CURRENT SITUATION - QUECHUA

The first language family of South America.

In terms of numbers of speakers, Quechua is the first linguistic family of South America. It is followed by Tupi-Guarani and then Aymara. The phrase "linguistic family" is used because really the divergence between the distinct variations—commonly called dialects—of Quechua is such that, in the case of the most extreme differences the "dialects" are separate languages. This situation could be compared in a very broad way to that of the Romance languages, for example to the cases of French and Spanish where inter-comprehension is not possible or is very difficult.

But traditionally one talks about the language (singular) of Quechua and this is perhaps because of the Quechua speakers themselves. There had been for several centuries and at least up to the end of colonial times a general dialect of Quechua, which served as a lingua franca alongside the local dialects. This conserved the idea of linguistic unity and because of this, Quechua-speakers continued talking of Quechua and not of the Quechua languages. In this text the traditional approach is used, speaking of dialects and not languages.

Comparison with the case of French

For example, making a comparison nearer to our culture here in France the different dialects of French are or were Franc-comptois, Picard, Champenois and many others. Between these dialects there were varying degrees of intercomprehension. From one of them was forged a standardised language, French, which because it was the state language succeeded in supplanting and absorbing the others. But this type of evolution did not hold in the case of Quechua and for that reason we are in a relatively fragmented situation.

Comparison with the case of Arabic

In actual fact when linguists refer to the concept of Quechua as a *language*—of a linguistic unity, which was maintained for centuries and exists up to today—it is because there existed a *vehicular* variety, which was called the *lengua general*. We will come back to this concept a little further on. There is in Quechua a situation which is similar in some respects to that of Arabic. For example a Palestinian and a Moroccan in fact speak forms of Arabic so different that they cannot understand one another. There exists alongside these local varieties (languages rather than dialects) a written language, which those who study it in school learn and which preserves the "consciousness of unity." In that sense the Moroccan and the Palestinian can say, "I speak Arabic" when in fact what they speak, on a daily basis at least, is Moroccan and Palestinian, which are distinct languages. We have something similar in the case of Quechua.

Cusco, the Incas and Quechua

From the sixteenth century until about the 1960s, that's to say when modern linguistics began to be applied to the Andean languages, the Quec

not in any way Cuzco. Because of that one cannot talk objectively of a Quechua more genuine than another, "more Quechua" than another, less still talk about Cuzco Quechua as "purer" when it has received more influence from the Aymara language than any other Quechua "dialect."

Quechua I and II

From Map I (quechua1.jpg) it can be seen that the area where dialects of the Quechua family are spoken extends from the south of Colombia to Santiago de Estero in the north-east of Argentina. Following the work of the Peruvian linguist Alfredo Torero, who initiated modern Andean linguistics in the 1960s, it is now accepted that the Quechua family is divided into two broad groups of dialects which are called—following Torero—Quechua I, covering all the central and north-central sierra of Peru, and Quechua II which extends to the south and to the north of the Quechua I area, that is, in a non-continuous manner. Amongst the Quechua II dialects can be distinguished a southern Quechua II which is spoken in an area extending from the Department of Huancavelica to the north-east of Argentina, and a northern Quechua II which is spoken in the equatorial *sierra*, from the south of Colombia and the rain forest area of Ecuador, extending along the rivers Pastaza and Napo to the east and the Peruvian north-east.

Mixed dialects

On the north of the map (dialectes_quechuas.jpg) there are smaller areas where Quechua is spoken and which pose some problems with respect to this classification. From the start of the 1980s the Australian linguist Gerald Taylor, now living in France, did a lot of work on the dialectology in the centre and in the north of Peru. He showed that some varieties of Quechua did

not fit the classification proposed by Torero of Quechua I on the one hand and Quechua II on the other. He showed that the Quechua dialects surviving in these areas in the northern sierra of Peru, which were not known in any detail before the work of Taylor, and in the province of Yauyos in the Department of Lima, cannot be considered either type I or type II. Gerald Taylor called them "mixed dialects."

