

# 13 BILINGUAL INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE ANDES

*Teresa Valiente Catter and Michael Dürr*

## Introduction

The main aim of this article is to present the practice of intercultural bilingual education in Latin America, focussing on the Andes and the varieties of Quechua. We will discuss some central political, organisational, social and economic aspects of intercultural bilingual education, as well as the actors and their discourses, following the lines of this volume to supply the reader with a comparative perspective.<sup>1</sup>

In the Andean highlands of Peru and Bolivia, and in parts of Ecuador, the indigenous peoples still form the majority of the population. Among the languages spoken there, the most prominent are the various varieties of Quechua, showing such a diversity that it may be even appropriate to speak of ‘Quechuan languages’, with a total of approximately eight or possibly up to ten million speakers. Moreover, in the Amazonian regions in the east of these countries, there are scores of smaller languages belonging to various linguistic families, including varieties of Quechua, each with between a few dozen and some tens of thousands of speakers.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the region came under the influence of Spanish colonial administrative and missionary efforts, resulting in the establishment of Spanish as the dominant and most prestigious language. Nevertheless, language policy also meant conversion to Christianity in the various indigenous languages until 1770, when Charles III enacted a law stating that Spanish was to be used exclusively as the language of communication all over his possessions in the Americas. As a principle of this policy, at least in theory, all indigenous subjects had to speak Spanish, and the use of indigenous languages in education and religious service from then on was forbidden – a ban surviving the colonial era and lasting into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Educational programmes aimed at the various indigenous languages started systematically by the foreign Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) as late as 1945 in Peru and in the early 1950s in Ecuador and Bolivia, since then varying in intensity, methodology, and in their pedagogical and political goals. Unfortunately, even in the case of Quechua, all these efforts could not avoid a considerable language shift to Spanish: “What the shift amounts to is an increase in the amount of bilingualism, coupled with a sort of collective decision not to hand on the language to the next generation” (Adelaar 2006: 14–15).

## **The role of indigenous language in the national education systems**

Previous discussions and efforts of anthropologists, linguists, language planners and politicians culminated in 1975, when in Peru Quechua became the second national language along with Spanish, and a unified alphabet was established.

What results can be found after 35 years of implementation of bilingual intercultural education in the Andes? The main components are pedagogical innovation, intercultural perspective and a methodology starting with the indigenous language as the first language, later turning to Spanish as the second and national language and finally to English as the foreign and international language. Participation of the indigenous organisations in the decision process is granted. Such proposals have to be viewed against the background of a rural educational reality with high dropout rates, low yields, and frequent repetition and over-age in the school years.

Quechua as the first language of most children in the rural areas of the Andes became the starting point for teaching reading and writing, thus becoming a vehicle of education.

But except for teaching materials, for the most part restricted to primary education, and official texts, such as the constitution, occasional short articles in newspapers, and a few religious texts, little was published in Quechua – as printed books in general, even in Spanish, are hard to find in rural areas. Some radio and a few TV programmes in Quechua, mostly presenting folklore on a regional level, are broadcasted regularly, but national and international productions in Spanish, such as the telenovelas, are far more popular and leave their mark on individual and collective longings.

In primary schools, the first two years focus on Quechua, whereas the dominant language Spanish is introduced only gradually as a second language by listening and memorising just single words and phrases. Teaching becomes more and more bilingual in the third or fourth grade, and reading and writing experience a shift towards Spanish. The goal is to achieve bilingualism in Quechua and Spanish according to the so-called maintenance model, i. e., the use of both the indigenous language and Spanish throughout the primary years, depending on the subjects and the grade.

Although all official statements refer only to this maintenance model, many actors – politicians as well as members of the indigenous communities – consider this phase as crucial for switching to Spanish as the only language suited to preparing children for their future life in a national and global context. These actors implicitly or even sometimes overtly prefer a transitional model of education that results in the children giving up their first language as a vehicle of communication.

