

Documentation of Sign Language Diversity in Peru

Brenda Clark

ICLDC4 2015

Peruvian Sign Language (LSP)

- official language of Peru (2010)
- 30,000 signers (0.1% of the population)
- threatened by educational policies, attitudes, transmission, ASL
- documentation just beginning

Fieldwork (2014)

- 2 months (Lima, Pucallpa)
- Discussions with PUCP linguists, Deaf leaders, Ministry of Education, researchers, educators
- LSP data collection and interviews (25 hr)



Overall Impressions

- a lot of variation (by age, education, region, social group)
- influence from ASL, BSL, LSE (20-70%)
- more positive attitudes in Lima
- interest in documentation and education within the community

Challenges

- finding informants
 - conflict, long-distance networking
- interpretation
 - small group, all in Lima, established relationships
- variation
 - dialect, Spanish/LSP fluency, education, attitudes
- elicitation
 - no common language, consistency, abstractness

Solutions: Informants

- become visible and recognizable
- hang out
- relax- schedules are relative
- show interest in tangible ways
- name-drop
- use liaisons to contact schools and higher authorities

Solutions: Interpretation

- learn the language
- don't expect to have an interpreter during elicitation sessions
- ask educators and other researchers about basic usage
- beware of friends and family members
- watch out for answer-feeding
- support interpretation programs

Solutions: Variation

- find out each participant's educational background, fluency, attitudes, and fingerspelling as soon as possible
- use many modes and find what works
- use variation to spark discussion
- ask for descriptions, not answers
- "I like to see different signs"

Solutions: Elicitation

Session Structure

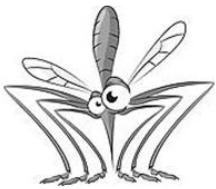
- metadata interviews first
- short sessions (11-36 numbered items)
- organized by semantic domain
- mix of individual items and longer descriptions
- one video per “session”
- large individual images/concepts with Spanish
- printable
- individual or group
- be present to discuss and clarify

agua



45 de 77

zancudo



3 de 11

mojado



49 de 77

seco



Solutions: Elicitation

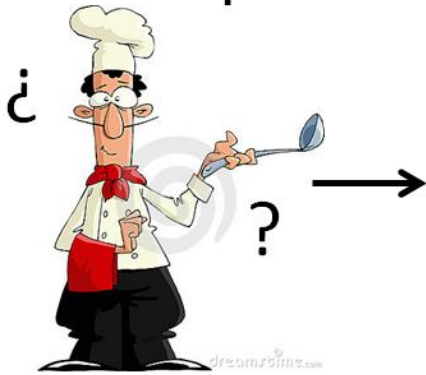
Abstract and Longer Items

- reuse symbols
- give sample answers
- find each participant's strength
- comic strips
- “teach me how to...”, “do you like...”, stories
- group sessions

Consent

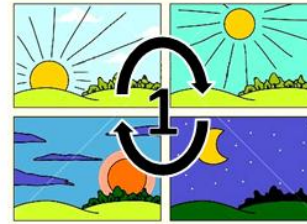
- discussion format, ideally interpreted
- “I want to see YOUR signs”

¿Cómo preparas
pescado?

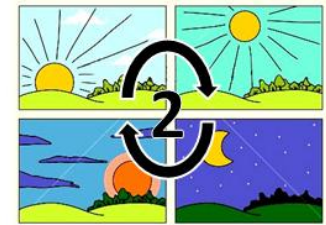


28 de 29

día



2 días



4 de 22

Ongoing and Future Work

- lexical and phonetic comparison
- Quechua-based variety?
- phonological and syntactic analysis
- educational materials and policy
- community projects



Thanks to...

- my participants, Asociación de Sordos del Peru, Lima, and Ucayali
- Analy Vidal Perez, Isabel Rey, Tito Vega
- Sonia Maruenda, Miguel Mondoñedo, James Woodward
- Bilinski Educational Foundation