Language ideology, ownership and maintenance: the discourse of the *Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua*

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1. Introduction

Language maintenance efforts are sometimes thought of as being in essence either a matter of top-down state planning or the result of "grass roots" initiatives by speakers themselves (see Hornberger 1999 for a discussion of this for Latin America). The present paper considers a case which appears to fall into neither camp. It concerns the ongoing Peruvian project of status and corpus planning being carried out by a language academy, the Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua (based in the former Inca capital of Cusco), which displays an ambivalent attitude towards both the nation-state which it claims to serve and the speakers whose aspirations it claims to represent. It will be argued that, given the peculiar linguistic, social and political agenda espoused by many of the senior members of the organisation, a serious Quechua language maintenance project on the part of either state planners or grass roots activists would be likely to find in this body at best an unreliable ally, and at worst an implacable enemy.

The paper examines the perspectives and ideology of the Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua (henceforth, "the Academia"), drawing in part on publications by and about it and its members, and in part on interviews conducted in 2001 (by a proxy interviewer) with the current president of the Academia, Dr Leandro Herencia Fernández, and with a teacher of Quechua who works for the institution. The principal source of data to be analysed, though, is an hour-long interview with one of its senior officials, a professionally-trained academic, carried out in Cusco in 1996 as part of my research on Quechua language shift (see Marr 1998). For reasons of confidentiality this individual is not named here (and is generally referred to as "the academician"). However, it should be noted, first, that he was interviewed in his capacity as a senior, elected office-holder of the Academia rather than as a private individual; and second, that he agreed enthusiastically to the interview being recorded on tape. The opinions I solicited from him were expressly those of the Academia as an

institution. It is also perhaps worth noting that the person interviewed has been a leading member of the Academia for many years, and by dint of his seniority and authority, might be supposed to exert some influence within the institution; certainly his views seem to accord on many questions with those of the current president.

2. Language and legitimate authority

Few academic linguists, in Peru or abroad, would regard the Academia as a serious scholarly institution; in such circles its position tends to be at best marginal (see Cerrón-Palomino 1997). The fact remains, though, that it is is recognised by the Peruvian government as the major representative body for the Quechua language; Article 3 of its constitution (reproduced in AMLQ 1995) lists as one of its six fundamental tasks the preparation of an approved Quechua version of the Constitution of the Republic, and the President of the Republic is automatically elected as an honorary senior member of the institution *(miembro honorario protector)*. As will be seen, though, the Academia's attitude to the Lima-centred Peruvian state is rather more complex and conflictive than this formal relationship might suggest. As holder of the state franchise, as it were, for Quechua, the Academia sees itself as the defender and protector of the language, and sometimes, by extension, as the voice of the "authentic" language as opposed to the linguists and educationalists it regards as outsiders or "foráneos" (Itier 1992b).

The Academia in its present state was instituted by congressional decree in 1990 out of the former Academia Peruana de la Lengua Quechua. It has, though, existed in various forms for very much longer; its immediate intellectual lineage might be traced back to the politico-cultural *indigenista* movement which flourished in Peru (and particularly in the Cusco region) in the early part of the 20th century. (For a critical account of this historical background, see Niño-Murcia 1997). Much of the ideological discourse of the Academia, though, lies squarely within a tradition that has existed in Cusco since at least the 17th century, whereby local social and political élites have sought to portray themselves as the legitimate heirs of the Incas, in part through the appropriation of the supposed language of the Incas (Itier 1992a; Godenzzi 1992; Niño-Murcia 1997). Traditionally, such groups – composed almost invariably of bilingual *mestizos* (those of mixed Spanish and indigenous descent) – have claimed that their own Quechua sociolect preserves the "purity" and "nobility" of the Inca tongue. Members of the Academia like to refer to the language as "quechua imperial" (see e.g. Manya 1992); or as *qhapaq simi* or *apu simi* (that

is, as something like "language of the nobles" or "language of the lords") in an unambiguous attempt to differentiate it from *runa simi* – "people's language", the term by which the language is generally known by *runa*, the Quechua-speaking peasants of the Andes.

Along with this insistence on the prestige and legitimacy of the Academia's "own" variety of the language goes an insistence on the display and recognition of duly-sanctioned authority, often deployed in order to fend off the perceived threat from other, competing authorities in the world of Quechua. The current state of "authority" in the field appears muddled and prone to strife. The emergence of locally-based Academias in other historically Quechua-speaking areas, such as the Callejón de Huaylas in the central Andes, tends to be regarded with a mixture of satisfaction at the resilience of the language and an intense suspicion that these bodies constitute a potential threat to the hegemony of the academicians of Cusco. A short while prior to the main interview discussed here, my interviewee informed me, the Lima branch of the organisation (or certain members of it) had taken to styling themselves "Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua del Perú", hence implicitly disavowing the authority and pre-eminence of the Cusco centre. The president of the Cusco centre was due to travel to Lima that month to call a meeting of the branch and re-impose the authority of the Academia – "cuya sede es la ciudad del Qosqo, Perú, cuya sede es la ciudad del Qosqo, Perú (...)" [whose headquarters is in the city of Cusco, Peru, whose headquarters is in the city of Cusco, Peru] as I was told with marked repetition. (The word *Qosqo* is the Quechua original of the hispanicised *Cusco* or *Cuzco*. It is to be assumed that its use in a Spanish-speaking context, by a bilingual, inevitably carries ideological weight: here, as elsewhere where it occurs in this paper, it is doubtless intended to convey a sense of the historical legitimacy of the city where matters of language and culture are concerned).

