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By

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2003

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**LITERACY PRACTICES AMONG QUECHUA-SPEAKERS: THE CASE STUDY  
OF A RURAL COMMUNITY IN THE PERUVIAN ANDES**

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OF A RURAL COMMUNITY IN THE PERUVIAN ANDES**

by

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**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
The University of Texas at Austin  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the Degree of  
**Doctor of Philosophy**

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2003

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the participants of the study: the teachers, the children, the parents, the communal leaders, and all men and women from Huancalle. I could not have finished this project without the help of the teachers, who were very helpful and with whom I established friendships. I am extremely grateful to the *comuneros* for the patience they had answering all my questions and explaining in detail about their lives. I thank all of them for sharing not only opinions, but also their homes, food, and feelings with me. I appreciate all the good moments partying during carnival and weddings, lying on the grass, and having good conversations.

I thank the Asociación Pukllasunchis, for its permanent support to this project, and to the members of the team of the Proyecto de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe en Escuelas Rurales Cercanas a la Ciudad --Ricardo, Cecilia, Hilda, Pocha, Rami, and Gilmar-- for providing me with their friendship and unconditional support. My work could not have been completed without the help of friends, Quechua native speakers and specialists in the Quechua language: Gina Maldonado, Selena, Ch'aska, Goswinda, Marilú, and Clorinda. I also need to thank Denni, Deborah, Lissa, Carol, Christie, and Ceci Loayza for their valuable help in editing and giving me their comments. I especially thank Denni Blum for her help editing and organizing the final editing process. I appreciate her for sharing her friendship with me. She really accompanied me through the final moments of writing this dissertation.

I want to thank my advisor, Douglas Foley, for his encouraging and sharp comments of my work, as well as for providing me with his dear friendship. I appreciate Harriett Romo's and Henry Trueba's permanent support of my work. I also want to thank Gustavo, who has always meant a driven force to me. Thanks for your loving support and for sharing all this. Nico and Lucia, my children, who shared this project with me. Nico's patience and Lucia's energy helped me throughout this process. Finally, I appreciate Tere's help in taking care of my children lovingly.

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Publication No. \_\_\_\_\_

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2003

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The purpose of this research was to understand the literacy practices among Quechua-speaking members of a rural community in the Southern Peruvian Andes. Research findings respond to the need to question and propose answers to educational issues in the context of the efforts of Bilingual Intercultural Education in Peru. The ethnographic approach to literacy practices focused on different domains: the households, the church, the school, and the community. Data were gathered by conducting individual interviews, life history interviews, participant-observations, and videotapes of literacy events in diverse contexts. Findings suggest literacy practices in this Quechua-speaking community were shaped by institutional literacy practices of the school, the state and the Protestant church. The hegemony of the Spanish language and literacy over the oral and written Quechua was noticeable.

Literacy practices in the school were imposed on children and lacked meaning in their lives. Literacy instruction was decontextualized, composed of unchallenging activities, and was shaped by teachers' ethnocentric views about the children, their parents, their culture, and language. Teachers assumed the role of civilizing the children and negated the linguistic and cultural resources the students brought to the classroom. Literacy practices occurred within the normalizing everyday practices at school, in which Quechua literacy was used only as a bridge towards Spanish literacy.

Bureaucratic Spanish literacy was imposed in the community. However, it was performed in a particular way. It was practiced as a collective activity and was surrounded by Quechua orality. Orality gave meaning to the texts and constructed the literacy events within activities of interpretation and negotiation. There were few uses of vernacular literacies, which show the particular interests of the writers. Quechua literacy

was only used in the context of the Protestant churches in the community. Religious literacy practices were characterized by the memorizing of Bible passages and the copying of religious songs. In conclusion, literacy was imposed by social institutions, however, they were reinterpreted to satisfy the goals of the members of the community and were performed in a particular local way.

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## INTRODUCTION

In spite of the efforts of the Peruvian state to implement Intercultural Bilingual Education programs, the schooling of indigenous populations in the country is still in need of improvement for the sake of social equity. As stated by Cuenca (2002), recent research about the pedagogical practice of Peruvian teachers indicates important difficulties that continue in spite of the copious in-service training implemented in recent years. The difficulties regarding pedagogical practice are similar to the ones found by the General Diagnosis of Education conducted in 1993 (Cuenca, 2002), before Intercultural Bilingual Education was implemented by the state. In addition, the education system has not responded to this diversity and the particular needs of indigenous children (Jung, 1994). Thus, the education scene has demanded teacher preparation which is responsive to the cultural, social, and linguistic reality of indigenous students. Within this educational context, literacy is a current concern of the government, teachers and policy makers.

