

**Linguistic and social constraints on minority language variation:  
The case of the uvular phoneme in Chanka Quechua**

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In the Peruvian Andes, social norms require progressive Western practices for formal situations, while traditional Andean customs suggest familiarity, even inadequacy. These ideologies transfer onto language use: in Andean linguistic ideologies, Spanish, the majority language, is standard speech and Quechua, the minority language, is non-standard (Zavala 2014). Such a perspective disregards possible Quechua-internal variation, and the dearth of variationist studies on Quechua propagates this perception. To open the discussion, the present study observes variable deletion of the uvular phoneme in the Chanka variety of Quechua, considering linguistic and social factors.

Analyzing Quechua using typical variationist methodology is complicated by ideologies considering it a non-standard and monolithic language. Majority language-internal variation is often defined based on deviation from standard forms, usually disseminated through education and identified comparing formal and informal speech. As irregular Quechua teaching in schools began only a decade ago (Carbajal Solís 2011), few speakers are literate in Quechua. This means most speakers lack access to a standard variety, even though Chanka has a nationally standardized orthography. Therefore, to determine variable forms, the present study considers the orthographical representation and speakers' access to it.

Following Kroch and Small (1978), a Chanka radio program allowed for a clear distinction of grammatical ideologies between hosts and in-studio guests. The current project compiled a spoken corpus of a program from Andahuaylas, Peru. The uvular phoneme was selected as a representative sociolinguistic variable for quantitative analysis for two reasons. First, it always appears in writing, though it is described as in “free variation with zero” in three suffixes (Parker 1966; Cerrón-Palomino 1987; Soto Ruiz 1976). Second, Quechua-literate speakers consider non-deleted forms more formal, indicating social conditioning. The multivariate analysis contemplated morphological, phonological, and social factors.

Results demonstrate linguistically and socially conditioned variation in Chanka. Uvular deletion was confirmed to be morpheme-specific and variable, occurring only in exhortative /-rqu/ and past tense /-rqa/<sup>1</sup>. Though phonologically similar, these two suffixes (>160 tokens each) exhibited drastically different rates of uvular deletion: almost 100% versus 13%, respectively. Overall, deletion in both was linguistically conditioned by how many morphemes followed the uvular: more following morphemes favored deletion. Thus the exhortative, occurring early in the verbal template and often before several suffixes, showed higher deletion. But the tense suffix, occurring late in the template with three following morphemes maximum, was less likely to appear in deletion-favoring environments (Myler 2014; Parker 1969).

Additionally, deletion is conditioned by complicated social relationships. Hosts and guests had significantly different rates of deletion for past tense (10% vs. 33%,  $p < 0.02$ ), contradicting Kroch and Small's assumption (1978) that both groups exhibit similar forms. This disparity reflects the guests' lack of access to standardized Quechua ideologies as compared to Philadelphia English. Chanka-speaking guests, welcomed regardless of education, often lack Quechua literacy, whereas hosts' speech reflects knowledge of orthography gained through professional schoolteacher training.

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<sup>1</sup> The suffix /-sqa/ is also described as variable, but only two tokens in corpus.

In summary, this investigation demonstrates a means for quantifying sociolinguistic variation in minority languages lacking a broadly disseminated standard form. To continue legitimization of minority languages, future studies should formally explain their systematic processes.

## **References**

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In the Peruvian Andes, social norms dictate that formality requires progressive Western practices, while traditional Andean customs suggest familiarity, even inadequacy. These ideologies transfer onto language use: Spanish, the majority language, represents proper speaking, with Quechua, the minority language, relegated to non-enlightened interlocutors (Zavala 2014). Essentially, in Andean linguistic ideologies, Spanish is standard speech and Quechua is non-standard. Such a perspective ignores that variation exists within Quechua. As the first known quantitative analysis of the Chanka variety of Quechua, the present study considered linguistic and social factors that may influence variable deletion of the uvular phoneme.

Analyzing Quechua using typical variationist methodology is complicated by the ideology that considers it a non-standard and monolithic language. Studies often define language-internal variation based on deviation from a standard form, which is usually disseminated through education, and can be identified by contrasting formal and informal speech. As irregular Quechua teaching in schools began only in the past decade (Carbajal Solís 2011), very few speakers are literate in Quechua. This also means that most speakers lack access to a standard variety, even though the Chanka variety studied here has a nationally standardized orthography. Therefore, the present study depends on the formal-informal distinction to determine preferred forms.

Following Kroch and Small (1978), the program allowed for a clear distinction of grammatical ideologies among hosts, in-studio guests, and callers. This project compiled a spoken corpus of recordings of a radio program in the Chanka variety of Quechua spoken in Andahuaylas, Peru. Specifically, the uvular phoneme was selected as a representative sociolinguistic variable for a quantitative analysis. The uvular has been described as in “free variation with zero” in three suffixes without considering conditioning factors (Parker 1966: 48; Cerrón-Palomino 1987; Soto Ruiz 1976). Educated speakers consider the fully realized forms to be more formal, indicating social conditioning. The multivariate analysis contemplated morphological, phonological, and social factors.

Results demonstrate linguistically and socially conditioned variation in Chanka. Uvular deletion was confirmed to be morpheme-specific and variable, occurring only in exhortative /-rqu/ and experiential past /-rqa/<sup>2</sup>. Though phonologically similar, these two suffixes with >160 tokens each exhibited drastically different rates of uvular deletion: almost 100% versus 13%, respectively. Overall, deletion in both suffixes was linguistically conditioned by how many morphemes follow the uvular. More following morphemes favor deletion, and this explains why the exhortative, which occurs early in the verbal template, shows higher deletion. Since the past tense suffix occurs late in the template, the number of possible following morphemes is limited to three, which lowers the likelihood of a deletion-favoring environment (Myler 2014; Parker 1969).