The problem of the proliferation of competing self-appointed authorities on Quechua, added to the ideological imperative – to be discussed below – of promoting a particular sociolect, leads the Academia to adopt at times a quite distinctive mode of discourse, in which for example questions formulated primarily in terms of *language* are answered in terms of *authority to pronounce upon language*, as in the following extract from the interview. The academician was asked if the Academia's dictionary (AMLQ 1995) attempted to record the way everyday Quechua is spoken (that is, whether the dictionary is in essence a descriptive or a prescriptive work). The reply came:

> El diccionario se ha elaborado con la participación de los miembros de número, que es la máxima categoría de los maestros del idioma quechua. Son personas que están ahí 30, 40, 50 años, estudiando, investigando (...)

[The dictionary was put together with the participation of the *miembros de número*, which is the highest rank of expert in the Quechua language. These are people who have been studying and researching for 30, 40, 50 years (...)]

A lengthy exposition followed on the professional and personal eminence of the senior members of the Academia. In seeking to understand the import (at times, it seems, only at the level of a semi-conscious subtext) of what the academician has to say, it is necessary to appreciate that his linguistic *Weltanschauung* is shaped by a distinct conception of power and authority: all tends towards the justification of the proposition that he and his fellow academicians are uniquely able to pronounce upon Quechua, upon Cusco, upon the Andean region, upon the Republic as a whole, and even beyond. Itier's (1992b) critique of the institution concludes that its activities are designed ultimately to demonstrate that "(...) el Cusco, su clase media y sus intelectuales están legítimamente llamados a representar la supuesta cultura andina y, por ende, la nación" (Itier 1992b:90). [Cusco, its middle class and its intellectuals are legitimately called upon to represent the supposed Andean culture and, consequently, the nation.] That this is a substantially accurate assessment will, it is hoped, become apparent in due course.

3. *Cuscocentrismo* and the cult of the Incas

As Itier's comment implies, the Academia's institutional attitude to language is conditioned by a heavily ideologised worldview which is essentially Cusco-centric (that is, determinedly regionalist), and, within this, class-based. The academicians' claim to linguistic, cultural and political pre-eminence depends upon the generalised recognition, firstly, that the Inca past represents the moral and cultural heart of Peru; and secondly, that control – in both the linguistic and political senses – of the supposed *qhapaq simi* affords them an indisputable claim to the heritage of the Incas. For this section of the *mestizo* élite, then, it is axiomatic that Quechua originated in Cusco under the Incas. Thus Juan Antonio Manya, a former president of the Academia, writes: "El hablar del idioma quechua es hablar del Qosqo, que es ciudad milenaria, arca sagrada, cubierta con el denso velo del misterio; emporio, en época fabulosa, de riqueza, ciencia y poder (...)" (Manya 1992: 49). [To speak of the Quechua language is to speak of Cusco, which is an age-old city, a sacred ark, covered with a thick veil of mystery; a treasure-house, in that fabled epoch, of wealth, learning and power (...)] And so on for several paragraphs in the same vein. The identification of the language with the city is absolute, as is the identification of the city with the Incas, and with the heart of the modern Peruvian nation. Much of the

discourse of the Academia relies on this kind of romanticism and mysticism to make its case. Its president since December 2000, Dr Herencia Fernández, can claim that: "El sonido del idioma quechua es como una piedra que toca el agua del río y el sonido va hasta el infinito". [The sound of the Quechua language is like a stone hitting the water of the river, its sound echoing into infinity.]

Like this equation of the sound of the language with the very sounds of nature, the notion that the history of Cusco is "cubierta con el denso velo del misterio" owes more to wishful thinking – or wilful obfuscation – than reality. The well-established complex of modern historico-linguistic research showing that Quechua developed not in Cusco but in the central part of Peru, including its Pacific coastal section (see e.g. Torero 1974; Rojas 1980; Cerrón-Palomino 1989; Mannheim 1991) tends to be ignored or dismissed out of hand by the Academia, incompatible as it is with the cherished myths of Incaic Cusco.