Quechua in the sierra of Chiclayo and Yauyos

These mixed dialects in the two areas of the northern sierra and of Yauyos are not "mixed" for the same reason. Those in the north of Peru are spoken in the sierra of Chiclayo in the districts of Cañaris and Incahuasi lying behind Ferreñafe. Quechua still maintains its strength in this area where there are 100,000 speakers. On the other hand it appears to have disappeared in Chachapoyas. Gerald Taylor studied the Quechua of that area towards the end of the 1970s.

Two waves of expansion

These mixed dialects of the north appear to be "mixed" because—it is suggested—they have resulted in their current form from two successive waves of the spread of Quechua. A first wave came from the central and north-central sierra, that is Quechua of type I, on which centuries later but still in the pre-hispanic period, was superimposed a wave of expansion of Quechua type II. We will see later what the historical circumstancies were which could have produced such an explanation. By contrast in Yauyos, according to Taylor, it appears we are not in the situation of the superimposition of different "expansive waves" but of a real "missing link," of an area which spoke a transient Quechua between those which we know today as types I and those of type II.

Historical documents show that in reality this type of dialect should have evolved much more strongly up to the sixteenth century but that it became absorbed by Quechua II. Understanding why this Quechua remains only in the province of Yauyos is a key to some of the arguments that are set out later in this text.

Number of Quechua speakers

Regarding the number of Quechua-speakers the figures below should be regarded as approximate because they are established on the basis of census-data. The censuses ask different questions in different countries, some are vaguer than others or are subject to various criticisms.

Country	Quechua speakers
Colombia	4500
Ecuador	2250000
Peru	4000000
Bolivia	2500000
Argentina	100000
TOTAL	8854500

Comparable to Swedish or Greek

It could be held that an estimate of 10 millions is not too adventurous and is relatively reasonable because a tendency exists in all the censuses to underestimate the number of speakers. This underestimating is not so much on the part of the census-takers, but it is rather the respondents who tend not to disclose the fact that they know or speak this language as a mother-tongue. A language of 10 million speakers is one that is comparable in this respect with Swedish, Hungarian, Greek, and Czech. But as is well known, Quechua is not comparable with these languages either from the point of view of its social status or the role that it plays in the societies where it is spoken. In spite of Quechua having a prolific literature which is little published but

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Peruvian, Bolivian and Chilean *altiplano*. In spite of the immense size of the territory, Aymara here has few local variations: they exist but are not very important because there is perfect inter-comprehension between speakers from different areas of this territory. On the other hand the Aymara of central Peru is very distinct from that of the South. And perhaps in this it is similar to the comparison between Quechua I and Quechua II.

Country	Source	Aymara speakers
Bolivia	1992 census	1.6 million +
Chile	estimated	10000
Peru	1993 census	420000
TOTAL		2 million+

Chipaya

There is a third Andean language which is known as Chipaya because it is spoken still in the town of Chipaya a little to the west of Lake Popoo, to the south-east of Oururo in Bolivia. Chipaya is currently spoken—with a lot of vitality—by some one thousand people and until only a few years ago there were speakers of this language in a *comunidad* on the shores of Lake Titicaca, but it seems that these have all shifted to Aymara. We have documents, which show that the old area where Chipaya was spoken was very much more extensive than that today.

Aymara, Quechua and Chipaya compared

Although these three languages in principle are not related (and these complex issues need further explanation) Quechua and Aymara, as well as Aymara and Chipaya, share a minority but significant part of their vocabulary, and they also share many structural features at the

Thus Aymara and Quechua have structural similarities. At the level of syntax, the order of words within the phrase—the order of the components of the phrase—is identical in the two language families. The order of the suffixes one with another is also very close in the two languages. So what is puzzling is that in spite of this structural similarity between the two languages, the core lexicon and also the suffixes appear to be so distinct, so irreducible to a common origin.