In fact, except for a few programmes using Quechua up to university level, all higher levels of education, through secondary, high school and university, make use of Spanish exclusively. And even in primary school from third grade on, mathematics and science tend to be taught in Spanish.

## **Developing bilingual intercultural curricula**

An adequate curriculum has to be the starting point of all considerations to design the educational process. Such a curriculum is mandatory as the guideline for the preparation of textbooks, teaching and learning materials, and for the training of teachers. Questions as to the what, how, when and by whom of learning are vitally important to be answered by the curriculum (von Gleich and Valiente 2005).

In most cases, teaching materials for Quechua follow the lines of the national curriculum and are slightly modified versions translated from Spanish. A point discussed in Ecuador, Bolivia and, at least for Amazonia, in Peru since the 1990s, is the necessity to develop specific indigenous curricula and to increase the degree of participation of indigenous groups in such development. The influence of participation and the relevance of indigenous curricula in educational practice may vary considerably on the national or even regional level from one legislative period to the next, as can be most prominently seen from the developments in Bolivia since the assumption to the presidency of Evo Morales in 2006.

Sometimes, curricula have been specifically developed by indigenous language experts for Quechua (Adelaar 2006: 14): “Best known are the experimental programs of bilingual education, [...], that were operational in Puno (Peru) and in Quito (Ecuador) during the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the current intercultural bilingual education program PROEIB Andes in Cochabamba (Bolivia).” These curricula reflect Andean cultural concepts focussing on the local way of life the children are familiar with. In 1988, indigenous educators from Ecuador declared the following criteria essential for creating a curriculum (von Gleich and Valiente 2005):

- elaboration of a curriculum that respects and preserves indigenous knowledge and that is in line with the indigenous way of thinking.
- inclusion of indigenous schemata, classifications, and concepts, e. g. of space and time, in the content of the various subjects.
- design of curricula and programmes that are related to the needs, interests and aspirations of indigenous peoples.

In the curriculum, an Andean world view is presented, in part reflecting the discussions of anthropologists, that often simplifies and generalises indigenous concepts to a Pan-Andean level of abstraction. As in the case of the curriculum currently used in Ecuador, this may lead to refusal by the indigenous families, but also by the indigenous teachers (Valiente 2011: 106): “Many teachers also reject the application of a curriculum incomprehensible in meaning and function, and return to the established curriculum.”<sup>2</sup>

Important for developing curricula and school materials is the interdependence between the languages involved and the teaching and learning content. Which language will be apt for a given curriculum content? The natural and social environ-

ment of the children is presented in the indigenous language. As these topics are in focus in the first three years of school, this orientation neatly fits with the necessity to start teaching with the first language. The more elaborate curriculum content from the fourth grade on, such as for mathematics and science, starts to be introduced at least in part translated or paraphrased from Spanish, to be later substituted by Spanish texts in the higher classes.

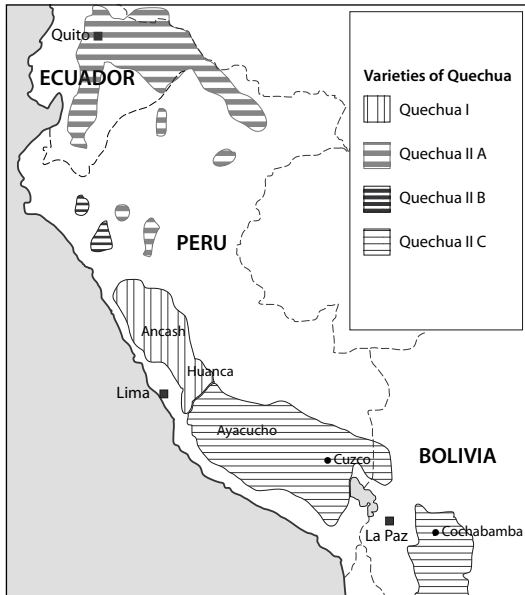
In the intercultural approach, the complementarity of different perspectives of knowledge plays an important role in the development of learning content. How do we relate knowledge developed from the experiences of everyday life to the principle of 'universal' science? Answering this question implies recognition of various forms of knowledge and the need for epistemological decentralisation: a) knowledge for solving problems of everyday life, i. e. the development of practical knowledge and genuine forms of abstraction and b) knowledge as a process of abstraction from concrete experiences based on inquiry, observation, measurement, comparison, interpretation and speculation. Thus the knowledge acquired empirically is exposed to stimulating reflections and innovation skills. Intercultural processes take place (von Gleich and Valiente 2005: 147) as follows:

