



Runasimi

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Background Information

Number of speakers:

- The most widely spoken language family of indigenous peoples of the Americas
- Total of around 8–10 million speakers

Other related languages:

- Quechua shares a large amount of vocabulary, and some striking structural parallels, with Aymaran languages. This is perceived to simply be from close geographical contact.



Geographical Spread

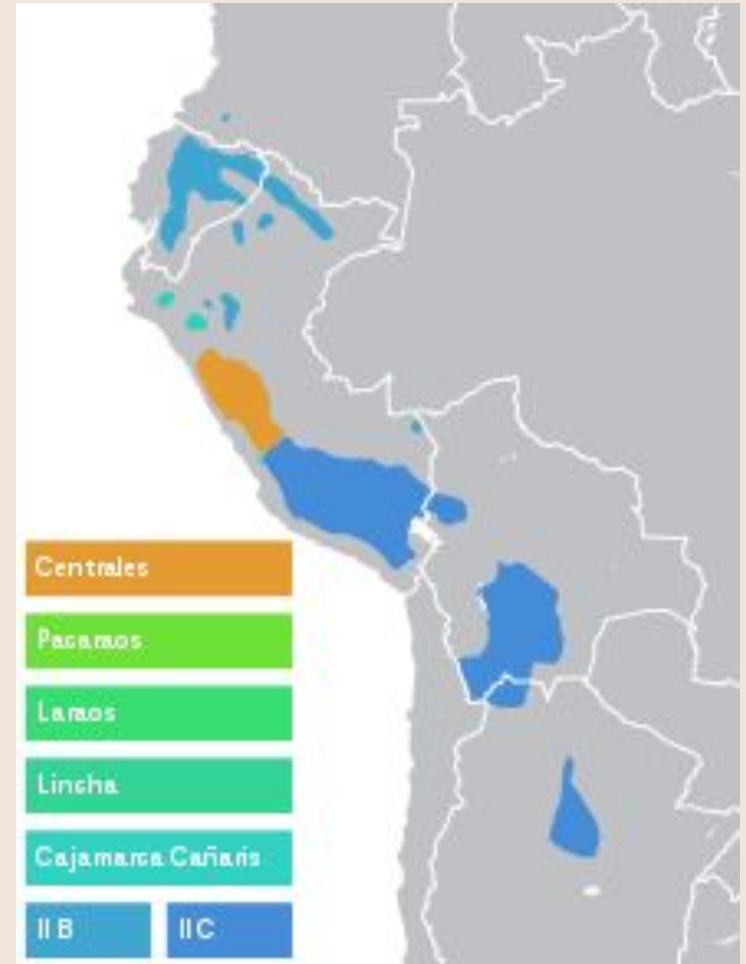
Places where Quechua is still spoken:

- Argentina: 900,000 (1971)
- Bolivia: 2,100,000 (2001 census); 2,800,000 South Bolivian (1987)
- Chile: few, if any; 8,200 in ethnic group (2002 census)
- Colombia: 4,402 to 16,000
- Ecuador: 2,300,000 (Adelaar 1991)
- Peru: 3,800,000 (2017 census); 3,500,000 to 4,400,000 (Adelaar 2000)

Linguistic Background

There are significant differences among the varieties of Quechua spoken, and are classified as such:

- II-A: Yunkay Quechua (North Peruvian Quechua) is scattered in Peru's occidental highlands
- II-B: Northern Quechua (also known as *Runashimi* or, especially in Ecuador, *Kichwa*) is mainly spoken in Colombia and Ecuador. It is also spoken in the Amazonian lowlands of Colombia, Ecuador, and in pockets in Peru
- II-C: Southern Quechua, in the highlands further south, from Huancavelica through the Ayacucho, Cusco, and Puno regions of Peru, across much of Bolivia, and in pockets in north-western Argentina. It is the most influential branch, with the largest number of speakers and the most important cultural and literary legacy.



