



## II LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN PERU

### 1. Language map of Northern Peru.

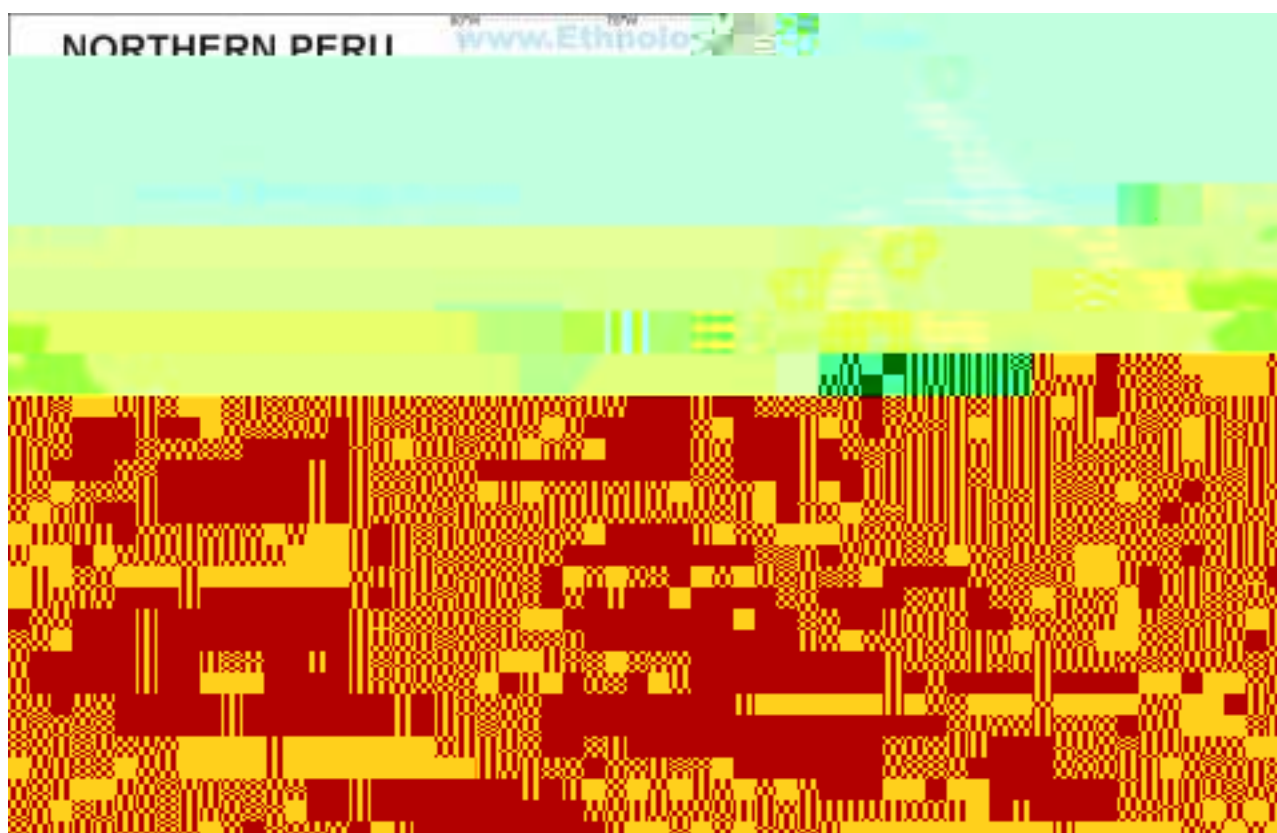


Image 1) For the original of this map please consult the Ethnologue website at [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com). Other maps used in the preparation of this talk include the Routledge 1993 Atlas of World Languages and the Atlas of Peruvian Languages by Roger Davinnes.<sup>7</sup> These can be consulted at specialist libraries; e.g. the Musée de l'Homme library, Paris or libraries of the University of London, but are not available online.