PART II - HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION BEFORE 1530

Reasonable hypotheses

This part looks at some of the hypotheses which have been put forward to explain the historical expansion of Aymara and Quechua. It is based on the work of two Peruvian linguists who are respected specialists in this field: Alfredo Torero (from the 1960s) and Rodolfo Cerrón Palomino (especially from the 1980s onwards). This short section cannot go into much detail. For example it does not enter into the linguistic techniques for reconstructing the common ancestry of a linguisitic family and comparing it with its different contemporary forms. In any case, the point of departure for the hypothesis, which is going to be developed on this question, is that which is provided by the historical documents. We have to build on the linguistic situation that is revealed through historic documents from the moment that writing arrived in the Andes, that is to say at the time of the Spanish conquest.

Situation much more complicated than appears on the map

On Map 2 (1530) (langues_andines_1530.jpg) things are simplified a lot. The linguistic situation was in reality much more interconnected than that which can be represented on the map you see here, but at least it gives us an idea and serves as a basis for discussion.

Aymara covered a much wider area

First we see that the extension of Aymara was much greater than it is is now. Compare Maps I and II. Aymara almost reached the gates of Cuzco. To a large extent it was spoken in all of what is today the department of Apurimac, a part of the department of Ayacucho, and to the south it occupied a major part of Potosi, Sucre, Oruro and Cochabamba, where people now speak Quechua.

Other languages

But at the same time it can be observed that there were also other languages very much alive in the sixteenth century. On the one hand there is the language we call Chipaya, which in reality was Uruquilla when one deals with its historical existence. The Uruquilla languages of which modern Chipaya is a descendent are spoken in various redoubts along the axis which goes from Lake Titicaca, to Lake Popoo and to Lake Salar de Uyuni and all the area of the Salt Lakes. And on the other hand I have tried to represent, following the information of Torero, another language, Puquina, which was spoken in the extreme south of what is now Peru: Moquegua, part of Arequipa, the north, west and east of Lake Titicaca, and also the area of Cochabamba. Some redoubts appear in other places of what probably were languages in the sixteenth century. These

are the remains of a language extending over a greater area. Central Aymara as well had a more extensive coverage.

Quechua covered a smaller area

Cholon is a language, which was spoken in the Upper Marañon in some communities up to some twenty years ago. It appears even that it's possible that if searches were done, elderly speakers would still be found. There are some twentieth-century documents, some *testimonios* regarding this language.

Chachapoya in the area of Chachapoyas, that is, we say, the substratum of Chachapoyas Quechua, a language of which we know little. Wh 7d.9((g)i3 -2.3 p)-10apospeakers woname

lists. It disappeared in the 1940s, that is, in relatively recent times. Speakers were still surviving in the beginning and middle of the century in Eten, it seems.

Other languages are known also through a few words, which are to be found in colonial documents, and which mention that in such a place they speak such and such a language.

It is worth mentioning that Mochica, which is the best known of these northern languages, contrasts with the case of Aymara and Quechua. Mochica is a completely different language structurally and has very few terms in common with these other two Andean languages: that is to say that it had very few linguistic contacts and it had those very late in the Inca era, probably.

Initial focus for the expansion of Quechua and Aymara

Not all the details of the evidence supporting the hypotheses are going to be presented here. These are simply the hypotheses on which Torero and Cerron Palomino agree. There are differences in their reconstruction of Andean linguistic history but this presentation is limited to the essential features on which both agree.

The focus of expansion of Quechua

Both coincide in placing the initial, most ancient focus for the spread of Quechua in a location between the central coast, say the area of Lima, and the north-central sierra, which corresponds at least in its *sierra*—mountainous—part to the area of central

would have promoted Aymara as state language—on the one hand towards Cuzco, on the other to all the rest of the Aymara area marked on the map.

Going back in time and advancing in the hypothetical, but always according to these two linguists, Map III (langues_peru1000.jpg) shows the situation schematically at the end of the middle horizon (the outward intensification of relations under Wari-Tiwanaku). The shaded area shows the expansion of Aymara throughout the centre-south and southern Andean mountains. Quechua remained in all the northern area. To the South according to Torero, who has worked the most on these two languages, there was a greater expansion of Uruquilla and also of Puquina. Torero in his first publication had suggested that the language of Tiwanaku was Puquina, but afterwards in a more recent work he proposed the theory that in actual fact Puquina was the language of the Pukara—city and ceremonial centre to the north of Lake Titikaka, which before the rise of Tiwanaku around the beginning of our era (first century A.D.) had great importance—and that Uruquilla had been, we say, the first language of the Tiwanaku people. It seems to me that what Torero and Cerrón Palomino are saying here does not prevent us from thinking that Aymara also was already being spoken in these areas during the (later) Tiwanaku which was contemporary with the Wari, because of the relations which were able to exist between Upper Peru, Peru and the two empires. In any case the theory which has been put forward of a southern origin for Aymara cannot explain the great degree of convergence and structural similarity which