Additionally, deletion is conditioned by complicated social relationships. Hosts and guests had significantly different rates of deletion for past tense (10% vs. 33%,  $p < 0.02$ ), which contradicts Kroch and Small’s assumption (1978) that both speaker groups would exhibit similar standard forms. This disparity reflects the stark difference between who has access to standardized Quechua ideologies in the Andes as compared to Philadelphia English. As schoolteachers, the hosts have studied Chanka orthography. The guests are typically locals without higher education who arrive to the show of their own accord, rather than by invitation.

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<sup>2</sup> Only two tokens the third variable suffix /-sqa/ were observed in the corpus.

This investigation demonstrates systematic sociolinguistic variation in Chanka Quechua, a minority language without a broadly disseminated standard form. By formally explaining systematic processes, future variationist studies of minority languages would further evidence their legitimacy.

In Andahuaylas, the Quechua language as a whole is a non-standard way of speaking; as soon as speakers have some knowledge of Spanish, they use it in formal situations, even if they and their interlocutors are more comfortable in Quechua (Zavala 2014). This is also reflected in the fact that hosts also tended to switch to Spanish for more formal interactions with authorities.

distinguish/dictate/determine norms for formal and informal domains: the former requires/relates to everything Western, and the latter everything traditionally Andean.

Quechua as a non-standard way of speaking  
Quechua speakers as minority  
Quechua has a standardized orthography  
Radio as a proxy for formal speech

Since Labov (1966/2006), linguistic variation has often been defined based on the extent to which a given/certain variety deviates from a standard form, as defined by a national authority for political reasons or based on how educated groups speak. But how do we define a standard way of speaking when there is no relevant language Academy (authority) that can encompass all relevant varieties of the language, and the language is still not adequately taught in education (Carbajal Solís 2012)? most educators have not formally studied the language (Carbajal Solís 2012)? the language began being used widely in education only in the past 10 years? This is the case of the Quechua language in Peru.

Desde Labov (1966), linguistic variation is often defined based on whether or the extent to which a given/certain variety conforms to or deviates from a standard form, as defined by a national authority for political reasons or based on how educated groups speak. But how do we define a standard way of speaking when there is no relevant language Academy (authority) that can encompass all relevant varieties of the language, and the language is still not adequately taught in education (Carbajal Solís 2012)? most educators have not formally studied the language (Carbajal Solís 2012)? the language began being used widely in education only in the past 10 years? This is the case of the Quechua language in Peru.

One possibility may be found in observing how fluent speakers speak in formal situations, and using this variety as a baseline for standard speech. Speakers of a language often consider reporters on news reporting programs to speak a standard variety. This variation study considers precisely such a resource: the data come from speech produced on a Quechua language radio station, mainly by three male announcers in their 40s (formality level 1), but also taking into consideration speech from in-studio visitors, and phone-in commentators. Following Kroch and Small (1978), the radio hosts and guests are considered to be speaking more formally than callers.

The study observes variable deletion of the uvular fricative phoneme (written orthographically as /q/) in the Chanka variety of Quechua spoken in and around Andahuaylas, Peru, looking specifically at 4 contexts of morphemes where the underlying /q/ is preceded by an /r/ or an /s/

and followed by a vowel: /-rqu/ (), /-rqa/ (experiential past tense), /-sqa-/ (future 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> person), and /-sqa-/ (distant past tense). This phoneme variable constitutes an ideal sociolinguistic variable since it occurs frequently as an integral part of grammatical structures, is below the level of consciousness, and is easily quantifiable (Labov 1966). Historically, Ayacucho-Chanka Quechua has been described as maintaining the uvular in these suffixes, whereas the geographically adjacent Cuzco-Collao Quechua variety has pretty much completely lost it. Deletion of the q in Ayacucho-Chanka, then, may be evidence of a change in progress, with the eventual result of 100% deletion, or complete loss of the phoneme in the specified contexts. Thus close attention is also paid to the age of speakers on the radio program. It causes syllable reorganization, in which the previously syllable-final r or s moves into onset position of the following syllable, originally composed by qa or qu. Overall, the study considers a variety of social, phonological, and morphological features as possible causes of deletion/reduction of the uvular phoneme.

Preliminary results indicate that speech style is the most important factor determining deletion or retention of the uvular phoneme. The most formal style involves retention of the uvular fricative in the relevant aforementioned contexts; however, for the announcers who project their voices every day, even a news program is not a formal enough context to require regular pronunciation of the phoneme (/q/ is deleted over 80% of the time in three morphemes). Instead, the only speakers to preserve the phoneme in all morphological contexts are invited guests on the show, who may feel an elevated level of formality. In addition to style, certain morphological contexts seem to require preservation of the phoneme for all speakers. Thus this variable deletion appears to be dependent on style, rather than on any grammar-inherent motivations. Results of this investigation could contribute to our knowledge of how phonetic variation occurs in minority languages, specifically for the case of indigenous languages in the Americas, as well as inform future studies of indigenous languages using formal methods, which may assist local government entities such as the Ministry of Education, as they develop methods for effective teaching in these languages.

When Quechua speakers need to speak in a formal situation, they switch to Spanish.

First sentence: not about linguistics

Since the arrival of the Spanish in 1534