Linguistic Overview {Phonology}

Syllable structure:

- Non-initial syllables is CV(C) and in word-initial syllables (C)V(C).
 - Sequences of consonants within a syllable and word finally are not allowed.

Vowels:

- Proto-Quechua had just three vowels: back **u**, central **a**, and front **i**.
- In Modern Quechua dialects, due to contact with Spanish, mid vowels, **e** and **o**, have been introduced, and now the vowel inventory consists of five vowels in many dialects, except for those that do not have uvulars.

Consonants:

1) Quechua has 26 consonants (Sometimes, glottals and aspirates are given symbols)

Modern Usage:

- There are Modern Quechua dialects, such as Proto-Quechua.

Linguistic Overview {Morphology}

Quechua is an **agglutinating** language with complex but regular morphology based on suffixation. Words may add several suffixes in a row.

Nouns are marked for number, case and possession but not for gender.

•**Case:** *nominative, accusative, genitive, allative, ablative, locative, instrumental.*

The nominative is **unmarked**

The accusative marker is usually **-ta**

Genitive one **-pa**

The allative (motion towards a goal) is marked by **-man**

Ablative **-manta** (express motion away from something)

The locative marker is **-pi** in most Quechua II dialects

Instrumental is **-wan**

	<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>
nominative	wasi	wasikuna
accusative	wasita	wasikunata
genitive	wasipa	wasikunapa
allative	wasiman	wasikunaman
ablative	wasimanta	wasikunamanta
locative	wasipi	wasikunapi
instrumental	wasiwan	wasikunawan

brown: plural marker; red: case marker.

Vocabulary Examples

one: huk

two: iskay

three: kimsa

four: tawa

five: pichqa

six: soqta/suqta

seven: qanchis

eight: pusaq

nine: isqon/isqun

ten: chunka

hundred: pachak

father: tayta/papa

mother: mama

brother: tura (of a woman)/wawqi (of a man)

sister: ñaña (of a woman)/pana (of a man)

son: wawa (of a woman)/churi (of a man)

daughter: warmi wawa (of a woman)/ususi and warmi churi (of a man)

head: uma

eye: ñawi

foot: chaki

heart: sonqo/sunqu

tongue: qallo/qallu

Singing/ Speaking
Example - [Search](#)



History of Runasimi / Interesting Historical Facts

- Originally developed as a language with frequent contact from Aymara
- In 1560, the first grammar and lexicon of Quechua was written by Domingo de Santo Tomás.
- Many literary contributions in Quechua have also been made beginning around the 16-17th century largely with texts describing Inca religion and mythology, poems, and dramas and continuing throughout the 19-20th century with prose and traditional stories and oral narratives.
- In 1975, Peru recognizes Quechua as an official language; Ecuador recognizes it as a regional language in 2006, and Bolivia as one of many other official languages in 2009.

Dates/Places	200-	500-	700-	1000-	1200-	1400-	1500-	1600-	1900-
S Colombia	Barbacoan							Q	
N Ecuador	Barbacoan						Q		
S Ecuador	Jivaroan/Cañari/...							Q	
N Peru	Jivaroan/...							Spanish	
Cajamarca	Q								
N. Ancash /S Cajamarca	Culli							Spanish	
N C Peru	Q								
C Peru Pacaraos	Q/Aymara								
Ayacucho	Aymara?	Q							
Cuzco	Aymara/Puquina					Q			
Puno	Aymara						Q		
Nazca	Aymara							Spanish	
Arequipa	Puquina							Spanish/Aymara	Q
N Bolivia	Uru/Puquina				Aymara/Puquina				Q
Lake Titicaca	Uru/Puquina/Aymara							Aymara	
Altiplano	Uru/Puquina				Aymara				
Cochabamba	Puquina and other languages						Q		
S Bolivia	Q								
N Argentina	Q								

Figure 6.2 The distribution of languages per region, over time (Q = Quechua)