Historically, in Peru, schooling has been denied to indigenous Quechua people. In overall terms, the access of indigenous people to alphabetic literacy “has been partial, slow, and conflictive” (Godenzzi, 1997a, p. 238). Presently, however, how to *alfabetizar* (make literate) Quechua-speaking peasant children –especially in Spanish- is the main concern of these children’s teachers. Within the framework of international discussions and aggressive initiatives which search for *eradicating* illiteracy in the world, many social problems in Peru, such as poverty or unemployment, have been attributed to the condition of “illiteracy” of indigenous populations. The Peruvian school system pays much attention to the “eradication of the *analfabetismo* (illiteracy)” -in the words of an educational authority in the city of Cusco, Peru.

Literacy has been defined by the national education system, the state and most literacy programs from an *autonomous* perspective, as stressed by Street (1984, 1993, 1995), meaning, implicitly, that there is only one right way of being literate, closely associated with the literacy practiced in schools. This *right way* has been related to the formally educated. This perspective has had extremely negative consequences in the

social construction of the *illiterate* in discourses found in media, social science and policy sectors. The hegemonic discourses about language, literacy and education consider that “multilingualism and illiteracy impede national development and modernization” (Godenzzi, 1997a, p. 237). In Peru, the result has been the stigmatization of the *illiterate* as being *not intelligent, uneducated, ignorant* people (Godenzzi, 1997a). Furthermore, there is an association of the *illiterate* as being peasant, indigenous and female (subordinate populations). The reasons for the *illiteracy* of indigenous populations are often explained by prejudiced assumptions that clearly reflect deficit perspectives on Quechua-speaking rural people’s way of life, taking as a starting point literacy’s apparent naturalness. As Giroux stated, referring to the case of the United States:

*illiteracy* is not merely the inability to read and write, it is also a cultural marker for naming forms of difference within the logic of cultural deprivation theory. What is important here is that the notion of cultural deprivation serves to designate in the negative sense forms of cultural currency that appear disturbingly unfamiliar and threatening when measured against the dominant culture’s ideological standard regarding what is to be valorized as history, linguistic proficiency, lived experience, and standards of community life. (1988, p. 61)

According to the Census data of 1993, 12.8% of the population of Peru is considered illiterate<sup>1</sup> (Godenzzi, 1997a). Higher levels of illiteracy are found in areas where high numbers of Quechua speakers live,<sup>2</sup> such as the department of Cusco, in which 25.4 % of the population is considered illiterate. From the Quechua speaking population labeled as *illiterate*, around 70% are women (Coronel-Molina, 1998). These numbers have caused distress because of illiteracy’s association with cognitive development and social ills. As a consequence, there has been a deep preoccupation by the Peruvian state about *alfabetizar* (making “literate”) indigenous populations and women. As a result of this situation, literacy campaigns were implemented by the Peruvian government, which targeted these populations.

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<sup>1</sup> People who are older than 15 years old and do not know how to read or write.

<sup>2</sup> Quechua is the most used indigenous language in Peru, with 16.5 % of the population (more than 3 million) older than five years of age speaking Quechua as their mother tongue. In some areas Quechua speakers still constitute more than the 95% of the population. Cusco has 63.7% of Quechua speakers and 85.8% of the rural population speak Quechua as their first language (Godenzzi, 1997a).

The hegemonic and ethnocentric view of literacy does not account for the diverse ways in which Quechua people use literacy. This widely-held view of literacy does not consider the fact that literacy is always defined in terms of the historical, political, social, and cultural contexts in which it is used. As highlighted by Street (1997, p. 375), *literacy* has not one but multiple meanings and uses: “We can no longer talk about Literacy as though it were a single thing, -- with a big ‘L’ and a single ‘y’ – as though Literacy means the same in all contexts and societies.”

