

## Language Usage Among Various Ethnic Groups of Evangelicals

By Roger Grossmann  
SEPAL study April 2002

The following is the best information available on language usage of major ethnic groups in Guatemala.<sup>1</sup> This data is taken from pastors on personal interviews. Because of the nature of the interview, the interest level of the pastor and the preparation of the pastor, we are confident that this is valid information. In regard to language, they were asked 1). What ethnic group they belonged to. 2). What language they speak in the home and if it was always Spanish, mostly Spanish, mostly Mayan or all Mayan. 3.) In what language did they preach in their church and if it was always Spanish, mostly Spanish, mostly Mayan or all Mayan?

Interestingly enough, their preaching pattern is very similar to what they speak in their homes. An evangelical pastor is most likely more literate than the average population and likely knows more Spanish than most of his counterparts in the local Indian community. However, his differences are usually not reflected in his wife and as such, speech patterns in the home will be more "typical" or usual.

*Chart 1*  
Survey Data From Evangelical Pastors  
Throughout General Church Characteristics  
Guatemala March 2002

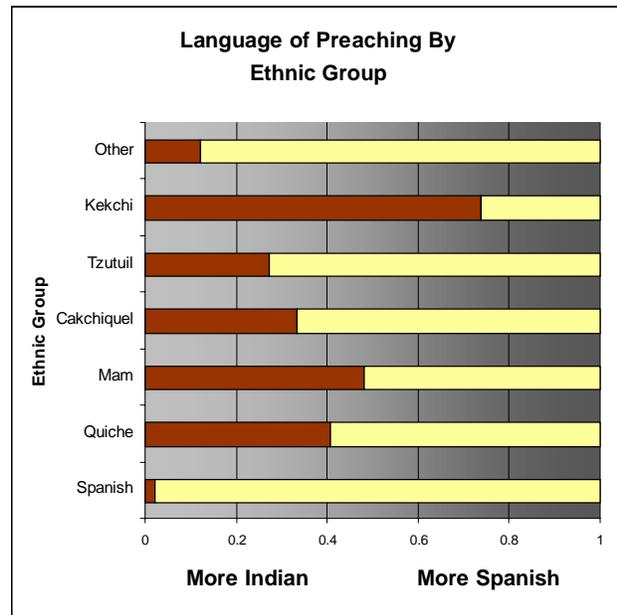
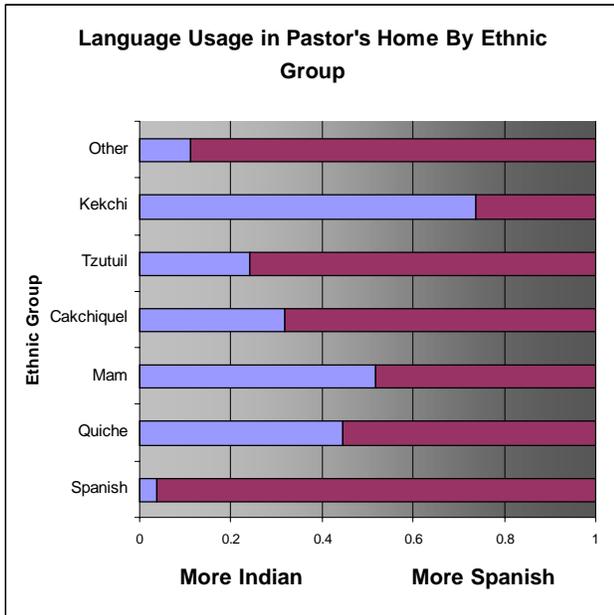
Ethnic Group	n	Churches with total Indian Preaching
Spanish	289	0%
Quiche	27	7%
Mam	9	11%
Cakchiquel	24	8%
Tzutuul	11	9%
K'ekchí	19	53%
Other	29	3%
Total	408	

There is a surprisingly low amount of "pure" Mayan preaching. The rankings of Mayan groups with regard to level of pure Mayan preaching is similar to the order of older studies done by Alfredo Tay Coyoy. As in the early nineties the K'ekchí were by far the most monolingualistic

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<sup>1</sup> The following information was taken from the Pastoral survey. The survey was administered to 525 pastors randomly selected throughout the Republic. Pastors were encountered in the municipios that were randomly selected for the General survey and approximately one third were surveyed as we administered the survey during pastor's meetings of certain denominations and general meetings of evangelical pastors. Denominational proportions were equalized to the same level as the general population by randomly eliminating a factored amount from disproportionately large denominational samples.

Mayan group and the Quiche are the most Hispanic in language. Personal interviews and observations also confirm that the youth are quickly losing the Mayan language through the process of education, media, commerce and travel.



*Charts 2 and 3*

The preceding charts are a summary of a spectrum of languages spoken in the home and preached at the church. These are designed to give a rough proportion of Mayan to Spanish language spoken in the two contexts. In the first chart, the bottom row represents the Hispanic or Ladino groups. Light blue is the proportion of spoken Mayan and purple is the proportion of spoken Spanish. Note that for the K'ekchí, they speak the highest proportion of Mayan language in the home and in their churches as compared to the other Mayan groups.

**Financial Participation of Church Construction for Evangelical Churches in Guatemala**  
 by Roger Grossmann  
 SEPAL Study March 2002

The following information was taken from the pastoral interviews done by SEPAL. Databases were prepared by March 2002. Pastors were asked a series of questions that included questions of sources of income for church construction. Because of the rapid growth rate of churches, new congregations and the construction of many large, expensive buildings, the question was posed if Guatemalan churches were doing this on their own energies or were being propelled financially by outside forces from the USA. The answer is patently clear that the vast movement of church plants and construction is propelled and sustained by the maturing Guatemalan church. Only 2% of the churches indicate help from churches from the United States. The category "other" however does include Guatemalan Christians in the United States who send money back for special projects. This is a significant part of Guatemala culture as well as Guatemalan church culture. This is not the same as dependency upon churches from the United States.

Financial Participation of Church Construction for Evangelical Churches in Guatemala, March 2002

n	Percent	Funds for Church Property
274	68%	Congregation
11	3%	Other Guatemalan Church
27	7%	Neighbor
9	2%	USA Church
39	10%	Church Member
44	10%	Other
404		Total

n		Church Building
332	83%	Congregation
8	2%	Congregation and USA
21	5%	Congregation and other Guatemalan church
37	10%	Other
398		Total