- in the interaction of indigenous people with mestizos (in technical Spanish as a second language),
- in the mastery of concepts and practices of mestizo culture in solving problems of daily life (e. g. in mathematics),
- in the application of local knowledge and the adaptation of other elements of indigenous knowledge to the needs of the communities (in natural history)
- and in the search for the reasons for the current social conflicts and for a new social order based on traditional Andean values (in social studies).

Until recently, these indigenous curricula have been dedicated to, but from an intercultural perspective also restricted to, rural regions characterised by an indigenous majority. With the new education law of 2010, education in Bolivia is officially proclaimed to be a national issue and intercultural bilingual curricula are to be established for the whole country, expanding their realm to the indigenous as well as the mestizo population living in the urban centres. Thus, indigenous languages are starting to be taught as a second language to Spanish-speaking children, including aspects of indigenous knowledge.

Cultural and linguistic routines not only vary between Spanish and Quechua, but also within Quechua. It is therefore crucial to choose a well-suited variety as the standard for the written teaching materials to be printed.

In Peru, with its numerous different dialects of Quechua I and II, there was no possibility to establish a single written standard because the differences are so great that some varieties are mutually unintelligible. Therefore, in 1976, six dialect clusters were identified as the basis of the written regional varieties of Quechua (from the



[26] Map showing the main varieties of Quechua in Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

North to the South): San Martín (II B), Cajamarca (II A), Ancash (I), Huanca (I), Ayacucho (II C) and Cuzco (II C). These standardised varieties used in education are compromises resulting from the generalisation of more or less mutually intelligible dialects with similar phonemics, morphology and lexicon. The choice of the respective teaching materials is a political and administrative decision, liable to be reconsidered, as in the case of the Quechua II C varieties, that by now show a tendency to be treated as a single variety. And, of course, local dialects do not in every case correspond with administrative boundaries. As a

result, in some communities in Peru the school books do not represent the local variety spoken by the children, thus causing difficulties in teaching and in the perception of the children. Some non-governmental organisations, such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics, preferred to produce strictly local materials in editions of very few copies. From the local perspective, this might be the most appropriate solution, but such an alternative turns out to cause not only an administrative burden and high printing costs, but also leads to a cleavage in language identity.

The regional varieties of Quechua in Ecuador (II A) and in Bolivia (II C) do not differ as significantly as in Peru, so that it was possible to create a single written standard for the whole of each country. For the Bolivian varieties, the official orthography was issued in Cochabamba in 1983, and has been used since then as the single unified written standard, although some variation in practice may be found, in part resulting from regional varieties, and in part from non-linguistic or non-pedagogical reasons. In Ecuador until 1998, a so-called ethnophonemic spelling was used, but since then, the general spelling conventions for Quechua are more or less the same in all three countries.

Ethnophonemic spellings follow the lines of the orthography of the national language, for Spanish most notably in the case of the phoneme /k/, which is written with <qu> before /e/ and /i/, and with <c> elsewhere. This convention was also used in the indigenous languages,<sup>3</sup> e.g. Ecuadorian Quechua <quiru> for /kiru/ 'tooth'. But now, in all official orthographies for Quechua, the phoneme /k/ is represented by

the single grapheme <k>. Such ethnophonemic spellings that were also used in Peru and Bolivia before the establishment of the official orthographies in the late 1970s and 1980s, have often been advocated for minority languages, as the same writing conventions for the national language and for the minority languages may facilitate learning of the second language, regardless of whether or not this is the national or an indigenous language.<sup>4</sup>

