

Foreword

Kendall King's study of school and community efforts to teach, promote and restore Quichua within two indigenous yet predominantly Spanish-speaking communities of Saraguro, Ecuador is at the cutting edge of a growing scholarship on the reversal of language shift and the revival of dying languages. In today's world we are experiencing the rapid extinction of living languages and of the cultural and intellectual resources they carry with them, a matter of considerable concern to linguists and other scholars, not to mention the speakers of the languages. King's study of community members' attitudes toward Quichua language and Indian identity as these attitudes relate to the goals, curricula and pedagogical practices of Quichua-as-a-second-language programs in the schools is of great significance, not only to those directly concerned with Andean studies and with language and education in Quichua/Quechua, but also to those interested in the larger question of the viability of a locally controlled educational program as means for a subordinate minority group to restore and revitalize its language and culture.

King brings her experience as a second language teacher, her expertise in sociolinguistic, ethnographic and educational theory and research, her knowledge of Quichua, and her intellect and insight to bear in this innovative work, which not only elucidates the Saraguro Quichua case but also provides a window for analysis of larger theoretical questions such as the relationship between language, culture and identity; the interactions between communities and schools around issues of language and ethnicity; and the role of locally controlled educational programs in political struggles for indigenous rights. Particularly valuable is her linking of descriptions of actual language use and interaction in home and classroom settings to a wider discussion of second language acquisition and instruction, language planning and language revitalization efforts and principles.

Like my own study a decade earlier (Hornberger, 1988), King's study focuses on two schools and their communities in the rural Andes, on language use and language attitudes in the communities, and on the role of the schools in language shift, maintenance and revitalization there. Unlike my study, which considered instruction through the medium of Quechua

as mother tongue and its role in Quechua language maintenance, King's study looks at instruction of Quichua as a second language and its role in language revitalization. The change in emphasis is in part a reflection of different community contexts, different national contexts and different conceptual frameworks brought to the study. In this respect, the two studies, viewed comparatively, mutually inform each other and deepen our understanding of the complex and shifting realities of language use and language attitudes in Quechua communities of the Andes.

Perhaps even more revealing, though, it may be that the shift, in only a decade's time, from a focus on language maintenance to one on language revitalization is an indication of Quechua's increasingly threatened status throughout the Andes. Given that increasing threat and the value of Quechua ways of speaking, writing, being, acting and believing not only for Quechua speakers but for all of us, the need for careful case studies such as King offers us here is all the more salient.

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