As mentioned above, literacy is a social phenomenon widely talked about, however, little is known about the *local literacies* (Street, 1993, 1995, 1997) of Quechua people. Studies about Quechua symbolic systems, forms of cultural expressions and their social meanings in the Andean world have been commonly conducted (Arnold & Yapita, 1998, 1999; Howard-Malverde, 1998; Mannheim, 1999; Mannheim & Van Vleet, 1998; among many others), as well as studies about the contact of literacies (Spanish alphabetic literacy and Quechua communicative resources) during colonial times (Adelaar, 1997; Dedenbach-Salazar, 1997; Lienhard, 1992; Pratt, 1991; Quispe-Agnoli, 2002). However, very few empirical studies (Arnold & Yapita, 2000; Hornberger, 1994, 1997; Lund, 1997; Zavala, 2002) focus on how Spanish and/or Quechua alphabetic *literacies* are put to use in the context of Quechua people’s today daily lives in different social domains. Becoming informed about the local definitions and uses of literacy is not a goal embraced by the education system, in spite of the fact that the failure to take into account *multiple and local literacies* (Street, 1994, 1997) in literacy programs and education reform projects has been identified as one of the main reasons for their frequent failure (Street, 1997).

The question in need of answering is: What do Quechua speakers of rural communities do with Spanish and Quechua literacies? In other words, what kinds of literacies can be found among them? From this general question I developed the following sub-questions: What kinds of social practices and institutions are related to literacy use? How do literacies affect social relationships? How do social relationships influence the way literacy is used and conceived? What are the local ideas about literacy

(local meanings and ideologies)? How are literacies put to use in everyday activities (literacy events)? In sum, I try to understand how literacy practices (cultural practices) introduced by western institutions (state, church, school) in Huancalle (a rural Quechua community) were incorporated into the everyday life of the community, taking into account the local ideas and the behaviors about literacy.

This study responds to the need to question and propose answers to educational issues in the context of the efforts of Intercultural Bilingual Education in Peru. There is a great need to pay attention to the cultural practices and resources of students in the education process. The education scene becomes even more complicated when the users of literacy belong to a culture whose spoken language has not many written social functions. Generally, children are the ones who have to adapt to the school's demands and definitions of literacy. If the education system, with the teachers as their representatives, continue to impose literacy practices that bring with them ethnocentric and stigmatizing assumptions without taking into account children's native languages and communicative resources, we risk educating children in a context that forces them to negate their identity, their culture, and their linguistic resources.

In sum, I present the local ideas about literacy, as well as its uses by different members of the community: adults, children, men, and women in different domains of their lives. Findings of this study suggest that literacy is mainly related to the Spanish language, the language promoted by the public school and the state. Even when Quechua literacy was promoted by the school, the Quechua language and communicative resources were marginalized and framed by definitions and uses of Spanish literacy. Literacy was clearly imposed by these social institutions; however, literacy practices were reinterpreted to satisfy the goals of the members of the community. Literacy practices were performed in a particular and local way. In spite of literacy practices being mostly in Spanish, they were surrounded by Quechua orality and incorporated in the local cultural practices and ideas about language, education, family and community.

In Chapter One, I will provide the theoretical and methodological approach for my research of literacy practices, from an ideological and ethnographic perspective.

While the focus of this research is literacy practices, the characteristics of the community influenced them. In Chapter Two, I describe the community in which the research was conducted. General information about the population, the geographical characteristics of the area, and the economic activities will be provided. In addition, I develop important issues that set the context in order to understand the chapters that follow about literacy practices in the community: the relationships between the members of the community and the city, the value of reciprocity, the conformation of social networks, the use of Quechua and Spanish language in the community, and the religious beliefs in the community.

In Chapter Three I discuss the local ideas about school and literacy in the community. In order to understand the local meanings of education and literacy, I present the voices and opinions of the members of the community regarding their experiences with schooling, their historical construction of literacy in the community, and their definitions of literacy. The local ideas about literacy were related to local definitions about the body, the process of learning, the inter-ethnic relationships with urban Spanish speakers, and the hegemonic discourses about progress at the individual and collective levels.

Then, in Chapter Four, I turn to the sociocultural context of the school. I introduce the school setting and the educational models that are implemented in Huancalle. I detail, as well, the practices and discourses that constructed the environment of the school. Finally, the discourses about literacy held by the teachers and literacy instruction in the classroom are presented. This chapter provides a backdrop to Chapter Five, which shows how literacy instruction was implemented. I explain how the focus on the deficiencies of the students (their errors) and formal aspects of the written texts –enacted in the social interactions in the classroom— intervened in the construction of literacy events. I analyze the interactions by presenting transcripts of particular literacy events. Spanish and Quechua literacy practices are presented, addressing the ways Quechua language, literacy and communicative genres were marginalized and used only as bridges towards Spanish literacy.