Sometimes, the phonemic systems of the languages involved lead to a pedagogical dilemma. Should orthography be based on the three phonemic vowels /i/, /u/ and /a/ of most Quechua varieties, excluding the allophonic variants [e] of /i/ and [o] of /u/ from writing, or should it represent the five vowels <i>, <e>, <u>, <o> and <a> to make the learning of Spanish as second language easier, as ignoring the /i/ vs. /e/ and /u/ vs. /o/ distinction of Spanish is a typical error made by native speakers of Quechua, e.g. the loan words <misa> ‘mass’ vs. <mesa> ‘table’ both turn invariably into [mesa] in most Quechua varieties and in the regional indigenous Spanish. The lowered allophones [e] and [o] of /i/ and /u/ are found mostly adjacent to uvular stops and fricatives. The following examples with uvular /q/ from Ayacucho are given here for illustrative purposes in five- and in three-vowel orthography: <qollqe> / <qullqi> ‘silver, money’ or <qellu> / <qillu> ‘yellow’, but with velar /k/ only <kullu> / (the same) ‘tree-trunk’ or <kiru> / (the same) ‘tooth’. Some sound shifts related to stops, as for instance in the change in some varieties of velar /k/ to a fricative /x/ may lead to problems of the best choice of representation: Ayacucho <huk> sounds [huk], but Cuzco <huk> [hux].

Differences in phonemics, grammar and lexicon also may cause difficulties in understanding, even for related varieties of Quechua. In the Cuzco region (Quechua II C), there is a three-fold distinction for stops – simple, aspirated and glottalised, as can be seen from the minimal pairs <tanta> ‘gathering, meeting’, <thanta> ‘old, used, worn’ and /t’anta/ ‘bread’. But the Ayacucho variety (also Quechua II C) has <tanta> as a cognate for Cuzco <t’anta> ‘bread’, an articulation leading to misunderstanding with <tanta> ‘gathering, meeting’ by a Cuzco speaker. Some more examples of stops in Cuzco are <qella> ‘lazy’ and <q’ellu> ‘yellow’, whereas in Ayacucho the corresponding words <qella> and <qellu> are articulated both with the same initial stop /q/. And, in the Quechua II B varieties, even the velar vs. uvular distinction (/k/ vs. /q/) was lost, as both stops merged into present-day /k/. In the Ancash-Huaylas variety (Quechua I), there is a negative suffix <-tsu> that corresponds to <-chu> in Quechua II C from both Ayacucho and Cuzco, but in the latter varieties, <-chu> is also used as a polar question marker, a function that is expressed in the Ancash-Huaylas variety by a different suffix.

Besides possible misunderstandings, another complication lies in the necessity to reduce elaborate and varied spoken language to writing and to grammar teaching. Many local subtleties are lost or ignored in order to press the language into the simple grammatical rules that are expected in prescriptive school grammars. The



[27] School in Qullana, a Quechua community near Puno. The unit is on the use of ponchos, the traditional garment in Highland Peru.



[28] School in Pacor, a Quechua community near Cuzco.

whole situation may be made even worse, if not only the school books do not fit the local variety, but also the teacher is a speaker of a different variety, as it will not be possible in every case to recruit fully fluent speakers of the respective variety as local teachers.

### Reflecting the situation

Even though Quechua has the status of official language, only Spanish is used in most political, administrative and technical contexts. For these semantic domains and for all others relevant in higher education, no Quechua terminology has been systematically elaborated. Language planning efforts aimed at filling the gaps, substituting loan words from Spanish and creating an indigenous lexicon for neologisms have been undertaken, but have met with problems of acceptance. There is no sole representation or one single voice, although the *Academia de la Lengua Quechua* in Cuzco insists that it is the ultimate judge for standardisation.