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Quechua used in the mines, on haciendas and in commerce

During the colonial period there was a radical upheaval in Andean society, in the first place economically. [Refer to Map II: the reduced sector of south-east Peru and northern Bolivia.] As you know, from the 1540s the Andean economy was oriented essentially towards mining; the silver mine of Potosi was discovered in 1545, and Huancavelica in 1563 became one of the nerve centres of the colonial economy. From the beginning of the decade of the 1570s, Viceroy Toledo established the *mita*, the compulsory service for working in the mines, essentially Potosi and Huancavelica. The system implied that some ethnic groups had to do their *mita* in the Huancavelica mines, Choclococha, and other mines in that area. Other groups had to do their *mita* in Potosi. All the area of Cuzco towards the south came into the orbit of the Potosi *mita*. On the other hand here [more or less corresponding to this shading on the map] are the groups which had to do their *mita* service in Huancavelica or in mines nearby. At the same time one imagines the enormous number of [regional / indigenous] people who were to be found in these mines,

Greater inter-provincial trade

At the same time the Andes began to be traversed by greater numbers of llama and mule trains because in the colonial period there was an enormous expansion in trade. In the pre-hispanic era, or at least towards the end of that period, trade was a relatively reduced phenomenon because each ethnic group tried to assure themselves direct control of land situated at different ecological levels. They had to be, to some extent, economically self-sufficient. By contrast, this system changed in the colonial period and the intensification of human circulation also contributed to the emergence of a common language. This common language was Quechua II meridional, for all the area that is Peru and Bolivia, because for one thing it already was the *vehicular* language in the Inca period. It already had that role.

This phenomenon was going to be amplified during the colonial period because Quechua was the language of some zones whose demographic weight was very important, in particular Cuzco. They contributed important labour to Potosi and were also very economically productive zones in other respects. What you see is the very strong coincidence between the economically active colonial regions during the middle of the seventeenth century and the sub-divisions of Quechua II meridional. For example the colonial economic space, which includes the town of Huancavelica, Huamanga and various secondary centres, corresponds more or less exactly to the area of Ayacucho Quechua, which is the northern subdivision of Quechua II. The same is true of the area covered by the Quechua of Cuzco which matches exactly the economic area of Cuzco in the seventeenth century. We could go on with similar cases. Potosi, and secondarily Chuquisaca and Cochabamba, in the colonial period spread Quechua into the rural zones which surrounded

them, to the cost of Aymara, Puquina and Uruquilla, and for that reason Quechua has a strong presence in Bolivia. This had been much less during the pre-hispanic era.

Aymaraes and the naming of Aymara

A significant shift from Aymara to Quechua appears to have occurred during the colonial period in the area between Lake Titicaca and an invisible line south of Cuzco and Ayacucho. Ethnic groups, which dissolved in the colonial period, gave birth to new identities. At the time of the first chroniclers in the sixteenth century, Aymara was spoken as far north as the province of Aymaraes in the present day Department of Apurimac. It is for circumstantial reasons that it is the Aymaraes that have given their name to the Aymara language. Today they are in an area which is very distant from where Aymara is spoken.

Spanish remains a foreign language

In the interior of the country during the colonial period Quechua and Aymara remained strong, to the extent that it could be said that Spanish remains a foreign language throughout the colonial period and even well into the republican era. Those Spanish born in the country, those called *criollos,* at least in the south, had Aymara or Quechua as a mother-tongue, or learnt Quechua or Aymara at the same time as Spanish. For example, depending on the area where they were, it was Aymara or Quechua which was spoken on a daily basis in the family. They were not only languages for communicating with so-called Indians.