The determined propagation of the cult of the Incas seems to necessitate a near-total disregard for any other Peruvian or South American culture. At no point in the interview with the academician was reference made to any pre-Inca civilization in Peru: the history of the country is virtually understood to begin with the Inca empire. Degregori's (1994) account of discussions with a group of Cusco residents shows how deeply-rooted this mode of thinking is; he notes the marked tendency of his informants to reduce the whole of Peru's precolumbian history to "(...) su último momento de desarrollo, el relacionado con los Incas" (1994: 448–9) [(...) the last moment in its development, the one associated with the Incas.] Within this style of discourse, as Degregori rightly notes, virtually nothing of any significance is attributed to pre-Inca cultures – not even the cultivation of such ancient Andean crops as maize and tubers. In similar fashion, the academician's vision of America at the time of the Conquest is an extraordinarily limited one. The Spaniards, he says: "(...) a nivel del nuevo mundo, o sea entre el norte de Argentina, Chile, Perú, Bolivia, Ecuador, etcétera etcétera, han matado a aproximadamente 200 millones de personas". [(...) in the New World as a whole, that is to say, in northern Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, etcetera etcetera, killed approximately 200 million people.] One might or might not wish to take issue with the figure cited. However, the most striking point here is surely that this definition of "New World" contrives to ignore entirely most of the continent, which is dismissed with an "etcétera etcétera": the whole of America is presented as being basically synonymous with the limits of the Inca empire. The same selective vision of culture is projected into the present. If the true culture of Peru is self-evidently an Andean Quechua one, and Quechua-speaking (or, rather, bilingual) Cusco self-evidently the very essence of it, then any Peruvian who is less than fervently interested in Quechua is simply suffering from cultural dislocation. Indeed, so

strong is the belief that the Inca culture defines Peru that the Academia – according to the teacher interviewed – is now demanding that the national Ministry of Culture be moved from Lima to Cusco. This is clearly not going to happen; but the evident lack of sustained governmental support for the Academia's cultural and linguistic project is rationalised thus by the academician: "Y el Estado pues no ha (...) no ha brindado su apoyo total, sino un apoyo esporádico, un apoyo así circunstancial (...) mas eran hombres no totalmente identificados con su cultura, con su mundo andino, etcétera". [And the State hasn't (...) hasn't lent total support, only sporadic support, support in certain circumstances (...) but they were men who didn't identify totally with their culture, with their Andean world, etcetera.]

Their culture – *their* Andean world: every Peruvian, from wherever in the country, speaking whatever language, of whatever extraction or orientation, is expected willy-nilly to acknowledge the cultural and linguistic pre-eminence of Cusco and the Andes and accept it as the defining mark of his or her *peruanidad* (or "Peruvian-ness"). By extension, then, Quechua is not just one of the estimated 44 languages extant in Peru (the number cited by the linguist Gustavo Solís at the first Encuentro Internacional de Peruanistas at the University of Lima, 3–6 September 1996). Rather, Quechua is the true "native" tongue of *all* Peruvians. If they refuse stubbornly to recognise this, it can only be because they are ashamed of their nationality:

> Que es así como el niño yanqui o norteamericano se siente orgulloso de su país, de su cultura, de su historia, nosotros también queremos que el niño peruano, el joven peruano, se sienta orgulloso ¿no? de su historia, de su cultura ¿no? de su lengua materna.

[It's like the way Yankee children, North American children, feel proud of their country, their culture, their history; we want Peruvian children too, Peruvian young people, to feel proud, you see? Of their history, of their culture, you see? Of their mother tongue.]

Within the logic of this worldview, the Academia, faithful to the supposed mother tongue, represents the true patriots. Indeed, it seems to be suggested that South Americans (Latin Americans? Americans?) in general should accept this definition of cultural identity, whereby the *Tawantinsuyo* (the "four quarters", the historic area of the Inca empire at its brief apogee) comes to stand as emblematic of the whole continent: "El quechua del Qosqo. Qosqo como capital de la nacionalidad continental del Tawantinsuyo". [The Quechua of Cusco. Cusco as the capital of the continent-wide nationality of the *Tawantinsuyo*.]

The academician thus defines the agenda of his organisation in the most grandiose terms; it amounts to the reduction of the modern republic (and even

beyond) to a sphere in which his and his colleagues' influence – as guardians of the true language and culture – might be supposed to hold sway.

4. Quechua language and the discourse of Quechua superiority

The cult of admiration for the Incas is founded on a series of givens. One is the superiority of their system and philosophy of government to any other. If, according to the former (to 2000) president of the Academia, Inca society was "casi un paraíso" [almost a paradise] (Pacheco 1994: 13), then it must have been based on extraordinary principles. Hence the academician lights upon a – frankly rather banal – *pensée* attributed to Pachacútec Inca, and invests it with enormous significance (and note the curious conflation of the Inca empire with the modern notion of the "Republic" – presumably of Peru):

> Ha aquí algún pensamiento de Pachacútec, y su traducción es: *el hombre que no sabe gobernar su casa y su familia, menos sabrá gobernar la República.* Un pensamiento de profundo sentir y contenido filosófico. Ningún pensador griego, romano o oriental ha tenido este pensamiento por ejemplo (...)

[There is a theory that Pachacútec had, and it translates as: *the man who cannot govern his house and his family, still less will he be able to govern the Republic.* A thought of profound feeling and philosophical content. No Greek, Roman or Oriental thinker has had such a thought, for example (...)]

