

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY: The Shifting Face of Quechua in Peru

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of a study on the impact of language attitudes and language identity on the longevity of Quechua in Huallanca, Peru. Quechua was the language of the Inca Empire, and while there are a multitude of dialects spoken across the Andes from Peru to Ecuador there is a consistency in the factors that impact upon the use of the language. This paper presents the findings of a fieldwork study in Huallanca, a small mining town in the Peruvian Andes and discusses how factors such as the organization of space, politics, education and modernity impact upon the perceived value of the language to members of a community. The paper presents three case studies of residents in the town. Overall, in Huallanca, there is a demarcation that is both physical and geographical between the speakers and non-speakers of Quechua that impacts upon how people perceive and identify with Quechua.

Key words: endangered languages, identity, language shift, language revitalisation, and modernization

Introduction

The growth and flux of language is both a result of the evolution of languages and a consequence of social, economic and political power contests. Industrialisation, globalisation and modernisation are processes that have impacted upon languages, especially indigenous languages. This paper discusses the impact of language and identity on the contemporary decline of Quechua in Peru. The paper will focus specifically on the status of Quechua in Huallanca to illustrate how and why indigenous languages are quickly vanishing in this area. While this study is about the decline of a language there are also more optimistic projects that have studied the revival of indigenous languages. This research will present an analysis of three case studies and will compare the impact of intrinsic factors, such as background, age, gender and motivation with extrinsic factors such as policy, education, history and modernity.

This paper argues that language use is closely linked to the construction of identity – individually and collectively articulating a complex relationship to processes of modernisation and globalisation. Due to social, political and economic pressures many minority languages are facing a crisis. This crisis involves the decline and disappearance of indigenous languages as a result of contact with major languages such as English, Spanish or Russian (Crystal, 2004; Dixon, 1997). This decline of indigenous languages also results in a loss of identity and a move towards homogeneity as minority languages and cultures are influenced by the dominant linguistic groups as a result of globalisation and modernisation. The

research aims to describe the impact of these factors on residents in Huallanca.

My interest in Quechua developed from my childhood experiences. When I was a child it surprised me that my parents spoke to each other in a language, Quechua, which I could not understand. They spoke Spanish to their children. Although I was only young I felt excluded from this other language and this peaked my interest in Quechua later in life.

The research questions addressed in this paper are: firstly, “how does the organisation of space impact upon language use?” And, secondly, “how do factors such as politics, education, economics and modernity impact upon the perceived value of Quechua in Huallanca?”

Huallanca, a merging of geographies, histories and languages

The Republic of Peru is situated in western South America and its geography varies from the arid plains of the Pacific coast to the peaks of the Andes mountain range and the tropical forests of the Amazon Basin.

Peru is divided into 25 regions. These regions are subdivided into provinces, which are composed of districts. Huallanca is a district of the province of Bolognesi in the Ancash region on the western side of the Peruvian Andes (Fig 1.). The town of Huallanca is in a valley bordered by four *punas* (highlands areas). The district extends from 3,300 metres to 5,283 metres above sea level. The four *punas* are *Andachupa*, *Jogo*, *Huachua*, *Ututupampa*. Administratively *punas* are part of the town,

however the residents of the *punas* live in small villages that are separated from the town centre by the mountains. It is approximately a three-hour walk up hill from the town centre to the *punas*. The district is expansive and the remoteness of some of the villages means that there is not only distinction but disconnection in everyday life.



Figure 1:
The Ancash Region and Huallanca

Mining is a chief economic activity in the region. The district of Huallanca has the geological and geomorphology characteristics for the mining of silver, antimony, zinc, lead, copper and coal. The inhabitants of Huallanca migrated there from different regions searching for work in the mining industry or other production areas of cattle farming, agriculture and commercial activities. The mixed population made Spanish a *lingua franca* that shapes the culture of the town. However, the population that inhabits the *punas* also speaks Quechua. This divide is a major focus of my research. It constitutes a significant dichotomy that shapes the classification of people as being modern or traditional, educated or uneducated, urban or rural.