In Chapter Six, I introduce the uses of Spanish literacy in the community and at home. I explore how these imposed institutional literacies -bureaucratic and schooled literacies- were used by the members of the community, sometimes to satisfy alien purposes and others' to satisfy their own indigenous purposes. In Chapter Seven, I focus on the uses of Quechua literacy in the community, specifically in the religious domain. The religious beliefs of the two Protestant churches are discussed in their relationships with the uses of literacy in this social domain. Finally, in Chapter Eight I elaborate on the conclusions. I consider the implications for teacher training and for teaching in schools that serve Quechua-speaking children.

I believe that our objective as educators and researchers, who are concerned about education of Quechua-speaking children, should be to find ways in which this cultural medium of communication, when introduced by the school, will not become a tool that alienates the students from their own language and culture or accentuates the hierarchical ethnic, class, and gender relationships of the larger society in the classroom. Literacies should be used in order to make the students feel that school and school knowledge is related to their lives, their experiences, and their identities. Research has shown that by understanding local ways of using literacies, teachers are able to construct more relevant contexts for literacy learning, where students feel comfortable with who they are, and in which asymmetric social relationships are not encouraged (Britsch, 1994; Dyson, 1993; Gilbert, 1994; Heath, 1983; Henry, 1996; Lindenberg, 1998; Moll & Díaz, 1987, 1993; Paley, 1994; Trueba 1987, 1989; among many others). In sum, children should have opportunities to become creative authors by using all their resources without limits.



CHAPTER ONE:  
THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

**A theoretical framework for the study of local literacies**

The study of literacy practices needs a theoretical and methodological perspective that takes into account the discourses, symbolic representations, and complex historical, social, and cultural processes around literacy. I approached literacy practices of people from Huancalle from the *ideological model of literacy* proposed originally by Brian Street (1984), which has been used and enriched by an important number of scholars who are part of the New Literacy Studies (NLS) (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000a; Baynham, 1993; Bloch, 1993; Gee, 2000; Guerra, 1998; Hornberger, 1994, 1997; Howard-Malverde, 1997; Koulick & Stroud, 1993; Landaburu, 1998; Lindenberg, 1998; Rockhill, 1993; Zavala, 2002; among many others). I also drew from the ethnography of communication framework (Hymes, 1974). Thus, I position my study within the New Literacy Studies model of research, which has approached language and literacy from a critical and ideological perspective.

The ideological model of literacy, as explained by Street (1984, 1993, 1995) is a theoretical and methodological framework that helps to explain literacy (and orality) in its social contexts. Furthermore, the ideological perspective avoids the polarization of orality-literacy and technical-cultural aspects of literacy. According to this model, literacy's social uses are related in diverse ways to the ideologies of literacy and the cultural values. Thus, literacy is a practice that should be understood from the community's perspective and frameworks of reference. Thus, literacy is not one, but *multiple* and *local*.

*Multiple* and *local literacies* are two concepts that have been developed by Brian Street. *Multiple literacies* implies that there is not only one literacy based on technical skills. On the contrary, literacies vary according to the context and society in which they are imbedded (Street, 1984). *Local literacies* accounts for the literacy practices that are related to local identities (Street, 1994). According to Street, there are three possible local literacies: (a) different languages and writing systems of a nation, (b) *invented literacies*,

frequently by indigenous people “in the face of the dominant literacies of colonial powers” (1994, p. 13), and (c) *vernacular literacies* (Camitta, 1993; Street, 1997) or *community literacy* (Barton & Ivanic, 1991), which entail “alternative uses of reading and writing within the same language and writing” (Street, 1997, p. 379).

Proponents of the ethnography of communication have also argued that literacy cannot be isolated from its sociocultural context (Hymes, 1974; Farr & Guerra, 1995; Hornberger & Hardman, 1994). Farr and Guerra (1995, p.7) explained this issue as follows:

Within this framework, speaking (and reading and writing) are viewed as ways of communicating that are characteristic of a particular cultural group; context is crucial to the interpretation of behavior; and linguistic behavior is inextricably connected to, even constitutive of social meaning.