The presumed superiority of Inca science and cosmology is also singled out for praise, at the expense of the supposed scientific underdevelopment of 16th century Europeans, who had "(...) una concepción filosófica atrasada, retrógrada" [a retarded and backward philosophy]. The present president of the Academia remarks without further elaboration that Pachacútec Inca was "el mejor estadista y el mejor astrónomo" [the greatest statesman and the greatest astronomer], while the Quechua teacher insists: "nadie actualmente ha llegado al nivel de desarrollo al que llegaron los incas" [no-one in the present day has reached the levels of development that the Incas reached], and even suggests airily that the Incas engaged in space travel.

The recurring *leitmotif* of Inca cultural superiority, though, is more tangible: the grandeur of their building. The archaeological sites of Incaic Cusco (and only Incaic Cusco – there is no mention of Incaic sites elsewhere, or of pre-Incaic sites such as, say, Tiwanaku in modern Bolivia, or Chavín de Huántar and Chan Chan in Peru) are deployed as *prima facie* proof of the perfection of that civilization, without any further explanation being considered necess-

ary: "Sentimos orgullosos de esa historia gloriosa de los incas. ¿Por qué? Porque ahí están sus obras, como Machu Picchu o Sacsayhuamán, que es motivo de admiración de parte de toda la humanidad". [We feel pride in the glorious history of the Incas. Why? Because there we have their great works, such as Machu Picchu or Sacsayhuamán, which are admired by all humanity.]

Later in the interview it is suggested that these sites were actually destroyed by the Spaniards: "Han destruido las portentosas obras, unas obras excepcionales que habían de los incas, como Machu Picchu – bueno, Machu Picchu no, sino Sacsayhuamán, Pisaq, Ollantaytambo". [They destroyed the majestic creations, exceptional creations of the Incas, such as Machu Picchu – well, not Machu Picchu, but Sacsayhuamán, Pisaq, Ollantaytambo.] The demonstrable continuing existence of these sites sits ill with the simultaneous claim that the Spaniards destroyed them (and the assertion that Machu Picchu – undiscovered by the Spaniards – was destroyed is indeed withdrawn in timely fashion). However, the underlying intention of the discourse, as it appears to the listener, is to establish not facts, but the thoroughgoing malevolence and philistinism of the *conquistadores*. The "Incas" (by which term one is presumably supposed to understand the ruling class of the Inca empire) are conceived of as mystical, noble, and spiritual – the symbolic moral antithesis of the Spaniards.

Within the framework of this discourse, *all* facets of Inca / Andean culture (the two are never formally distinguished) are superior to *all* manifestations of Spanish / European culture (again, never formally distinguished). Whatever is Spanish is corrupted, backward, barbarous; whatever is Incaic is, in the most real sense, perfect: consummate and unimprovable. Most importantly, for our present purpose, this must hence be true in the matter of language. As was noted earlier, for the Academia it is inarguable that the Incas, in Cusco, were the first Quechua speakers: the language is hence perceived – as if it were a kind of verbal Machu Picchu – as yet another unsurpassed achievement of Inca culture. The interview includes a commentary on the ways in which Quechua is structurally superior to all other languages:

> Sinceramente el idioma quechua por ejemplo ha superado, este (...) el artículo. No existe como una categoría gramática el artículo. ¿No? Para decir por ejemplo: yo voy a ir a tu casa. Yo – voy – a – ir – a – tu – casa. Siete palabras serían. En quechua sería *wasiykita risaq*. Dos palabras. Es un idioma polisintético, que sintetiza, ¿no? que con unas solas palabras se puede expresar toda una oración, todo un juicio.

[Quite honestly, the Quechua language for example has overcome, er (...) the article. The article does not exist as a grammatical category. You see? To say, for example: I'm going to go to your house. I'm – going – to – go – to – your –

house. That would be seven words. In Quechua it would be *wasiykita risaq*. Two words. It's a polysynthetic language, a synthesising language, you see? So with just a few words you can express a whole sentence, a whole opinion.]

The linguistic absurdity of this comparison (like that of the blithe assertion, cited below, that Quechua is "more perfect than Latin and Greek") goes unexamined: indeed, it is irrelevant. Within the terms of the discourse of Quechua superiority, every facet of its phonology, lexicon and morphosyntax, even the fact that it happens to lack articles (that it has "overcome" them is the proud boast) is simply further proof of its innate perfection.

5. The influence of the European in the discourse of the *Academia*

The irony concealed at the heart of the discourse of the Academia is its paradoxical embracing of foreign, colonial and metropolitan influence in language, thought and behaviour. The foundation of this entire ideological edifice is the glorification of the Incas: yet the Incas are never thought of or understood in relation to contemporary or earlier Andean cultures; still less are they thought of in objective isolation. They seem to gain shape only when they are compared with outsiders. Throughout the interview, the speaker's style of argument rests on the use of contrast and comparison: nothing can be judged on its own terms. As seen above, he cannot be satisfied with the quoting of Pachacútec Inca's philosophy of government but must compare it to the ancient philosophers of Europe and the East (finding it, of course, superior). Most tellingly of all, the academician contentedly cites the interest of a handful of traditionally-minded *foreign* linguists in Quechua as if this were the final, triumphant proof of the inherent virtues of the language.