Quechua in the Peruvian Andes

While there are various studies on the indigenous peoples in the Peruvian Andes (Haboud, 2004; Rindstedt, 2002; Luykx, 2004; Albó, 2004), little research has been

undertaken on the role of Quechua in the lives of people living in remote villages. This research will focus on the language use in one town, Huallanca, in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the relation between language use and identity. Quechua has experienced systematic suppression since the 18th Century, first from the hand of the Spanish colonial powers, then from the elite of the independent nation state of Peru (Gleich, 1992; Cerrón- Palomino, 1987). However, recently, scholars have identified counter-trends of revival, with radio, print and electronic media using Quechua (Albó, 2004; Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004). Also, the Peruvian constitution has been translated into Quechua and there are Quechuan health programs (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004), bilingual educational programs and official State communications written in Quechua (Gleich, 1992). Although there tends to be a mismatch of ideologies between supporters of revitalisation programs and ordinary language speakers (McEwan-Fujita, 2010).

Overall, Quechua is not increasing in use in the Andes, but there are localised efforts to maintain and promote the value of the language even if the efforts are piecemeal and often bound by district and provincial boundaries.

The current status: demographics, diversity and sociolinguistic characteristics

The Quechua language has evolved over the last five centuries and with that evolution the language has divided and sub-divided into the recognisable forms of Quechua that are spoken today. Quechua is an indigenous language of South America, which has 8 to 12 million speakers in the region, who are mainly concentrated in the Andean highlands of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. Smaller numbers of speakers or communities are found spread across Argentina, Chile and Colombia (Albó, 2004; Haboud, 2004; Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004; King & Hornberger, 2004). Quechua is the most widely spoken indigenous language in the Americas, with an active community of language learners and users. Hornberger and King (2001) believe that the survival of Quechua is assured, but Haboud (2004) disagrees and states that Quechua is a threatened language and is still considered to be an endangered language that is in need of urgent attention.

Linguistic diversity in Quechua

In terms of linguistic diversity, Quechua has many language varieties, such as Huaulay, Huancay and Ap-Am-Ah, but is lacking an overarching structure that connects all languages and speakers (Hornberger & King, 2001). Geographically, Quechua was spoken by a largely rural population that have become non-rural as a result of the massive migration and urbanization over the last fifty years that have transformed all Andean countries

(Hornberger & King, 2001). Socio-linguistically, Quechua speaking communities are spread across a diverse range of domains including major urban centres, *pueblos jóvenes* (shanty towns), monolingual Quechua communities or Quechua speakers who live in close contact with speakers of other indigenous languages such as Aymara, which influences the nature of the language and community (Hornberger & King, 2001).



Figure 2:

Linguistic map of Quechua and Aymara in South America Cerrón-Palomino (2000) (translations by authors). Reprinted with permission of CBC Centro de Estudios Andinos “Bartolomé de Las Casas.”

Quechua contends with issues and obstacles such as purportedly mutually unintelligible varieties that mean that speakers of Quechua variations cannot understand each other’s Quechua (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004). As a result of Quechua’s centuries of contact with different languages, such as the previously mentioned Aymara and languages such as Guaraní, there are various linguistic and extra-linguistic conditions that characterise each specific situation, all of which makes the diverse and diffuse situation of Quechua difficult to describe as a whole (Haboud, 2004). Consequently, there is no typical Quechua community and it is difficult to develop or make

abstractions about the language due to a mosaic of contexts and experiences in which Quechua occurs.

Because of the geographical and ethnic diversity of speakers and regional varieties of the language, Quechua faces the same challenges as other endangered languages in terms of linguistic, geographic and socio-linguistic diversity (King & Hornberger, 2004). These divisions shown in Figure 2 are largely geographic. The Quechua that is spoken in Huallanca, my case study, is known as Quechua I (Central Quechua).

Linguistic ideologies and language attitudes in Quechua

Language ideologies, language attitudes and identities have an important role in language shift, maintenance and revitalisation. A positive attitude towards a language will naturally support revitalisation attempts, while negative attitudes or ideologies that undervalue or marginalise a language will thwart or interfere with revitalisation. In different regions in the Andes there are differing degrees of value attached to Quechua and its variants. In some regions, such as Peru, there is a stigma attached to speaking the Quechua language and the language is overtly devalued by the dominant society and the Quechua speakers themselves. This leads to people denying or hiding the fact that they can speak the language for fear of being ostracised (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004). In Peru, Spanish is viewed as being superior while Quechua is seen as parochial.