Thus, within the ethnography of communication there is a focus on the “context-creating aspects of verbal performance” (Duranti, 1997, p. 294) of the *speech events*, which are extended to *literacy events* (Heath, 1982). *Literacy event* is according to Heath (1982) “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants’ interactions and their interpretive processes.” Similar goals, conceptual, and methodological approaches characterize both the ideological model of literacy and the ethnography of communication framework.

The frameworks presented here presuppose the understanding of empirical data from a social theory of literacy (Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic, 2000b). They were proposed as a response to the dominant perspective –an “autonomous” view-- in the study of language and literacy. Traditionally, language has been studied as a decontextualized phenomenon --isolated from the cultural and social context-- and its focus was on language properties and technical features. Proponents of this perspective conceptualized language and literacy as a unique, neutral and universal phenomena. Similarly, the focus of this line of research was on technical features of literacy (coding and decoding processes), and its cognitive and social consequences.

Within this dominant paradigm, which proposes a “great divide” (Goody, 1977) between literacy and orality, evolutionary arguments dominated the understanding of the

relationship between oral and written uses of language. The evolutionary perspective is predisposed to universalize and essentialize literacy and does not take into account that the characteristics of written or spoken languages are shaped by the context of communication. Literacy, according to Goody (1977), Ong (1982), and Olson (1988) bring changes in the way people think. Therefore, people who come from oral cultures are conceptualized as uncivilized and with no capability for abstract thinking. Goody focused on the effects of literacy on the thought in oral and literate cultures (1977), and Ong (1982) stated that “by isolating thought on a written surface, detached from any interlocutor, making utterance in this sense autonomous and indifferent to attack, writing presents utterance and thought as uninvolved in all else, somehow self contained, complete” (p. 132). Moreover, from Olson’s perspective, literacy has undeniable cognitive consequences. He states, “when writing began to serve the memory function, the mind could be redeployed to carry out more analytic activities such as examining contradictions and deriving logical implications” (Olson, 1988, p. 28).

Following this mode of thought, literacy would also generate social consequences. For example, literacy was tied to the emergence of nationalism. According to Gellner (1983), common national and mass literacy would bring the possibility of the conformation of the modern state. According to this perspective, homogenization of people, their language use and their literacy would be necessary to create a nation.

The *autonomous* view of language and literacy influenced the popular views about literacy as *natural*, *neutral*, and *good* in essence. Therefore, cultural, political, historical and social issues were not contemplated in order to try to understand it. One of the problems of this perspective is that it tells “us nothing of the literacy practices that are constitutive of the everyday lives” of people (Taylor, 2000, p. xiv).

The *ideological model of literacy*, on the contrary, defines literacy as a social phenomenon, “inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society” (Street, 1993, p.7). In other words, “reading, writing, and meaning are always *situated* within specific social practices within specific Discourses” (Gee, 2000, p. 189). An assumption of this paradigm, then, is that there is not “One” literacy but there are multiple literacies.

Furthermore, there are dominant and subordinate literacies, according to how they are socially valorized. Therefore, literacies are not essentially *good*, rather literacy has the potential to be both --a liberating or oppressive tool (Gee, 1991).

The ideological model focuses on “social practices in which literacy has a role” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 7).<sup>3</sup> This view of literacy assumes that literacy and context constitute each other. The key concept that allows the researcher to “see” the social character of literacy is *literacy practices* (Street, 1993). Street builds up on the notion of “literacy event” developed by Heath (1982) in order to define his concept of literacy practices:

I employ ‘literacy practices’ as a broader concept, pitched at a higher level of abstraction and **referring to both behavior and conceptualizations relating to the use of reading and/or writing**. ‘Literacy practices’ incorporate not only ‘literacy events’ as empirical occasions to which literacy is integral, but also ‘folk models’ of those events and the ideological preconceptions that underpin them (Street, 1993, p.12, emphasis mine).