> Entonces tenemos nosotros la suerte de contar con intelectuales de mucho prestigio, como por ejemplo con este doctor David Weber. También había un lingüista Honorio Mossi, italiano. El ha dicho por ejemplo que el idioma quechua es más perfecto que el latín y el griego. Hemos tenido a un alemán. Ernst Middendorf. Tiene varios libros.

[So we are lucky enough to have intellectuals of great prestige, like for example this Dr. David Weber. There was also an Italian linguist, Honorio Mossi. He, for example, has said that the Quechua language is more perfect than Latin and Greek. We have had a German, Ernst Middendorf. He has written several books.]

In a similar vein, the teacher of Quechua describes a conference in May 2000: "Han venido desde lo más lejos hablando quechua, desde Canadá, Japón, Austria, Dinamarca. Todos hemos estado de acuerdo de que el quechua del Cusco debe ser el que se difunda uniformemente en todas partes". [People came from far away speaking Quechua: from Canada, Japan, Austria, Denmark. We were all agreed that it must be the Quechua of Cusco which is spread uniformly everywhere.]

For all their determined championing of their home ground, there appears to be an uneasy feeling amongst many of the members of the Academia that real recognition can come only from outside. The frustration and resentment felt by a provincial élite towards the real seat of power, the capital, is everywhere manifest in the discourse of the academician. First the importance of Lima as an attraction in itself is scorned, and again, the opinions of foreigners – in the government-sponsored "Year of 600,000 Tourists" – are invoked to prove the point: "Se quiere hacer por ejemplo turismo de 600,000 personas, o sea la venida de 600,000 turistas al Perú, al Cusco. Pero ¿en función de Lima, en función del turismo? ¡No! En función del Qosqo y sus riquezas culturales". [They want for example to have 600,000 tourists, that is, to have 600,000 tourists coming to Peru, to Cusco. But is this tourism happening because of Lima? No! It's because of Cusco and its cultural riches.]

But while Lima is thus to be dismissed out of hand, it is simultaneously the source and measure of real success and influence. The presence of Quechua in Lima universities (a largely illusory presence; not for nothing does the list peter out after the mention of San Marcos University) is spoken of with ingenuous pride: "Por eso yo veo con mucha admiración que tenemos la suerte de que en la mayor parte de las universidades del Perú por ejemplo, ¡en Lima misma! en San Marcos, en (...) en todas las universidades de Lima, se enseña quechua". [So I admire greatly the fact that we have the good fortune to have Quechua taught in most of the universities in Peru, for example, in Lima itself! In San Marcos, in (...) in all the universities in Lima.] In the terms of this discourse, Spanish colonialism can have brought nothing of any benefit to Peru. The Spaniards who came to Peru are condemned in the harshest terms, as for example "(...) gente sacada de las cárceles (...) grandes criminales, y en el caso de las mujeres, eran mujeres sacadas de los peores prostíbulos de Europa" [people plucked from prisons (...) complete criminals, and in the case of the women, women taken from the worst brothels in Europe]. Certainly the Cusco élite would wish to disassociate itself from such people. And yet the influence of Spanish culture, thought and language in the universe of the academicians is all-pervading. One scarcely needs to be a practising Freudian to suspect that

this perhaps haunts their unconscious thoughts, given the bombastic way in which it is denied. The former president of the Academia writes:

> [T]enemos y debemos abandonar la mentalidad, actitud, posición, parámetros, categorías occidentales, europeo-hispanistas, que son total y completamente incompatibles con la realidad y la estructura biosíquico-social del habitante andino-Inka, y por ende, con su mentalidad y manifestaciones conductales. (Pacheco 1994: 109)

[We must and we have to abandon the Western, European-Hispanic mentality, attitude, position, parameters and categories, which are totally and completely incompatible with the environment and the biopsychological-social structure of the Andean-Inca, and also, therefore, with his mentality and behaviour.]

Unable to free themselves from the constraints of the Spanish paradigm, and often seemingly unconscious of this, the *mestizo* élite are condemned to recreate it, in endless inferior variations, in the Andean world. The model for the Academia – indeed the very *notion* of a language academy – has, of course, been taken from Spain. In the interview the task of the Academia was justified thus: "Así como la Real Academia Española, ¿lo cierto? ejerce esa actividad de normar, ¿lo cierto? de igual manera la Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua también tiene esa obligación de normar (...)". [Just as the Real Academia Española – does it not? – carries out normative functions – does it not? – so in the same way the Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua also has that obligation to set norms (...)]

Itier (1992a) points out, acutely, that the Academia-approved use of five vowels in Quechua orthography, rather than the three favoured by most academic linguists (see Itier 1992b, Samanez 1992 for a taste of this long-running and bitter argument) is no more than a demonstration of the extent to which Spanish has permeated the Quechua of Andean bilinguals. The academician's defence of *pentavocalismo* provides substantial (if unwitting) support for this assertion:

> El uso por ejemplo de las cinco vocales no es capricho de uno o dos intelectuales: es producto, es determinación de congresos internacionales, como el congreso internacional todavía de 1950 en La Paz, Bolivia. El congreso internacional de quechua acá en la ciudad del Qosqo en 1987. El congreso internacional en Lima en 1991. Son congresos internacionales.