The aristocracy spoke Quechua in the 18th century

For example at the end of the eighteenth century a Spanish traveller Carrió de la Bandera described a little this situation which is surprising to us today. In the *salons* of high society in Cuzco and of La Paz at the end of the eighteenth century, this self-same Creole aristocracy was speaking Quechua and Aymara and was not speaking any Spanish. Often they did not know how to speak Spanish, to the extent that Spanish and Creole women from modest backgrounds practically did not speak Spanish. This is the situation which it is necessary to bear in mind when assessing the very strong presence of these Andean languages, at least in all of the *sierra,* in the colonial period. And it is clear that at times the colonial authorities were disturbed by this situation, but they never succeeded, in spite of laws, in changing it, at least at that time.

Aymara and Quechua are languages not ethnic categories

Once all this is realised, therefore, what can be seen is the absurdity which results when using terms like *quechua* and *aymara* applied to ethnic entities. Quechua and Aymara are terms which signify languages and these languages have had a very complex history, much more than can be gone into here. Firstly it is absurd because they are categories which the language-speakers themselves do not recognise, the *comuneros*, the *campesinos* do not identify themselves as "we the quechuas," "we the aymaras." They do not know these categories, which are linguistic categories.

Culture, ethnicity and language are different

Also culturally it is absurd to talk of a Quechua culture or an Aymara culture—above all, Quechua. There is culturally little in common between a contemporary Quechua-speaker from the *altiplano* and one from the Ecuadorian jungle where the culture is essentially lowland or Amazonian. By contrast, now, the line between Quechua and Aymara passes more or less through Puno, Arequipa, etc. On both sides of the line of linguistic separation the culture is the same. Culture, ethnicity and language are three very different orders of reality which do not coincide, and we should not apply the terms Quechua and Aymara, which are terms referring to linguistic reality, to these other orders of reality.

Also it has been established that the particular equivalence which exists in the national imaginary between Peru-Quechua and Bolivia-Aymara does not have deep historical roots, for the initial focus of both languages is situated between the north and centre-south of present-day Peru.

Quechua loses role as a "general language"

In the nineteenth century with the crisis in the mining sector, the fragmentation of the Andean econo2my and the Vice-royalty, the separation of Peru into the two new republics and other factors, and because people circulated less, and there was less trade, less contact, Quechua lost its role as a *vehicular* language, as a *lingua franca*.

Additionally in the colonial period after the repression which followed the Tupac Amaru rebellion in 1780-81, the colonial power closed the university departments where they were teaching Quechua, that is in the University of San Marcos, in various convents, and various cathedrals of the Vice-royalty. For several decades the tradition of studying Quechua and Aymara

was extinguished. The teaching of Aymara finished in any practical sense with the expulsion of the Jesuits from Juli.

So with all this also the written form, which to a greater or lesser extent existed in the colonial epoch, principally for evangelism, dissolves.

THE 19th AND 20th CENTURIES

Quechua local and restricted

It is evident that many intellectuals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the provinces continued to produce literature in

Knowing Quechua not a disadvantage

It was true that until well into the twentieth century, speaking Quechua in Peruvian society was not something to be ashamed about, at least it was not in itself a symbol of cultural and social inferiority. The fact was that the majority of the Andean population did not know Spanish. What was a sign of social and cultural inferiority was not to know Spanish, to be monolingual. It wasn't "knowing Quechua"—it was "not knowing Spanish," the language of culture, modernity, prestige, etc.

From the 1940s this changes

For reasons which I will try to explain here, from the 1940s this changes. At least for those migrating to the city, it is the knowledge of Quechua itself which often becomes a stigma, a sign of inferiority, of which people try to rid themselves. From the 1940s Quechua—and to a lesser extent Aymara, but above all Quechua, and above all in Peru—entered into a process of decline in society with a loss of speakers. Why? Migration from the country to the city began in the 1920s; it was firstly a consequence of the great prosperity which Peru experienced more or less from 1900 to 1929.