Language Attitudes

- Peru: Seen as lesser than Spanish; often considered as an “unclean” or “poor” language; Not spoken in educational settings, but, as of 2017 language laws, in government departments language assistance in Quechua is provided
- Ecuador: Quechua is not an official language
- Bolivia: Quechua is recognized as one of many official languages, but is not used as widely or viewed as “valuable” as Spanish



Social, Economic and Political Situation

- As we've seen in many cases in this class so far, there is a sharp divide between governmental and touristic pride in promoting the cultural heritage of the Inca Empire through aesthetics and performance, and the treatment and socioeconomic reality of indigenous people who struggle to keep their own ties to their history.
- Although Quechua is one of Peru's official languages--spoken mostly in rural areas and in many cases as a first language--many of its speakers feel pressured to switch to Spanish more often due to its long-cultivated dominance in education, government, industry and business, etc.
 - Among monolingual Quechua speakers in rural areas, there is a distrust of government and authority due to how this dominance of Spanish has materially affected their communities; there are also clear distinctions between situations in which Quechua is spoken, and in which Spanish is spoken.



- Since it's been declared an official language in Peru, attempts to incorporate Quechua into public education have either focused more on teaching it as a second language to Spanish speakers (in an attempt to elevate its perceived prestige), or on instruction in Quechua to children of native speakers during their primary years of schooling, before transitioning into Spanish.
- The largest number of Quechua speakers is found in Cusco and its surrounding rural areas, although public media in the language is rare (or, if existent, poorly funded and unprotected)
 - It is important to consider Cusco's position as a hub of tourism when thinking about why Quechua might still be widely-spoken in this area despite this not manifesting itself in the media landscape

Life in the Community

As an easily-accessible and affordable public medium, radio seems to be the most commonly found one aimed at an audience of Quechua speakers. Many Quechua-language radio stations are based in or just around Cusco, and broadcast to a mostly rural audience; most commonly in both Spanish and Quechua, but sometimes only in the latter. Programming ranges from religious, to educational, to musical (primarily huayno music), to political.

In all cases, radio programs in Quechua serve a purpose of not only uniting a community marginalized by the dominant institutions through discussion of common struggles and collective developing of demands, but also connecting to speakers of a language that is usually not considered worthy of space on public forums. These stations, however, are not officially supported in any way by the government, and therefore in a constant state of financial insecurity.



'aya kawsay', the dead man who lives

Future of the Language

- Quechua has been slowly losing ground to Spanish (formal language of government and education).
- **Peru:** In 1975, Quechua was recognized as the second official language of Peru, but mostly used colloquially and intersocially; however, in 2017, the policy for native languages was enforced and Quichua was institutionalized within government sectors.
 - “On August 10th the government launched its “policy for native languages”, part of its preparations for the 200th anniversary of independence in 2021. It would require government agencies to offer services in those languages in areas where they are dominant.”
- **Ecuador:** Recognized regional language but not official
- **Bolivia:** Quechua (Southern) is recognized as an official language of Bolivia, one of the 36 indigenous languages declared official in the nation's Constitution in 2009.
 - However, compared to Spanish, which is spoken by 8.7 million or roughly 87% of Bolivians, Quechua is much less widely used. There have been numerous concerns raised over the status of indigenous languages including South Bolivian Quechua due to the prestige language in the area, Spanish, potentially forcing the endangerment of other devalued languages.

Future of the Language

Quechua Feature in Dora the Explorer (2019) movie



Discussion (Questions)

- How do we approach the fact that the commodification of Quechua to appeal to tourism contributes to the continued use and cultural awareness of the language?
- Do you think that countries should follow Bolivia's lead and recognize the indigenous languages of their countries (through proclaiming them as official)?
 - *Drawbacks to this?*
 - Ayoreo people in the Chaco region have been harassed by the New Tribes Mission. Many have been 'deported' to the town of Santa Cruz, where they are reduced to begging.