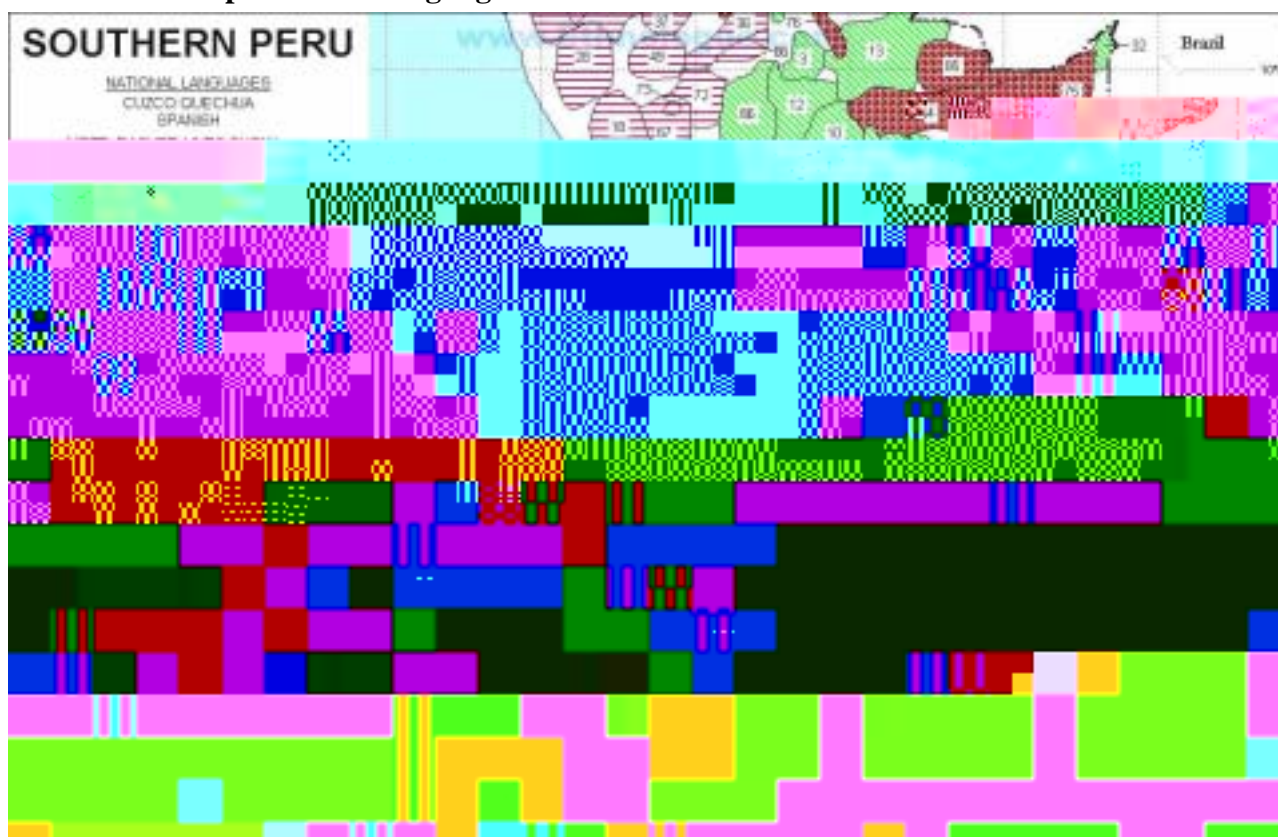
A language map of northern Peru presents us with a tapestry of ethno-linguistic groups. The blank or white areas are Spanish-speaking or without recorded population and in the numbered areas many, but not all, of the speakers of other languages are bilingual in Spanish. As neither time nor space permits coverage of all the languages in detail, only the major groupings or families of languages will be dealt with in this section. The Quechua language-family is perhaps the better known<sup>8</sup>. Statistically if you have Peruvian blood, the chances<sup>9</sup> are that you have at least one grandparent or great grandparent that spoke Quechua. And if they didn't, they spoke Aymara (see southern map), or maybe but with less probability, one of the languages from the lowland (Amazonian) areas to the East.

The Quechua-speaking areas on this map are clustered into three broad groups: Ancash (north-central highland) Quechua (31, 39, 60, 77, 79 on the map); the Quechua spoken in some of the Amazonian areas (25, 36, 56, 61, 71, 80); and some



Indo-European. It was, in fact, the observation<sup>13</sup> that Sanskrit had some likenesses to English that triggered, in the eighteenth century, the debate about language families in which we are still *embrouillé*.<sup>14</sup> The arguments over dialect and language continue to plague the definitions in these maps and charts. And for the inhabitants of Peru the issue is much more than academic. The demarcation on a map may well be used as evidence of territory to which an ethno-linguistic group has rights.