[The use of the five vowels, for example, is not the whim of one or two intellectuals: it is the product of, it has been determined by, international congresses, like the international congress in La Paz, Bolivia, as long ago as 1950. The international Quechua congress here in the city of Cusco in 1987. The international congress in Lima in 1991. These are international congresses.]

Just as the Academia perceives Quechua orthography through the distorting grid of the Spanish phonological system, so does it perceive the nature of its task through a Hispanic mindset. While one would not perhaps wish to argue that it is or was a trait peculiar to the Hispanic world, certainly a degree of legalism in argument has been a marked element of the culture bequeathed by Spain to Peru. With his concern for laws and decrees and his insistence on the rights of duly constituted authority – not to mention his determined regionalism and resentment of the capital – the academician is almost a caricature of the provincial lawyer in 19th century Europe. And yet he insists that he and his colleagues are the cultural heirs of the Incas, and that the Europeans brought nothing of any lasting significance to Peru. In his lament over the failure of the government to legislate anew for the compulsory teaching of Quechua in schools, the legalism inherited from Spain is faithfully reproduced even as the influence of Spanish culture is deplored: "Sigue entonces esa mentalidad, todavía occidental, esa mentalidad española (...) Y lo que nos falta es, precisamente, de que se tiene que oficializar el idioma quechua. ¿Para qué? Para enseñar a esa nueva generación". [So there still continues that Western mentality, that Spanish mentality (...) And precisely what is needed now is that Quechua be declared an official language. Why? So that the new generation will be taught it.]

There is no hint of doubt here that language can – should, even – be controlled and regulated by decree. The securing of the future of Quechua is understood by the Academia to be synonymous with the achievement of a single goal: official status, and hence compulsory teaching – of the Academia's *qhapaq simi*, it goes without saying. As the teacher explains: "Queremos que se difunda obligatoriamente en los colegios (...) Que se haga obligatorio, pero que lo maneje la Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua". [We want it to be an obligatory subject in schools (...) We want it to be obligatory, but it must be directed by the Academia Mayor de la Lengua Quechua.]

In this determinedly top-down, legalistic scheme of things, the complexity and delicacy of real-world language maintenance efforts go entirely unacknowledged. School language teaching is enough, and will succeed in producing new generations of Quechua speakers. The very substantial body of experience and literature derived from bilingual education projects in the Andes (see e.g. Weber 1994; Hornberger 1994; Hornberger and King 1996) is never once mentioned in the course of any of these interviews, any more than is the relative failure of the Velasco government's attempt in 1975 to establish Quechua as a national tongue by making it official and a compulsory element of the school curriculum (see e.g. Cerrón-Palomino 1989; Paulston 1992, 1994; von Gleich 1994).

An outsider with an interest in language maintenance might justifiably wonder whether the attentions of these traditionally-minded *quechuistas* would not be better directed away from congressional decrees and towards the maintenance of intergenerational transmission at grass roots level (as urged by Fishman 1991, and see also Fishman 2000) – that is, towards the millions of speakers who have acquired a variety of Quechua as their sole or principal code without the intervention of a single senator or schoolteacher. As will now be seen, however, such speakers have not always been regarded by the Academia as a resource to be cultivated.

6. Whose Quechua? The provincial élite and ideology in language

The attitude of Peru's ruling classes to the country's historical culture has traditionally been ambivalent and selective: it is summed up with admirable succinctness in the title of Méndez's (1996) article "Incas sí, Indios no". The *mestizo* bourgeoisie of Cusco wish to see themselves (and be seen) as the inheritors of Inca glory, not as the kin of impoverished peasants, and the symbolism of language must be pressed into serving this end. Seeking to remake the model of *peruanidad* in their own image, they hence start from the assumption that the "best" Quechua is spoken by themselves. René Farfán Barrios, another leading member of the Academia, insists: "Cuando se habla del quechua-hablante no hay que pensar en el indio que está en la puna, o en el indígena, el nativo, como se quiera llamar. Es el mestizo, a ellos hay que dirigirnos" (cited in Itier 1992b: 91). [When we talk about Quechua speakers we should not think of the Indian on the high Andean plateau, or the indigenous person, or native, or whatever you wish to call him. It is the *mestizo*, that is who we must address ourselves to.]

In fact, as Godenzzi (1992: 63) remarks, the supposedly Incaic Quechua preferred by the Academia (he points out that it is actually heavily influenced by Spanish) is a class-specific sociolect. There exists amongst some of the governing élite of the Academia a patronising and disdainful view of the language used by the great majority of monolingual speakers, which is seen as having fallen away from the classical model, become coarsened and degraded, a kind of *lingua romana rustica* to the *lingua latina* of the academicians. At one stage in the interview with the academician the "problem" of the peasant speaker was broached:

> El problema fundamental con el campesinado es que la mayor parte de ellos no saben leer y escribir ¿no? en idioma quechua. ¿Cómo hacemos? ¿Cómo hacemos? Fundamentalmente haciendo la corrección de su pronunciación. ¿No? En su pronunciación. ¿No? Conversamos así, ¿no? (...) ¿Qué hacemos nosotros? Nosotros estamos ahí tratando de corregir, ¿no?