It recovered again shortly afterwards, and it is thanks to that economic development that the cities began to acquire, very strongly, economic and demographic weight. The amount of employment offered by the state also increased, proportionately more for the upper provincial classes and the *pequeñas burguesias*, who were coming to depend economically less and less on

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The relative decline of Quechua

Thus in this context of massive urban migration, the migrants arriving in the cities were to confront racist attitudes. This induced them to integrate, to throw off the stigma of social and cultural inferiority imposed on them by the original city-dwellers. It was above all in their language that they found this stigma. And this is what explains the dramatic decline of Quechua in the twentieth century, especially during the second half, in Peru. From nineteenth-century census data it is estimated that in 1900 between 60% and 70% (author's estimate) of Peruvians spoke some form of Quechua. This does not mean that they only spoke Quechua but that a good majority of Peruvians spoke it and that it was the major language of the country. By 1940 the figure had declined to 47% and, as shown in the table, by 1993 the percentage had fallen to 18%.

Perú. Proporción de Quechua hablantes.	
Año	%
1940	47
1961	34
1972	26
1982	27
1993	18

There has been a very brutal decline which can be offset by the fact that the absolute number of speakers has grown, at least up to the beginning of the 1980s, because the demographic increase in the countryside has been such that it fully compensated for the loss of speakers produced by migration. For example, in the 1940s there were 2,420,000 Quechua-speakers in Peru and in 1993, 4 million. That is, the number of speakers has increased, although the proportion of speakers has decreased with respect to the total of the national population. It appears that we are now at the peak of this effect and that the number of speakers is beginning to fall.

The problem is that the notion of a natural, successful bilingualism does not exist amongst the people—still less amongst the teachers who can influence the attitudes which their students will have, regarding the question of maintaining the language or not, or transmitting it to their children or not, in the event that they leave their communities.

Quechua disappearing in the North

In just a few generations the use of Quechua has declined significantly. In the north of Peru it has practically disappeared, apart from the areas of Ferreñafe, Cañaris, Incahuasi, etc. mentioned previously. But in the wide area of the northern *sierra* and the eastern flanks it has disappeared in the twentieth century. Languages spread and disappear equally with surprising speed.

One new factor from the 1990s, connected with the international ideological context, is that concern regarding ethno-cultural issues has been growing. This is despite, or perhaps because of, the progress of bilingual policies and of acculturation. Proud affirmation of identity, thinking of Quechua as having important value and not hiding one's knowledge of it—these are not yet established but they are acquiring more force than they had twenty years ago.

The legal status of Quechua and Aymara

In 1975 the Velasco government made Quechua an official language, giving it the same legal status as Spanish for most possible functions. This law did not have much effect as the government fell, and also perhaps because there were not sufficient technical resources to implement Quechua as an official language. The constitution of 1979 did not retain this favoured status of Quechua. The constitution of 1992 marked an advance compared to that of 1979. In

Article 48 the official languages are Spanish and, in areas where they predominate, so additionally are Aymara, Quechua and the other indigenous languages. But this has proved too vague and as yet there are no defining statutes regarding "which areas" or "which languages." Nor is there a concerted citizens' movement to exploit this framework.

Bilingual education

Since the 1990s there has also been considerable development in bilingual education—of teaching the initial grades of primary education in an indigenous language. Since the introduction of schooling these had been taught in Spanish, a language which the children did not know. This naturally failed; for example, to give some recent dramatic figures: 62.8% of Quechua-speaking children in the primary grades are below the normal level. And to these 62.8% must be added the 10.1% of children who simply do not go to school. So approximately 73% of Quechua-speakers are not "where they should be" in terms of level. The linguistic problem really does seem to be the root of this. Since the end of the 1940s, since the Bustamante Government, various experiments in bilingual education have been carried out in particular areas, that is to say really only little by little and very slowly, by the Velasco, Belaúnde and Fujimori governments.

The textbook problem

The situation with the last Fujimori government has arrived at the following position which is quite ambiguous; that is to say, the system of bilingual education, when they started classes at the beginning of 2001, in principle was brought to 100,000 children in Peru. It existed in thirteen departments, covering the *sierra* as well as the jungle. And the state had ordered the manufacture