### 3. Southern map of Peru's languages



Quechua II which stretches right down to the Aymara region in the South and beyond in Bolivia and Argentina.<sup>16</sup> Jaqaru is related to central (24) and southern (78) Aymara.<sup>17</sup>

The Arawakan group of languages (3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 21, 35, 48, 50, 58, 86, 88) was first encountered on the northern map. The family or the individual language is sometimes loosely referred to as *campa* in the Lima press. This term perhaps is now politically incorrect in a country of multiple diglossias.<sup>18</sup> In the London lecture it was questioned as to whether all these varieties of the Arawakan family were indeed separate languages. Kaufman (World Atlas of Languages, Routledge) for example would take a slightly more aggregative—lumping—view. Nevertheless people from the groups do find inter-comprehension difficult and a local bi-lingualism often develops as contact occurs.

In Southern Peru members of the Pano language family can be found in: the tri-state area, north of the Madre de Dios river, where Peru, Bolivia and Brazil meet (75, 85); the area where the Purus river flows out of Peru into Brazil and later on into the Amazon (23, 75); and in the Ucayali basin (76 and northern map). This latter language (Shipibo-Konibo<sup>19</sup> - 76) will be dealt with below and will be the subject of another meeting<sup>20</sup> of the *Centre Cultural Peruvien (CECUPE)* in Pari.0004 Tw8.04 0



Council) in Latin America and the language media sold by multi-national publishing companies would need to be revamped.

### III LISTENING TO QUECHUA

**The sound of Quechua: a story of migration, *Historia de Luisa*. The text is in the Cuzco-Qollao dialect of Quechua.**

I think it is time for us to listen to Quechua. The recording is of a short story, which we were using to develop a new approach to education for Quechua speakers or for speakers of any language



Lusian Qosqo Ilaqtapi paqarirqan waranqa pusaqpachaq chunka pisqayoq watapi. Marques Valle Umbrosoq wasimpi. Luisa is born in Qosqo in 1815 in the house of the Marquis of Valle Umbroso.

Ancha khuyakusqan turachantan wañuchipurqan nku batalla Ayacucho. She loses a dear brother in the Battle of Ayacucho.



Luisaqa ancha yuyaysapa arte kamarisqanpi.  
Yuyaychakusqantantaq sapa p'unchaw "diario"  
nisqapi qhillqan. Luisa is very talented at art and likes to

1815 ine h1T83 TT12 14.1(u)1mef oropea10(e h)-11.7(d)-8.1.1928 T004 Tc0.2152 Tw35[(1815 i)0ncm 9

Waranqa pusaq pachaq kinsa chunka tawayoq watapi ñananwan qosanwan kуска Europata rirqanku. In 1834 she travelled with her husband and sister to Europe. Sumaqta pararaqanku Arequipanta I slayninta Liverpoolnintaima purispa. Via Arequipa, Islay and Liverpool.







## **7. Linking the spread of languages to**

have that amazing story of the evolution and spread of a language going right back perhaps to 1000 B.C., to the early stages of the Chavin.<sup>27</sup> More recently high rural birth rates have more than compensated for the loss of speakers as they migr

(Huari), and that the Wari themselves obtained or adopted this early form of Aymara from Nasca itself. This theory could always be invalidated if new archaeological finds are made, especially if they indicate the existence, however unlikely, of another horizon or another empire. Little is certain in linguistics when looking at these early periods. But that seems to be the current opinion.<sup>32</sup>

### ***Mochica***

A language which we know quite a lot about although it today is extinct—the last speaker died about 1920 (perhaps 1940)—is Mochica.<sup>33</sup> It is tempting to link the “focus of expansion” of the Mochica language with that great period of cultural and economic development<sup>34</sup> on the north coast also termed Mochica (after a name used locally at the time of contact) or Moche<sup>35</sup> (after the place-name just outside Trujillo on the north Pacific coast).