[The fundamental problem with the peasants is that most of them do not know how to read and write Quechua, you see? So what do we do? What do we do? Fundamentally we correct their pronunciation. You see? Their pronunciation, you see? So we talk to them, you see? (...) What is it that we do? We are there trying to correct them, you see?]

Perhaps the most remarkable leap of logic made here is that, as most monolingual Quechua-speaking peasants do not know how to read and write, so *they do not know how to pronounce their own language correctly.* Significantly, this disdain for varieties other than the supposed standard is projected on to other languages and cultures, and the foreign interlocutor is assumed to be supportive and understanding of this: "Lamentablemente por ejemplo digamos en caso de Estados Unidos, ese negro que habla atropellando el inglés, ¿lo cierto? (...) Ya no podrías casi influirlos, ¿no? Pero la preocupación fundamental es la juventud". [Regrettably, for example, say, in the case of the United States, those blacks who babble their English, you know? You couldn't really influence them now, could you? But what we are concentrating on fundamentally is the young people.]

This ingrained sense of racial and class superiority, itself perhaps a compensation for the resentment and sense of inferiority felt by the provincial *mestizo* bourgeoisie, has deep historical roots in Cusco. The regionalist Federico More, writing in 1925, commented: "[E]n la sierra actúa el quechua, lengua noble y lírica, mientras que en la costa apenas suenan los monosílabos de las plebes de Pekín y las guturaciones de aquellos negros que fueron esclavos (...)" (cited in Itier 1992a: 41). [In the Andes is spoken Quechua, a noble and lyrical language, while on the coast you can barely make out the monosyllables of the Pekinese underclass and the hoarse sounds of those blacks who used to be slaves (...)]

The echo of More's words some 70 years later is striking; this modern member of the Academia, too, considers Black speech to be degenerate – and one suspects that he, too, might have little time for the speech of Chinese-Peruvians.

Meanwhile, those academic linguists and *quechuistas* who take issue with the Academia's stance on the language are bitterly attacked, and their motives maligned (Itier 1992b; Cerrón-Palomino 1997): and so, within the framework

of discourse established by the Academia, must they be. Far from indulging in objective academic debate, they are challenging the very authority of the institution, its right to pronounce upon "its" language. This right was re-asserted in the interview in the strongest terms, with these linguists being accused of writing books on Quechua for financial gain, rather than in the interests of scientific research ("Para hacer fortuna [...] No con esa buena intención de hacer verdaderamente ciencia"). Similarly, the president of the Academia, Dr Herencia, states:

> Hay algunos intelectuales, entre comillas, que están tergiversando el idioma quechua (...) Aquellos que manejamos la ciencia lingüística del idioma quechua tenemos razón, y tarde o temprano van a caer esas personas que trafican con el idioma.

[There are certain intellectuals – in inverted commas – who are twisting the Quechua language (...) But those of us who deal with the linguistic science of Quechua are in the right, and the downfall will come, sooner or later, of those people who make a living by trading in the language.]

These are harsh words. And yet the level of "scientific" rigour demanded by the Academia appears, unfortunately and all too often, to be low. Cerrón-Palomino's withering review (1997) of the Academia's long-awaited dictionary (AMLQ 1995) lists a seemingly endless series of errors, omissions, inconsistencies and prejudices to be found within its pages. Nor does one need to be as learned in Quechua as Dr Cerrón-Palomino to find it an inadequate work: this expensively-produced hardback book has its bibliography arranged by alphabetic order of first names. A similar level of scholarship seems to have informed the book on Inca society written by Dr Herencia's predecessor as president of the Academia, Dr Juvenal Pacheco (Pacheco 1994). In the section of the book which purports to show that Quechua is superior to all other languages, the author asserts that languages such as Thai and – incredibly enough – Vietnamese use ideographic writing systems. The same is claimed, too, for Arabic, language of the "bloque árabe" [Arab bloc] – in which for good measure is included Iran (Pacheco 1994: 120). Given such ignorance of matters linguistic at the most senior levels of the Academia, it comes as scant surprise that Itier (1992b: 86), in describing the heated debate on *pentavocalismo* that broke out at a 1986 workshop in Cusco, can remark drily that dialogue was made difficult because "los académicos de la lengua quechua no entendían lo que es un fonema" [the academicians of the Quechua language did not understand what a phoneme is].

7. Conclusion

The discourse of the Academia often seems to display a tension, a marked ambivalence, which is experienced at several levels. This is seen in the question of the institution's relationship to the Peruvian state. Acutely conscious of the prestige and authority which state legitimation affords them, guarding jealously in the face of all competitors and critics their official endorsement, the academicians (or at least those senior members who purport to speak for the academicians) are nevertheless resentful of the power exercised in Lima. The capital is regarded as a usurper of Cusco's ancient privileges; Cusco remains the rightful symbolic centre of the nation, and those who do not understand or accept this supposedly self-evident truth are considered to be lacking in self-knowledge, or even in patriotism.