The indigenous languages are used as a learning tool predominantly in the basic levels of education. A survey of indigenous students in primary and secondary schools in bilingual areas and in urban Ecuador (Otto 1993) revealed the preference for stories and legends written in Quechua and for the treatment of topics like social reciprocity, regional history and agricultural technology in indigenous languages. But, on the other hand, the same students are aware of the usefulness of Spanish as the primary language of communication. Thus, for the children the world is not divided into native Andean and Hispanic topics, but rather they see the world in a holistic manner.

The school system is regulated by rules that have to be applied to achieve planned results. The resistance that many parents express to bilingual intercultural education, among other things, stems from a deep distrust, if the use of indigenous languages in school and topics already known within the family and community will promote understanding. On the contrary, school is seen primarily as the opportunity to learn new skills associated above all with the Spanish language. Parents are frustrated in two ways: first, because the content of the education system lies outside the world of their experience, and the system arouses expectations of economic and social improvement. On the other hand, in bilingual intercultural education, innovative ideas are brought up, as for example, social equality, that cannot be fulfilled within the prescriptive official education system, and therefore often lead to situations of overt rejection.

Such reactions demonstrate the possibility of an acceptance of the values of the majority society by the indigenous people, and also mirror existing prejudice against the indigenous way of life. Language shift may be favoured for practical reasons, regardless of language loyalty or indigenous identity, pushing indigenous language



to the back of one's mind as an aspect of that identity. A frequent occasion is temporary or permanent transregional, or even transnational, migration to another region or to a city. Nevertheless, in specific situations the same people may opt for language loyalty. And, although Spanish is the unrivalled tool for interaction with the national majority, quite often the insufficient command of the Spanish language – phonetic and grammatical deviations and different communicational styles /conventions – still stigmatises indigenous citizens, in particular in urban Hispanic contexts.

As another aspect of indigenous language reality, new registers of use of an indigenous language may intrude even into the intellectual domain of the national society, as in the case of some Peruvian *chansonniers* singing in Quechua, or of the regional educated class, as in the case of some illustrated children's books in Quechua, or combining Quechua with Spanish. This partial acceptance of aspects of indigenous language in the national context may further language loyalty, but at the cost of possible folklorisation.

Although far more favourable conditions can be identified for Quechua than for those languages of the peoples of Siberia and the Russian Far East discussed in this volume – a great number of speakers, the status of national language and long-established bilingual intercultural curricula, – these conditions do not by necessity lead to a stable bilingual situation or to a generally high degree of language loyalty.

Therefore, in education as in real life, all actors select intentionally from different, sometimes competing, cultural and social patterns, and transform these patterns to create a set of identities that is considered socially as well as individually appropriate. Favouring or obstructing experiences within the family, the community and school leave their marks on the language loyalty of each individual and on the way of transferring language skills to the next generations. Indigenous languages in this way will keep their relevance as markers of multiple ethnic, social, local or national identities – whether transferred as spoken languages or adapted, although in a fragmentary manner, to the need to serve as emblematic markers.

## Notes

- 1 Some paragraphs of this paper are revised English versions taken from Valiente (2011).
- 2 In the Spanish original: “Muchos maestros rechazan también la aplicación de un currículo incomprensible en significado y función, y vuelven a utilizar el currículo de siempre” (Valiente 2011: 106).
- 3 In this article, angle brackets are used instead of italic typeface for graphemic representations of phonemes and words.
- 4 Orthographic peculiarities of the national language may also cause considerable confusion in teaching, as for instance in English-based orthography <oo> for /u:/ or <ee> for /i:/, whereas the corresponding short vowels are written <u> and <i>, or Spanish-based <qu> for /k/, if there are aspirated or glottalised stops as in /kh/ and /k'/ to be written with an additional letter.

Another example is palatalisation in Russian, which forms a central component of Cyrillic writing, either by special letters for palatalised vowels, as in <я>, <ю> and <ë>, or pairs of letters differentiating the status of palatalisation as in <б> vs. <б'> or <е> vs. <е'>.

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