### ***Uruquilla***

The great culture of Tiawanaku, on the southern shore of Lake Titicaca, probably spoke or used as a *lingua franca* or vehicular language Uruquilla or Uru,<sup>36</sup> at least it did initially. With some probability there was a shift to Aymara, following Wari influence, thus consolidating Aymara linguistic dominance in the South of Peru. At the time of contact (with the Europeans) in the sixteenth century the Aymara-speaking area was far more extensive than today.<sup>37</sup>

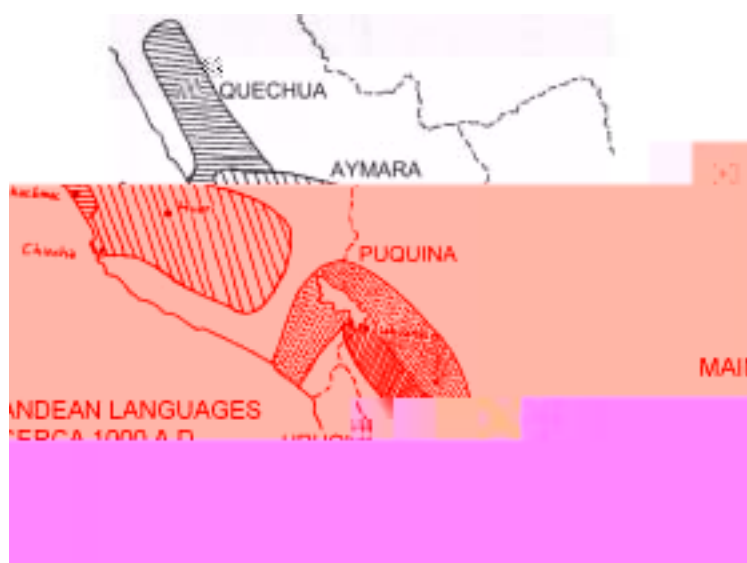


Image vii)

The table thus relies on reasonable hypotheses that explain the spread of languages in terms of whether they are or were *lingua francas*, adopted or native imperial languages, the vehicles of dominant cultures or the language of the evangelising cults of their day. Put simply, great empires or hegemonic cultures “need or breed” great languages: Latin, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, French, English. The table lists the principal regional empires (hegemonies) of the time and suggests the language which most, but not all, linguists associate with them. Aymara, for example, is associated with the Wari Empire. The Chavin culture, coastal traders in Chincha and the Spanish viceroyalty, as well as the Incas, played their part in the spread of Quechua. Thus the main expansion of Chavin, Pukara, Wari, and Tiwanaku cultures, in their turn produced, or at least resulted in, a language map which by 1000 A.D., with some probability, looked like that above (Map of









Image ix) map\_kaufman.jpg

Shipibo-Konibo (Spanish: *Shipibo-Conibo*), a member of the Pano “family,” is one of the most significant and well documented of the groups. These languages and ethnolinguistic groups are

Dios where Shipibo is still spoken. So the Shipibo have had centuries of dealing with Europeans and managed to survive somehow the exposure and servitude of the period of the rubber boom. They have developed an additional economic means of subsistence through the production of handicrafts which are now traded not just by themselves but also through various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and commercial entities. Shipibo ceramics are particularly well known, because the Shipibo do travel to the coast, to Lima, and to the tourist hotel in Paracas and so on, to sell community output at a better price.



Image x) shipibo1.jpg

The education system is starting to consider inter-cultural education and produce some texts in Shipibo to replace the previous assimilationist approaches, but the process is far from complete. Another reason given for the survival of Shipibo culture is that the communities have been able to play off one group of outsiders against another: people from various ministries, the non-governmental organisations, the Summer Institute, academics, commercial enterprises. In addition they often live cheek by jowl with the mestizo population. There is also a degree of legal protection

now, thanks to community laws, some of which were introduced by the Velasco Government<sup>45</sup> (1969-74). So there are protected or reserved areas. There are a variety of factors.

To summarise: linguistically and perhaps miraculously the Shipibo, in spite of having major contact for several centuries—theirs was an early mission area of the Jesuits and of the Franciscans—have maintained spoken Shipibo. Despite “transitional” bilingual programmes which are designed to prepare a Shipibo speaker to speak Spanish, the Shipibo have acquired some biliteracy and also resisted linguistic assimilation. The Shipibo are perhaps the only group living alongside a major waterway in Peru to have done so.