The impact of family and education on Quechua

The attitude of parents is also important as they influence the school curriculum. An example of the attitudes of parents and the value attached to Quechua is seen in Huanuco (Peru) (Howard, 2004). The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) has a programme providing two hours a week of classroom time for reading and writing in Quechua for children in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades of primary school. During grades one to three, Spanish is the sole medium of instruction, with no formal attention given to Quechua in the classroom. This was a result of the strong social prejudice against Quechua and its speakers.

Parents rejected the idea of having Quechua in the early years of schooling as they wanted Spanish in early schooling, believing that fluency in Spanish would help overcome social discrimination (Howard, 2004). Although the program promoted pride in the language, increased awareness of cultural heritage and raised self-esteem among the speakers in terms of seeing the value of Quechua, limiting the study of the language to the later primary years was seen as the best response to the expressed preferences of parents (Howard, 2004). Hence,

individual groups, such as parents, can have a influential role on the use of Quechua at a local level, despite the attempts of SIL to maintain and increase to value of the Quechua language variations.

The impact of gender, ethnicity and age on Quechua

Shifts in language and identity are vital for authority structures and intergenerational relationships within a language community. As young people in the region become more educated and fluent in Spanish, authorities within the community acknowledge the younger generations as having a greater knowledge of the world beyond the community's boundaries. This shift in the recognition of authority can interrupt traditional indigenous age and status hierarchies and the language preferences that follow with these changes in generational experiences (Luykx, 2000).

There are other aspects of identity such as gender and age that are important for ethnicity and language use. In rural areas usually women, small children, and other generations continue to use Quechua (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004). However, Howard (2004) notes in her fieldwork undertaken in Southern Peru (a rural area) how bilingualism is used in daily family life. Howard (2004) provides the case of Eladia (50s), a grandmother who speaks with her daughter Magdalena (age 29) in Quechua and Spanish. Magdalena and her husband Manuel speak mainly Quechua to each other, with some Spanish. They nevertheless speak only Spanish to their daughter Beatriz (age 2). The parents believe that learning Spanish while young may provide Beatriz with better opportunities as a fluent Spanish speaker; however, Magdalena and Manuel do intend to teach Beatriz Quechua when she gets older. Howard (2004) uses this case to show how different generations favour or prefer a language.

This trend of not speaking Quechua is reflected in teenagers living in urban areas. Youths residing in urban Andean settings usually prefer not to speak Quechua in public even if they were monolingual Quechua speakers when they were children. These youths also opt to speak Spanish and listen to *techno-cumbia* (a salsa hybrid) and non-indigenous music, preferences that indicate that this new urban generation is in the process of constructing a new identity in which Spanish and English are more important than Quechua (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004).

Albó (2004) states that some youths of second and third generation urban migrants identify themselves as Quechua people and even dress traditionally, but it would be only for commercial reasons, e.g. in their contacts with tourists, as they would not be able to have a solid

conversation in Quechua. Contrastingly, the older generations usually continue to speak Quechua in all domains, even if they are in urban centres, using Quechua also in their festivities or simply to reminisce (Hornberger & King, 2001). The focus on one language over another, which is either conscious or unconscious, tends to shift over life-cycles and generations (McEwan-Fujita, 2010). This trend is evident in Quechua with different generations favouring Quechua, Spanish and now English. These changes in preferences are summed up by Tsunoda (2005) who explains: "Indeed the loss of a language entails the loss of many important aspects of the culture, but what remains may be utilized to reconstruct the basis of the group's identity". Hence, whether the language and identity are used between family members, to reminisce or for commercial purposes, ethnic identity is interwoven with the language.

The organisation of space and identity and the impact on Quechua

According to Harvey (1989) and Tsunoda (2005), hierarchical structures, status and privileges are transmitted through the organization of space. The members of a community can create boundaries to reinforce their identity and their standing within that community. These boundaries allocate differing status levels to groups of people and neighbourhoods and this segregation can create a common origin and interest to form an identity as part of the bigger world. Baud and Van Schendel (1997) describe the boundaries between spaces as having 'natural borders' based on natural geographical parameters, such as rivers, watersheds, and mountains, and 'unnatural borders' through culture, ethnicity or language. They argue that these differences can serve to legitimise discrimination.

