Aymara variant revitalization in remote Andean communities

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Agenda

• Location of work / Background
• Unexpected linguistic observations
• The challenge: Variant valorization
• Some solutions
• Encouraging community participation
• Project, future plans
• Concluding observations
Arriving on location
Why am I here?
Aymara is not endangered.

Vowel suppression

– Original goal: Examine morphophonological properties of the language.
– Vowel suppression (CCCCCC)
  jiskt'ksmati ‘I didn’t ask you’
  jisk(a)-t’(a)-k(a)-sma-ti

• Nax utax sartxa  => Nax(a) utax(a) sar(a)t(a)xa

Na-x  uta-x(a)  sar(a)-t(a)-xa
I-TO  house-1P  go-1-FUT
‘I will go to my house.’
Some linguistic observations

• Aymara less uniform than believed
Interrogatives

Kuns akax? / Kun _ akast?
   ‘What is that?’

Khits thaqi? / Khit_ thaqastast?
   ‘Who are you looking for?’

Khitimpis sarañani? / Khitimp_ saratanxa?
   ‘Who do we go with?’

Kuns aparipxta? / Kunat q’allasiskapist?
   ‘Why are you arguing?’
Lack of [V:] - Future, CV, &c.

[p] Jichūru / Jichuru ‘today’
Mä, pä / Ma, pa ‘one, two’

[m] Sarä / Saraxa ‘I will go.’
Churäma / Churamama ‘I will give it to you.’

Lik’iitawa / Lik’itawa ‘You are fat.’
Janiw jach’äkiti / Janiw jach’akiti ‘It isn’t big.’
E.g. Imperative, RIK, paradigms

Churitpa! / Churitsapăn!
‘May he give it to me!’

Churpachawa / Churirkanx
‘He must have given it.’

3>3 –niwjamjaraks
NRem paradigm different, leveled

Nax ūnjstwa jupar churir (*churāna)
‘I saw that she gave it to him.’

Nax ūnjsth jiwasanak jupar churir (*churayātan)
‘I saw (in a photo) that we gave it to him’
Yapux wali qalaralaw ‘
Yapux wali qalaqalaw
‘The farm is full of stones.’

Kunats jumamp uñkatastam?
Kunat uñistast jupampist?
‘Why do you hate her?’
Mystery

Jiwayasiwjwiwa saphiw.
‘She killed herself, they say.’
A change in plans

• CONSIDERING:
  – The best speakers of Moqueguan variants are all over 40, youth hardly speak
  – Gov’t plans to build roads connecting communities
  – Economic realities

• Revised goal: Document a previously undocumented community of variants.

• Also, complete the original goal.
Grassroots-based revitalization

– Allows decisions about language & degree of revitalization to be made by speakers on their terms

– Linguist’s role:
  – Foster interest
  – Provide advice, guidance, and material
The challenge

• Fulfill uni obligation
• Document this disappearing variant
• Encourage revitalization, valorization
The obstacles

- Foreigner (suspect intentions)
- Time constraints
- Competing demands of “fieldwork”
Foster an environment where the locals take this into their own hands
Realization

• Introduction of project in community
• Identification of participants
• Training, practice
• Projects
• Growth
Introducing the project
Visiting authorities, influential people
Language learning
“Integration”
“Integration”: Participation in life
Participation in life: Manual labor
Participation in life: Responsibilities
Participation in life: Ritual participation
On the importance of culture in FW
2. Language-learning

Student/teacher dynamic: respect

Social role: respectful, funny, lends prestige

Opportunity to learn ab structure
Language learning (con)

- Identification of good teachers, basic knowledge of the language
  - Good teachers = good consultants

(Sr. David Centena Mamani; RIP)
Revitalization objective met

• Intent of researcher becomes clear
• Researcher’s focus on speakers lends prestige
  • Non-superiority of Puno/La Paz variants
Realization

• Introduction of project in community
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• Growth
Identification of participants
Las Vocales Aymaras

Morfológicamente en la lengua Aymara hay 3 vocales:

- a / k a /
- e / k e /
- i / k i /

Es la misma para a y e

El alfabeto Aymara:

Este alfabeto de la lengua Aymara que es como la española, que pone decir la voz que dicen primero, él (1) y si ahora él a la. En el grafema se pone, cada correspondencia con el vocal español, donde como parte así llamado

- a / k a /
- e / k e /
- i / k i /
\[ x = a \]
\[ \frac{x}{2} = \dot{e} \]
\[ 4 = \dot{u} \]
Training, practice
De los Puntos de Articulación

alo'fonos

\[ \text{\textbf{e}} \]

- gogaykura
- \[ \text{Oge} \text{ OxE} \] = des

\[ \text{\textbf{e}} \text{ Peq'e} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{e}} \text{ inti} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{e}} \text{ Tili'misi} \]

\[ \text{\textbf{x}}/-#\]

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| Lateral    | l       | ñn      |        |        |           |      |
| Vibranta   | r       | y       |        |        |           |      |
| Sonora     | w       | y       |        |        |           |      |
Revitalization objective met

- Aymara has an alphabet which can be used for reading and writing
- The uniqueness of local variants is something to preserve, there is no “correct variant”
Projects: Beginning work together
Local participation is mutually beneficial
On encouraging participation
Fieldwork can (should!) be interactive
Chance to hear voice, see photos, etc.
A novel, prestigious experience
Certificates of appreciation
Initial project
Project 1

• Interview elders to collect fiction (local folklore, myths) and nonfiction (historical events, childhood memories)
• Transcribe and translate these stories
• Illustrate with local talent
• Publish into book to be distributed for free to local schools, consultants, and interviewers
Goals of this project

• Increase prestige of Moqueguan Aymara language, culture
• Generate knowledge of written Aymara

www.AndeanAymara.com
What we would like to do
Encompass more communities
Aymara radio show
Music CD (video?)
Future plans

• Finalization of this project
• Creation of NGO to increase quality of education and encourage language documentation and local revitalization efforts
Concluding observations

• Scientific endeavor lends prestige to the community, language
  – Encourage grassroots initiatives in language preservation

• Interested community members learn about their own variant, some continue the documentation themselves
¡Yusilupay!
Contact

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