Thus, literacy practices are not only observable behaviors found in *literacy events* but they are also the meanings that people give to literacy --the values, the beliefs, the interests, the feelings and local ideas that shape literacy events. Local theories about education, literacy and learning are extremely important to understand literacy practices. Barton and Hamilton (2000) argue that “people’s understanding of literacy is an important aspect of their learning, and that people’s theories guide their actions” (p. 14). In addition, the behaviors and social interactions give meaning to the uses of literacy. Therefore, there is a need to approach literacy in the moment of interaction. Gee states “situations are rarely static or uniform, they are actively created, sustained, negotiated, resisted, and transformed moment-by-moment through ongoing *work*” (Gee, 2000, p. 190). Gee refers here to “human effort” or social work. Language and literacy are resources to do that work.

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<sup>3</sup> According to James Gee, this perspective is part of a change of paradigm that has affected diverse disciplines, where there was a “‘social turn’ away from a focus on the individual behavior (e.g. the behaviorism of the first half of the twentieth century) and individual minds (e.g. the cognitivism of the middle part of the century) toward a focus on social and cultural interaction” (Gee, 2000, p. 180).

Definitions of *literacy events* and *ideology* are required in order to be able to fully understand the concept of *literacy practices*. In addition to the definition cited above by Heath, *literacy events* include also talk around the written text and the social rules of the interaction (Baynham, 1993). The relationship between orality and literacy has been reformulated by the new literacy studies (Baynham, 1993; Heath, 1982; Street, 1993), moving away from the “great divide” between oral and written language postulated by proponents of the autonomous perspective. *Ideology* is defined by Street (1993, p. 8) as “the site of tension between authority and power on one hand and resistance and creativity on the other [...] This tension operates through the medium of a variety of cultural practices, including particularly language and, of course, literacy.”

Using the notion of *literacy practices* I was able to approach local literacies, taking into account the micro and macro contexts in which practices are embedded. This model accounts for both, a larger societal context --power and cultural structures and broader discourses-- as well as the moment-to-moment, negotiated, interactional context of literacy. This theoretical approach is also very similar to the main ideas of the cultural production theories (Levinson & Holland, 1997), which propose a dialectic between structure and agency. The ideological model of literacy, like the cultural production theories, allowed me to “see” the reproduction of and the resistance to social inequalities based on ethnicity and class in the community of Huancalle.

My position in this study follows the ideological model’s stance, which:

Does not attempt to deny technical skill or the cognitive aspects of reading and writing, but rather understands them as they are encapsulated within cultural wholes and within structures of power. In that sense the ideological model subsumes rather than excludes the work undertaken within the autonomous model (Street, 1995, p. 161).

I strongly agree with Kulick and Stroud’s (1993) argument against conceiving people as passively transformed by literacy (p. 31). I follow the concept of *social agency*, which refers to the possibilities of people to “actively make choices in life, rather than passively respond to the socioeconomic pressures that bear down on them” (Mehan, 1992, p. 8). Heuristic devices developed within the framework of the ideological model

of literacy (i.e. literacy practices) are adequate to explain also the agency of Quechua rural people, because literacy is defined as a resource that people may or may not use for social action. Quechua people were not merely passive recipients of Spanish, schooled, Quechua, or religious-related literacies. Quechua people were active participants, choosing whether to appropriate these literacies according to their own purposes. In addition, *comuneros* were active agents in the resistance to or the reproduction of discourses about literacy. Therefore, “the two-faced potential of literacy to both open and bar doors of opportunity becomes increasingly evident” (Hornberger, 1997, p. 3).

David Barton and Mary Hamilton (2000, p. 8) summarized the view of the New Literacy Studies and the concept of literacy practices in six propositions, which oriented my research:

- 1) Literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts.
- 2) There are different literacies associated with different domains of life.
- 3) Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships, and some literacies are more dominant, visible and influenced than others.
- 4) Literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices.
- 5) Literacy is historically situated.
- 6) Literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making.

In sum, taking into account the situation of Huancalle, where domination, appropriation and resistance characterized the sociocultural context of literacy practices, the ideological model of literacy is the framework that best explains the social practices surrounding literacies among Quechua speakers.

### **Methodology**

I situate my study within the areas of anthropology of education and the New Literacy Studies. My research goal was to find out how members of a Quechua speaking newly literate community in the Andes used Spanish and Quechua literacy skills for their own purposes in their everyday lives. Due to my intention of studying literacy as a cultural practice, an ethnographic approach was the best methodological choice for my research. Ethnography helps to comprehend the functioning of social systems by

providing detailed accounts combined with interpretation (Wollcott, 1987). As Street (1993, p. 25) states, “an ethnographic perspective enables us to see how literacy is incorporated into the receiving culture’s already existing conventions and concepts regarding communication.” Moreover, the ethnographic approach assists “in identifying and giving voice to alternative worldviews” (Delpit, 1995, p. 23).