## 10. Ecology and language

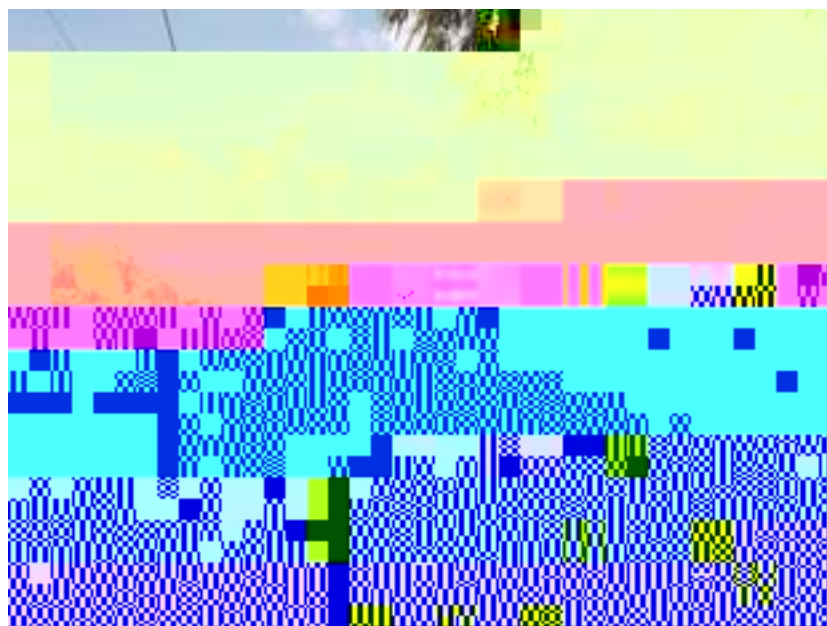


Image xi) ucayali1.jpg

Language is a mirror of lifestyle and environment. To an extent not perhaps appreciated in London and Paris<sup>46</sup> lifestyle is ultimately dependent on the ecological system. The value of *La Merma Mágica*<sup>47</sup>—which provides the most authoritative treatment yet of the rich vocabulary and categorisations in Shipibo with respect to human ecology and the natural (or ethnobiological) world—is the understanding it gives of the nature of these links.

In academic literature the theory of ecological niches—of bio-economic levels—emphasises height or altitude and the interrelationship between the levels as the prime determinants not just of economic activity but also socio-cultural life in the Andes. In the case of the Amazon basin, the ecological niches are created by the rise and fall of the river. It is the vertical movement and

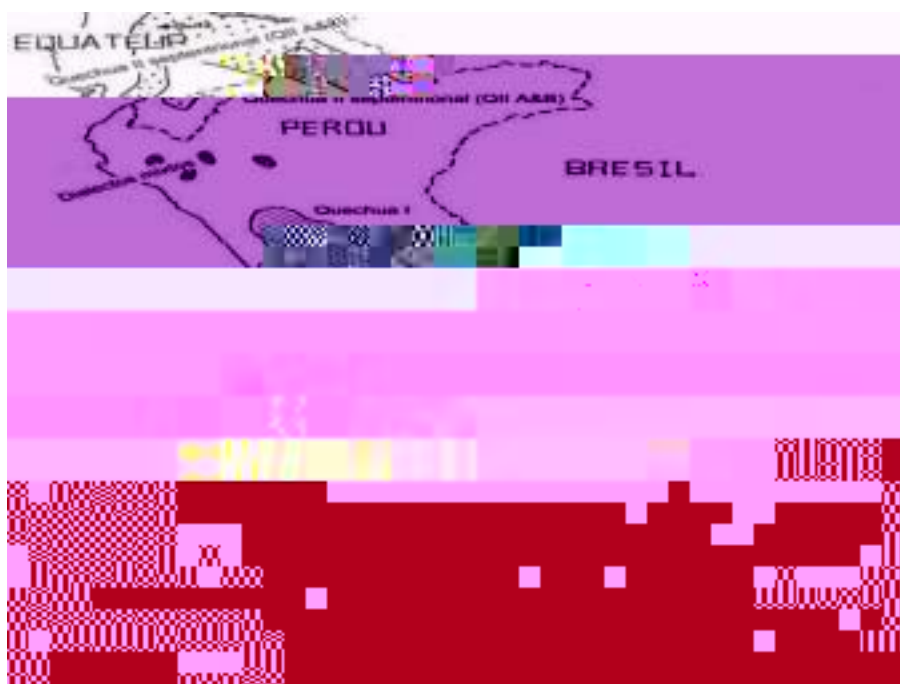


Image xiv).Current map of Quechua I and II, quechua1.jpg

## 11. Quechua a family of languages

So Quechua is the most extensive language family of South America in the sense that it has the largest numbers of speakers. It is followed by Tupi-Guaraní and by Aymara and could be compared to Arabic<sup>49</sup> in its range and variation but not its relative importance in terms of being a state or socially prestigious language. The differences between the regional variations of Quechua could also be compared to the differences between French, Spanish and Italian in some instances and, for example, Spanish and Portuguese in others.<sup>50</sup>

Either way there are certainly the two great varieties of Quechua I and II, the mixed dialects lying between Quechua I and Quechua II (North) and the central “missing link” between Quechua I and Quechua II (South).

