning
Lamatepec (Santa Ana)	Lamat + tepet – The mountain of the old lady
Ahuachapán (Ahuachapán)	Ajwech + apan – Where the dew is abundant
Apaneca (Ahuachapán)	Apan + ejekat – Where the wind is abundant
Apastepeque (San Vicente)	Apasti + tepet – The mountain of the clay pot
Apanteos (Santa Ana)	Apan + tiut – The sacred river
Apopa (San Salvador)	At + pukti – Vapor
Apulo (San Salvador)	At + pulua – Where water gets lost
Atecozol (Sonsonate)	At + tekú + apsul – The solfatara of the lord of the waters
Ataco (Ahuachapán)	At + ajku – High waters
Ayutica (Santa Ana)	Ayutuch + ika – Place of the armadillos
Ayutchtepeque (San Salvador)	Ayutuch + tepet – The mountain of the armadillos
Chalchuapa (Santa Ana)	Chalchiwit + apan – Where jade is abundant
Chalatenango (Chalatenango)	Shal + at + tenan + ku – Place surrounded by water and sand
Coatepeque (Santa Ana)	Kuat + tepet – The mountain of the snake
Comalapa (Chalatenango)	Kumal + apan – Where the griddles are abundant
Cojutepeque (Cuscatlán)	Kushul + tepet – The mountain of the pheasant
Cuscatancingo (San Salvador)	Kuskat + tan + tzin + ku – Place of the little Cuscatlan
Cuscatlán (Cuscatlán)	Kuskat + tan – Land of the precious stones. (El Salvador)
Iamatepec (Santa Ana)	I + amat + tepet – The mountain of the old lady
Ilopango (San Salvador)	Shilut + apan + ku – Place where young corn is abundant
Izalco (Sonsonate)	Itz + shal + ku – Place of the obsidian sands
Lamatepec (Santa Ana)	Lamat + tepet – The mountain of the old lady
Metapán (Santa Ana)	Metat + apan – Where the millstone is abundant
Michapa (Cuscatlán)	Michin + apan – where fish is abundant
Panchimalco (Sonsonate)	Panti + chimal + ku – Place of shields and flags
Sensunteque (Cabañas)	Se + tzunti + tepet – The innumerable mountains
Sonsonate (Sonsonate)	Se + tzunti + at – The innumerable waters
Soyapango (San Salvador)	Suyat + apan + ku – place where palm trees are abundant
Suchitoto (Cuscatlán)	Suchit + tutut – The flower bird
Tenancingo (Cuscatlán)	Tenan + tzin + ku – Place of the small walls
Teotepeque (La Libertad)	Tiut + tepet – The sacred mountain
Zacamil (San Salvador)	Tzakat + mil – The grasslands

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Autobiographical Statement

In Nawat

Naja Sergio José Mendoza Gallardo. Naja ninesik tik Siwatewakan, Kuskatan. Nukal nemituya tik ne techan Lamatepet. Naja niwalaj ka Estados Unidos tik ne shiwit ume shikipil chikwey (2008). An, naja tamachtiani wan nitekiti tik se tamachtiluyan tik New York. Naja nikneki niweli nitaketza nawat sujsul yek pal te miki. Naja nikmati ka ne nawat yawi suchikisa tik Kuskatan wan tik Estados Unidos. Yajika, tejemet timunekit tikmatit wan timumachtiat ne nawataketzalis.

I am Sergio José Mendoza Gallardo. I was born in Santa Ana, El Salvador. I lived in the neighborhood Lamatepec. I came to the United States in the year 2008. Now, I am a teacher and work in a school in New York. I want to be able to speak Nawat very well so that it does not die. I know that Nawat is going to grow in El Salvador and in the United States. That is why, we need to know and learn the Nawat language.