My analysis focuses on describing, understanding and interpreting the meanings and uses of literacy by Quechua speakers, relative to their particular social practices and context. I attempt to understand literacy from the Quechua people’s perspective,<sup>4</sup> instead of imposing my own view of literacy upon the individuals within this community. I conducted a case study of one community in order to perform an in-depth analysis of literacy practices in a local context. I carried out my research in Huancalle, a community of the department of Cusco,<sup>5</sup> Peru. I selected the community because there were a number of circumstances that I think are important in order to understand literacy practices. Social institutions including school and religious groups and their social and literacy practices had become a part of the community in the last few decades. This situation allowed me to observe if and how Quechua people incorporate Spanish and Quechua literacies in their everyday lives and within their cultural frameworks. In addition, Huancalle is a bilingual community which has Quechua as its main language of communication, but at the same time has a fluid relationship with the city of Cusco. As well, the community public school had teachers (two) who attended an Intercultural Bilingual Education Program (IBE), while the rest followed a Spanish-only model of education.<sup>6</sup> As a result, I had the opportunity to observe the literacy instruction of teachers who implemented IBE, as well as teachers who had no training in this model and

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<sup>4</sup> The *emic*, opposed to the *etic* perspective, supposes a viewpoint “from inside” (Pike, 1971).

<sup>5</sup> Cusco is a city in the Andes that was the capital of the Inka Empire. Quechua and Spanish are both spoken in the department of Cusco with 63.7% of its population speaking Quechua as their first language. It has an urban population of 414,000, from which 60.2% speak Spanish. In communities in the rural areas outside the city (460,000 people) Quechua is the language spoken primarily with a 85.8% of the population speaking Quechua as their first language (Godenzzi, 1997a). Children and adults from these communities use Spanish to different degrees.

<sup>6</sup> This particular IBE program was attended only voluntarily by teachers. Therefore, the program was not implemented throughout the whole school.

implemented literacy instruction only in Spanish in the same school. This compilation of factors led me to choose Huancalle as the community of study.

My ethnographic research was conducted during a period of one year and six months in the years 2001 and 2002. During this period I was able to conduct observations in the classrooms for two consecutive school years and meet eight different teachers. I was also able to be in the community during summer and winter vacations. During these time periods I concentrated on out-of-school literacy practices. I was living in the city of Cusco (45 minutes from Huancalle) and went to the community for the day (two to three days a week). I participated in diverse activities of everyday life of people in the community. I stayed overnight several times, in order to be able to participate in activities that were held at night.

I presented myself as a student who was doing her dissertation, but also as a part of the IBE program implemented in the area, in which I worked for one year (2001) as a researcher. I had previously conducted a sociolinguistic study in the same community for the program.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, I was known by the *comuneros*, teachers and children.

I gathered data using different techniques, which provided me with complementary types of data. The diverse sources of information allowed me to have a more complete picture of the literacy practices in Huancalle (the behaviors and the ideology about reading and writing). These sources of information, discussed below, were useful for the triangulation of my findings.

#### *Participant-observation*

Linguistic anthropologists and sociolinguists have warned us about solely relying on self-report data (Duranti, 1997). What people say they think about language is not the same as what they do with it. As Duranti (1997) argues, meaning is not only found in the mind of the people but in their actions. In addition,

Cultures are continuously produced, reproduced and revised in dialogues among their members. Cultural events are not the sum of the actions of their individual participants, each of whom imperfectly expresses a pre-existent pattern, but are

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<sup>7</sup> See de la Piedra et al. (2001). Data gathered during this piece of research has been included in this dissertation.



the scenes where shared culture emerges from interaction. (Mannheim & Tedlock, 1995, p. 2)