The number of Quechua speakers is comparable to Swedish or Hungarian or Greek in terms of total numbers—normally quite viable numbers if you are talking about the maintenance of the language.



Image xv) Variations of Quechua in Southern Peru. Image: [quechua4.jpg](#)

However against this, some linguists will claim the regional variants of Quechua are separate languages as inter-communication is difficult. In terms of numbers of speakers those areas with 200,000 speakers and over are:



Those areas with less than 200,000 are:



Estimated number of speakers - source Ethnologue database 2003. The total of 4,178,700 includes Quechua-speakers from all regions in Peru - image vii) [quechua3.jpg](#).



Many Quechuistas traditionally would prefer Quechua to be thought of as one language. Cuzco Quechua was decreed an official language of Peru in 1968. A newspaper appeared in Quechua, but the educational infrastructure was not adequate to the task of implementing the new decree, which—inadvertently, it is supposed—was also discriminatory against other regional languages. Ironically the agrarian reform of the same regime eliminated the *hacendado* class and with it an elite that still spoke Quechua, at least in the south-central *sierra*.

Returning to the debate about where Quechua “came from”<sup>51</sup> we know that in no way could it have been Cuzco, in spite of the fact that Cuzco Quechua has the largest number of speakers. Together with Ayacucho Quechua and the Type I Quechua of Ancash they account for a majority of Peruvian Quechua speakers.

There is an early chronicle which suggests that (by then, the fifteenth century) the Quechua-speaking Incas, when they arrived in Ecuador, found Quechua already being spoken. There are also remnants of Aymara in the Yauyos area, and we know that at the time of contact—the Routledge maps contain reconstructions for that period—a grand area in the South was Aymara-speaking when the Spanish first arrived.

## 12. Alphabets, syllabaries, writing and literature

Prior to the European invasion, 1492-1532, the system for storing information and communicating it over (considerable) distances was based on the use of the *kipu* (*quipu* Sp.). Some current research<sup>52</sup> points to binary mathematics as the science underlying the structure of knots, colours and branching strings which make up the *kipu*. Teams of *kipu* specialists were trained to “write” or fabricate the *kipu* and “read” or interpret it.

Image xvi) [quipu.jpg](#)

For five hundred years<sup>53</sup> an orthography using Latin letters has been used in the Andes. It was adapted from the Spanish alphabet and included a *ch*, *ll* and *ñ* and the five Spanish vowels. However agglutinative languages are not ideally fitted to alphabets and vice versa. Countries which have had the political and cultural independence to do so, have developed other systems. It is no coincidence that Japanese, for example, uses two syllabaries (and the Chinese-derived *kanji*) where symbols represent the sounds of the syllables, not those of the consonants and vowels. Quechua-speakers pay a high price for the imposition of an “inappropriate” writing system.

It is no surprise that for several decades now the issue of the alphabet has seriously divided Quechuistas. The five-vowel alphabet imposed originally by Spanish evangelists vies with the three-vowel (a,i,u) system. The issue brings out a bitterness which has roots in perhaps still more fundamental issues.

### 13. Language, knowledge and learning in the Andes

Andean peoples “create,<sup>54</sup> transmit, maintain and transform their knowledge in culturally significant ways” and “processes of teaching and learning relate to these.” Researching, learning

and teaching are sensitive areas, none more so than in the field of language. There has been a transformation in some of the ways of working, within the last three decades or so, in anthropology, sociology, cultural studies and linguistics, including cross-disciplinary approaches applied to the Andes. One result has been a greater realism in the attitude to endangered languages.

As we have seen, the original focus of expansion—the point from which a language breaks out from being a localised language—of Quechua is likely to have been the North of Peru, whereas Aymara, once thought to have been the language of Tiawanaku, is more likely to have been spread from the Nazca area by the Wari expansion.



Image xvii) So Quechua did not come from the Incas . . .  
But it was spread by them!