Geographically, Huallanca is divided into a central region and four *punas* or highland regions. This geographical divide also results in a linguistic divide between the Quechua speakers of the *punas* and the Spanish speakers of the town centre. In addition, the status and wealth of the people living in the mountains is lower than that of those in the central region. This distinction is clear to both people living in the mountains and people living in the town because of these borders, especially in relation to language. Thus, it can be seen that different strata in society are sealed off and this maintains social distinctions.

The boundaries between the sectors of the community in Huallanca categorize people largely as either *campesinos* or *mestizos*. The *mestizos* of the town centre of Huallanca, speak Spanish and identify themselves with a modern European lifestyle: ice-cream made from snow, which is typically a European practice, pastries with a French influence, their Catholic religion, modern attire and

cosmopolitan background. There is a focus on commercial activities in the town rather than subsistence farming and agriculture. The residents speak Spanish and their attire is that of most other developed nations; the residents wear jeans, jackets, caps and sneakers. The boundaries that exist between the geographical regions are also evident in the attitudes, attire and language use. I observed that in town the *mestizos* are mainly business people, selling wares and goods that they bought in Lima or Huaraz. Their identity is not ethnically marked. Some *mestizos* do speak and understand Quechua, but avoid identifying themselves with any form of the Quechua language and culture, as this is perceived as being backward. When individuals admit they speak Quechua, they feel they are being categorised as part of the poorer, more indigenous camp that is less respected and looked down upon.

The *campesinos* that live in the *punas*, are the indigenous sector of Huallanca who speak Quechua, and wear traditional Andean clothing, such as *sombreros*, *polleras*, *ojotas* and *ponchos*. The *campesinos* or residents of the *punas* are proud of their heritage and display a positive attitude towards speaking Quechua but only within their own environment. When I went into the highlands I observed that these people identify themselves quite clearly as being indigenous, as they were dressed in traditional colours, wore hats, silver earrings and traditional skirts. The women's attire was quite feminine and the image of being a woman is very important. The mothers carry their babies on their back with a piece of cloth called a *Manta*. They do not use prams as the women in the town centre do. They acknowledge that they are from indigenous descent, and speak Quechua. However, I observed that when the residents of the *puna* travel to the town centre they change and try to downplay their heritage and the fact that they can speak the language for fear of being shunned or ostracised by the dominant society. Interviewees told me that Quechua is not the language spoken in town. This observation is in line with observers from other locations. Hornberger and Coronel-Molina (2004) state that for other regions of Peru, Quechua speakers hide their ability to speak the language in order to blend in with mainstream society. Thus the language tends to be devalued by both Spanish and Quechua speakers.

The division between *mestizos* and *campesinos* is enforced through language use. During my field research in the town, it was difficult to secure interviewees who were open about their ability to speak Quechua. However, I did meet some Quechua speakers in the town centre by visiting the local medical centre. The Government funds the centre where the less wealthy residents of Huallanca can access free medical assistance. Consequently, the majority of patients come from the highland communities: *punas*. Some of them can only speak Quechua but the doctor at the centre cannot speak Quechua. It is not a

requirement for doctors in Huallanca to speak Quechua, yet surprisingly, English fluency is required. This is in contradiction to reports that The Ministry of Health established stations in local medical centres where Quechua is used by health workers facilitating communication between medical staff and patients (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004). In the waiting room of the medical centre I observed that very little Quechua was spoken between the patients. Even though their first language is Quechua, when they are in town, even with each other, they speak Spanish. At one level, authority and social structures, including education and family, influence language use. Two ways that this manifests is through teenage peer pressure and the shift driven by the younger generations themselves through their increasing connections with the world beyond the community's boundaries (Luykx, 2000).

Research Design

Data Collection and Results

In January 2009, I travelled to Peru for 2 months of fieldwork. I was living in Huallanca in shared accommodation. I visited Huallanca in 2009 for the first time. I lived in a guesthouse in the town centre. It was summer in Huallanca, but this was also the rainy season, which meant that there were no tourists. My first observations when I first arrived in the town were that, although I looked like an indigenous Peruvian, my attire and manner was foreign, so people welcomed me and showed a lot of interest in my visit to the town. That interest lasted until I explained that the purpose of my visit to Huallanca was to undertake research on the use of Quechua in the town.