The Academia's attitude to the majority of Quechua speakers is likewise an ambivalent one. Quechua is exalted as the most noble and perfect of tongues, and yet the speech of most of those who speak it every day as a mother tongue is regarded as debased and flawed. Quechua is not only to be maintained, then, but must also be corrected and purified. This process of correction and purification is viewed as necessitating, in essence, the imposition of the language of the academicians themselves – middle-class, literate bilinguals – on current and (especially) future speakers of the language, preferably through compulsory teaching in schools.

Much ambiguity derives, of course, from the contradictions inherent in the way Quechua is perceived and represented in Peru; it is simultaneously the stigmatised language of an oppressed minority and a state-legitimated symbol of former national glory (that is, what Fishman [1972: 44] calls "the link with the glorious past"). Any body (indeed, any individual) campaigning for the maintenance or revitalisation of Quechua in Peru, then, does so within a social context where language attitudes have become heavily ideologised in sometimes contradictory ways: discourses upon Quechua tend to dwell heavily on the notions of shame and pride, often together.

What are the implications of all this for Quechua language maintenance efforts? My own research amongst migrant communities undergoing rapid language shift (Marr 1998) suggests that the constant identification of Quechua with the Incas, which forms the core of the Academia's political and linguistic discourse, is – at best – effective only at the level of reinforcing national or regional pride. In terms of attitudes to "real" language it is negative, having the effect of demeaning the speech of present-day monolinguals and of locking the Quechua language into an idealised and remote past. As Niño-Murcia (1997: 157) quite rightly concludes: "The purist discourse in Cuzco, although it ap-

pears on the surface to legitimize indigenous culture (...) in reality contributes to the marginalization (...) of the indigenous language and ultimately of its rural speakers, whose language one sees marked by the stigma of poverty and equated with a lack of culture".

Genuine grass roots movements for language maintenance are hence unlikely to find an ally in the shape of the Academia as presently constituted. It is to be suspected that much of the leadership of the institution, with its roots in the bilingual Cusco élite, would have little interest in, and perhaps a decided hostility to, any language maintenance project (whether it arose from state planning or from grass roots aspirations) that it did not itself legitimate and control. Perhaps the most striking point to emerge from a consideration of the tradition which gave rise to the Academia is that, quite obviously, it could be hostile to any project which proceeded from the assumption that the language of rural monolinguals was in itself good, whole or representative.

It might of course be argued that the Academia's illustrious European models, such as the Spanish Real Academia, take a not dissimilar line: such institutions tend, after all, to be in the business of formulating and imposing (or attempting to impose) norms, not that of dispassionately describing language use. However, the nature of the task that the Peruvian institution sets itself must inevitably be coloured by the hard fact that Quechua is not an expanding world language, but an embattled minority language which has relatively few speakers outside its rural Andean heartland, and a powerful competitor in the shape of Spanish. Simple maintenance, rather than anything more ambitious, must surely be the primary goal (and indeed, maintenance of the language is one of the Academia's primary stated aims); the question is whether its approach to the maintenance of Quechua is an effective one or not.

What is at issue here is the perceived "ownership" of Quechua: the authority to speak about, and on behalf of, the language. However, the Academia can only with difficulty be regarded as a language academy or language maintenance organisation as commonly understood. Some of the senior academicians appear to have as their chief aim not the normalisation and/or maintenance of Quechua, but public ratification of their own view of themselves as the supreme embodiment of a culture, a region, a nation and perhaps even a continent. If the principle of self-determination for linguistic minorities is to have any real value, it is vital that this subtext to the discourse of Peruvian language maintenance be recognised, and that the opinions and aspirations of Quechua speakers as a whole not be confused with those of their self-appointed representatives. The Academia potentially has a great deal to contribute to the struggle for Quechua language maintenance: however, the fact that its support for the language has become entangled with a complex of dubious ideological

positions means that its efficacy and authority are, for the present at least, severely compromised.

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Questions for discussion

1. In terms of language maintenance, in what ways might the Academia's attachment to the historic Inca culture of Peru be a strength, and in what ways a weakness?
2. Quechua has been called an "oppressed" language (Albó 1979). If this is the case, does it help to explain some of the Academia's ideology?
3. Should Quechua language maintenance efforts in Peru concentrate around a recognisably prestigious dialect – the supposed *qhapaq simi* – or around the variety of regional dialects used by ordinary speakers, or around a mixture of the two? What problems do you think each of these approaches might encounter?

4. Why do you think the Academia seems to set such store by the question of official status for Quechua, and compulsory teaching of the language in schools? What are some of the risks and benefits inherent in this approach?
5. Quechua-speaking migrants to urban areas, and especially to Lima, typically are reluctant to use the language in public, and sometimes even in private. Their children almost inavariably grow up speaking only Spanish (Marr 1998). What role might organisations like the Academia have to play in stemming or slowing this language shift? What would they need to do, and what other individuals or organisations would need to be involved?