Quechua and Aymara do have structural similarities and Cuzco Quechua has vocabulary in common with Aymara, but in spite of this, linguists say they are not reducible to a common origin.

## VII POSTSCRIPT

### **Handing on the baton**

This sequence of talks was, as noted previously, hosted by two Latin American cultural associations, one in Paris and the other London. It is hoped that some of the other (hundreds) of associations and societies in Europe will be able to follow the theme, which in this case is

“Languages of the Americas,” by inviting the next speakers and supporting the work<sup>55</sup> of dissemination.

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<sup>1</sup>See file <languages\_peru\_intro.htm> and <[perulanguages.htm](#)> (version in Macromedia Flash) for a copy of the introduction in the original talk given at Canning House, London SW1. This article is an edited version.

<sup>2</sup>In this article the term regional is used in preference to indigenous or autochthonous. The total number of regional languages—proposed by those who use a narrow definition of language (the language “splitters”) —is something like 113. Those who group many dialects together into the same language can still count over sixty distinct languages. However we can simplify this by dealing with language “families.” Paul Rivet, one of the founders of the Musée de l’Homme (Museum of Mankind or Anthropology) in Paris gave us one of the earlier such classifications into family groups.

<sup>3</sup>For example: César Itier (Quechua) “Quechua, Aymara and other Andean languages” (this journal, above); Jacques Tournon (See “La Merma Mágica,” to be reviewed at a meeting of Cecupe, Paris) and Pilar Valenzuela (Shipibo - various documents on line). <http://email.eva.mpg.de/~valenz/Shipibo-Konibo.html> for summary of material on Shipibo and [http://email.eva.mpg.de/~valenz/English\\_CV.html#PUBLICATIONS](http://email.eva.mpg.de/~valenz/English_CV.html#PUBLICATIONS) for list of publications.

<sup>4</sup>That is, not just amongst americanists. See postscript.

<sup>5</sup>See prior article in this journal, P. Goulder, "Diasporas and shared knowledge," for a discussion of how associations of the Latin American diaspora can and do have a significant educational role.



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from the Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente General 532, and was first presented by Bouysse-Cassagne (1975). In spite of this 'external' fact, Uru speakers themselves call(ed) their language Puquina (cf. footnote 4)."

<sup>30</sup> Pieter Muysken, Uchumataqu: Research in Progress on the Bolivian Altiplano (*International Journal on Multicultural Societies* 4.2, ISSN 1564-4901 © UNESCO, 2002, available on-line).

<sup>31</sup> See also indispensable sources at <http://www.ilcanet.com/>

<sup>32</sup> Current information can be inspected at the [www.aymara.org](http://www.aymara.org) website and by following the 'aymaralist' (click on item in left column of that website) emails.

<sup>33</sup> See F. de Carrera: *Arte de la lengua yunga* (1644) and work of E.Hovdhaugen at

<http://www.hf.uio.no/kri/ospromil/participantes/hovdhaugen/index.html>

and the Linguist list <http://saussure.linguistlist.org/cfdocs/new-website/LL->

[WorkingDirs/forms/langs/LLDescription.cfm?code=XMOC&RequestTimeout=200](http://saussure.linguistlist.org/cfdocs/new-website/LL-WorkingDirs/forms/langs/LLDescription.cfm?code=XMOC&RequestTimeout=200)

<sup>34</sup> For a visual record of everyday activity (anything from making war to making love) during the height of the Moche period visit, virtually, the Larco Herrera Museum in Lima. <http://museolarco.perucultural.org.pe/english/mochica.htm>

<sup>35</sup> Almost universally used by archaeologists.

<sup>36</sup> See "The Andean Uru-Chipaya Languages," op.cit. (Click on link on the ILCA website <http://www.ilcanet.com/>.)

<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The first dictionaries and grammars were quite early. See Diego Holguín, "El vocabulario de la lengua general de todo el Peru llamada Lengua Qquichua o del Inca" (Lima, 1608, reprinted 1952 and 1989).

<sup>54</sup> See Henry Stobart and Rosaleen Howard, eds., "Knowledge and Learning in the Andes: Ethnographic Perspectives" (Liverpool Latin American Studies, 2002), based upon papers delivered at a conference held at Darwin College, Cambridge University, in 1996.

<sup>55</sup> Transcription if necessary, translation, media creation, sub-editing and indexing, online publication, registering with a central catalogue and finally 'handing on the baton.'