I established contacts through networks that helped me establish 'my field'. While I tried to find respondents with varying ages, gender, socio-economic stages, and levels of education, I chose key informants rather than representative samples, because I needed people with knowledge of Quechua or willingness to talk about it (positive or negative). Quechua speakers were hard to find. Networking became an important activity. My landlady was a personal friend of the mayor. This was a good place to start my interviews since he is a person of considerable authority. It was also recommended that I speak to Omar Llanos Espinoza, a local historian, who then introduced me to further interviewees. I followed a 'snowball' technique that got me in touch with people in town. My second field was the *punas*. I travelled together with people from the town to complement and later contrast my data from the highlands.

In the original research, sixteen participants were interviewed. As the data is rich with detail, I have reduced the number of case studies to three. However, each of these case studies provides a unique insight into the role of Quechua in Huallanca and the interrelationship between language and identity.

Case Study 1: Ruth

My interactions with Ruth enabled me to gain an understanding of the generational language shifts. The following is an extract from my fieldwork diary.

While I was printing some documents. I asked Ruth, the teenage girl who works there, what time I should return to interview her. She was quite shy about it despite being more enthusiastic three days before when she told me that she speaks Quechua and that she was very happy to participate. She also told me that she had a friend who speaks Quechua, is a similar age to Ruth and would agree to do an interview.

While I waited for the print outs, I saw a couple of young men and, as I needed to recruit people of their age, I approached them. They were interested and curious to begin with when they realised that I was from overseas. But as soon as I mentioned Quechua they quite proudly protested: "Oh no no, we don't speak Quechua". "You have to go to the *punas* and talk to the little old ladies (*abuelitas*) who still speak Quechua, not us".

Ruth was in the background observing this interaction. I turned to her to confirm the time of my interview with her but she immediately became self-conscious and unconfident saying that she didn't speak Quechua so there was no point in interviewing her. Her retraction appears to be a direct result of the attitude of the young men I had just spoken with. I tried to convince her and it took a long while for her to agree again to be interviewed. But she was not willing to be interviewed in the plaza for fear that people might hear. Her friend who had previously agreed to be interviewed withdrew. During the interview, Ruth totally closed up and her answers were very short. She did not smile and persisted that she was not fluent in Quechua, contrary to what she told me three days beforehand. She did, however, admit discrimination towards Quechua speakers at school and I began to understand why she had been so shy in front of her peers (Field Work Diary January 2009).

As my field work diary shows, I was surprised by the attitude of young people towards Quechua. I got the impression that the young men I encountered felt insulted by the idea of them being Quechua speakers and they made a strong statement about their Spanish

monolingualism. Ruth's subsequent non-compliance shows the influence of discrimination and peer pressure, even if it is indirect. This attitude to language impacts upon language use. Ruth is the embodiment of generational language shifts as Ruth's denial of the importance of Quechua illustrates that young people easily adapt and construct identity through language choice. (Hornberger & Coronel-Molina, 2004; Luykx, 2000).

Case Study 2: Judith

The use of a language in Huallanca is reliant on the framework of social class, values and symbols, as well as on conventions and the pragmatics of economic situations. This case study is an example of an economically motivated code switching practice and was recorded in my visit to the medical centre. Some members of the community negotiate the boundaries according to circumstances. The following is an extract from my field work diary.

Today, the women from the communities came into the Medical Centre to collect the food given to them. The Groups were more dispersed than I had expected so I wandered around talking to each small group individually. I interviewed one of the mothers, Judith who was 28 years old, who had a 1 year old daughter and 5 years old son. When I ask about her ability to speak Quechua with her children she responded: "Now kids don't speak Quechua anymore. At home my father speaks a little, but I can't speak Quechua anymore. My children no longer understand it...". (Field Work Diary January 2009).

I asked her if she thought it was important to pass on the language to her children. While she said she did, deep down I got the impression that she did not believe that it was worth doing. Later, she told me that she was a single mother looking for a job. She thought I could help her as an outsider with power. I told her that unfortunately I was looking for a Quechua teacher but she would not be able to help me, as she did not speak Quechua. I noticed a big change in her face and immediately she said:

I can teach you, I speak Quechua fluently

I told her that I needed a teacher who could read and write in Quechua and teach me grammar as well. She immediately put pen to paper and began writing enthusiastically, trying to prove her proficiency in the Quechua language that she had denied speaking a few minutes before. The young woman had therefore chosen to hide the fact that she was bilingual until I showed an interest and she could perceive an economic benefit. (Field work Diary January 2009).

Judith initially gave me the socially expected response about her family's ability to speak Quechua. The denial of

knowing Quechua was common in the town. When I was looking for interview subjects, I was often told by residents that “I understand a little, but I don’t speak it”. However, as with Judith, I often found out this is not quite true, often the town’s residents spoke Quechua fluently, but most people denied it. In this situation while looking for a teacher, once people, such as Judith, realised that Quechua may provide an economic benefit they admitted that they could speak or understand Quechua. I noticed this change of behaviour several times when I spoke to people about Quechua. I usually encountered a negative reaction when I told them that I was researching the Quechua language. While Judith became positive it seems to be only because she could see a financial opportunity by speaking the language.

However, the two young men at the internet café raised in the first case-study lost all interest in me or being interviewed once they associated me with Quechua. On several occasions the high status I was offered as an outsider was diminished as soon as the person I was speaking to found out that my purpose for being in Huallanca was to research Quechua.

Case 3: The Highlands

The residents of Huallanca who were not native Spanish speakers were still required to develop fluency in order to gain access to the town’s services. For example, social services, even when they are provided in the highlands by visiting professionals, such as nurses, are in Spanish.

One day I attended a meeting about sanitation and hygiene for the mothers and babies of the Ututupampa community, which is situated about 4,000 meters above sea level. The meeting was held in Spanish. After observing the meeting, I decided to conduct a group interview and changed my questions to gain a deeper understanding of the language use of the residents of the *punas*. When asked what language they would prefer to communicate in all of the mothers at the meeting declared that they would be more comfortable if the community health meetings were in Quechua. They talked about the discrimination associated with the language. They told me that if they speak Quechua in town, they are called the names of animals from the *puna*, such as puma and deer. Also, if they speak Quechua in front of people who do not know the language, those people become worried that they are speaking badly about them. After the meeting everybody spoke Quechua openly.

My discussion with the residents of the *punas* indicated that the people are aware of the distinctions that arise between Spanish and Quechua speakers and the residents of the *punas* feel more comfortable speaking Quechua in their own environment. They obligingly modify their behaviour to accommodate guests from town, such as the

visiting nurses attending the meeting. Even though it is their own environment the Quechua speakers are the ones who modify their behaviour. This was demonstrated when I interviewed people from the *puna* community. Their statements included:

Here in the highlands we speak Quechua more. When we go to town we speak Spanish.

When we have visitors and they speak Spanish

We speak Spanish with them, but at home, we mainly speak Quechua’

These comments confirm how the people from the *puna* are constantly challenged by Spanish speakers to express themselves in the language imposed on them. They imply that these people feel that they are expected to communicate in the Spanish language, and there was pressure on them to do so, even if they had received little or no formal education in Spanish. This imposition of language is another crossing of boundaries, where the dominant culture extends into all aspects of lives for the people in the highlands.

Conclusions

The organization of space, as represented by the geographical division of Huallanca, has led to the linguistic divide between the Quechua speakers of the *punas* (*campesinos*) and the Spanish speakers of the town center (*mestizos*). Such organization of space has interacted with other factors to impact the use and perceived value of Quechua amongst the locals.

Fieldwork revealed that when the residents of the *puna* travel to the town centre, they downplay their heritage and the fact that they can speak Quechua. This is out of a need to transact their business with Spanish speakers, but also out fear of being shunned or ostracised by the dominant society. We can see that the division between *mestizos* and *campesinos* is exemplified by their attitudes toward language.

Factors that interact with the organization of space include politics, education, economics and modernity. While Quechua is an official language of Peru, it is not emphasised in the formal education system. Also, as Judith indicates, Quechua is not being taught at home for those living in town.

Younger generations give Spanish greater value than the “old” Quechua. Case 1 demonstrates the younger generation’s increasing connection with a world that extends beyond community’s boundaries, leading to a rejection of Quechua through peer group pressure (Luylox, 2000).

There is also little economic benefit to speaking Quechua in the town centre. Case 2 suggests that things would be different if this were not the situation. Here, Judith only admits to speaking Quechua when she realises that there is an economic benefit involved.

The literature review and the presented case studies suggest that Quechua is under threat and will continue to decline in Huallanca unless it becomes recognised as having tangible functional value, beyond the ideal of symbolic preservation.

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