Therefore, participant observation is crucial. I took the role of an observer but also participated according to the situation. During fieldwork, there were times when the situation made it impossible not to participate, there were other situations when I needed to limit myself to quietly observe what was happening. I carried out observations of everyday life in different contexts: school, home, community, and church. I attended different classrooms at the school in Huancalle and observed activities when the classes were not in session (line-up, recess, and the moment children went out of school). Sometimes I acted as a teacher when the students did not have one. I also conducted observations at homes, in order to understand the literacy practices in this context and participated during the two Protestant churches' services. In addition, I observed different community settings such as while children were playing, spontaneous conversations on the street and in the stores, communal assemblies, *faenas*<sup>8</sup>, courses organized by a Non Governmental Organization --NGO--, and working the land). I participated during festivities and rituals such as *Todos los Santos* (All Saints', November 2<sup>nd</sup>), *Cruz Velakuy*, the anniversary of the community, carnivals, and marriage ceremonies.

In my fieldwork experience, informal conversations have been a rich source of useful data. Spontaneous stories or comments have been invaluable contributions to my research. I kept a systematic record of my observations and conversations by writing fieldnotes everyday, soon after the events took place. Since the beginning of fieldwork, I kept notes on my impressions and intuitions, which later were useful to compare them across time.

#### *Individual interviews*

I formally interviewed teachers, parents, children, communal authorities, church pastors and church members. The interviews were open-ended and conducted in the language chosen by the participant. Elder members of the community spoke Quechua exclusively, while middle-aged men as well as some middle-aged women, especially

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<sup>8</sup> These are communal and collective work days for which *comuneros* are required to participate.

those who had some schooling, and young people preferred doing the interviews in Spanish. I conducted the interviews with children in Quechua, as this was the language they most frequently used. If the interview was conducted in Quechua I had a research assistant who conducted the interview with me, translating simultaneously. All interviews but two were tape-recorded (two women preferred not to be taped). I asked very general questions about two general topics: schooling and literacy (Appendix 1) and framed the interviews as conversations (Fontana & Frey, 1993). I did two interviews with each participant (I did 52 interviews in total), one about each of the topics, in order to avoid an association between schooling and literacy. I transcribed the interviews with the help of research assistants. I later analyzed them looking for common themes and patterns. I purposefully looked for different perspectives about schooling and literacy among the people of Huancalle, as well as the situations in which participant used literacies.

#### *Life history interviews*

I interviewed elders of the community in order to gain a historical perspective of literacy practices in Huancalle. Life histories allowed me to understand the social representations of the introduction of Spanish literacy in the community. They lasted approximately one and a half hours and were conducted in Quechua. These interviews allowed me to understand the perception of elder members of the community regarding literacy when most of them did not read or write. Then, life histories were a useful tool in order to comprehend how perceptions of local history affected the conceptualization of literacy and formal education by *comuneros*.

#### *Tape and video recording of literacy events*

I audio and video taped literacy events in diverse settings. The video recording of literacy events was done only after I had spent months in the field and had reached a level of familiarity with the participants, always with their consent. While initially some participants were not as comfortable as they were without having the camera in front of them, after some time had passed they became used to the camera. In fact, it became a very valuable tool for me to return in some way the help of the community. Participants requested the use of the video camera at certain festivities, and later gathered to watch the

videos on the street. For the purpose of this study, videos were very helpful to analyze the moment-to-moment interaction and “the literacy event in progress” (Baynham, 1993). By this micro approach to literacy practices I was able to understand the different roles participants take in the literacy event and the co-construction of it. As will be seen in the vignettes and examples presented, tape and video recordings were very useful to capture in detail the production of local ideas of literacy in interaction. Regarding the camera effect, I agree with Duranti (1997) that it is just another effect of the researcher presence.

I avoided a position of detached observer and engaged as much as possible my informants and members of the community of Huancalle in dialogue about my findings. I always kept in mind that “we know through emotionally complicated and communicatively ambiguous social encounters in the field, then certainly objectivity is out of the question” (Abu-Lughod, 1990, p.10). I consulted with informants continuously to incorporate the members of the community as participants of the research process and in order to cross check the data gathered by different methods and my interpretations. Individual and life history interviews, informal conversations and observations provided me with many voices that I hope I will represent in this written account.

#### *Transcription and translation*

Having Quechua as my recently acquired fourth language I relied on Quechua speaking friends and experts on Quechua language to assist me with the transcriptions and translation. I also counted on the people from Huancalle in order to clarify certain terms in Quechua that referred to complex ideas. However, I am entirely responsible for any problems with the transcription, translation or interpretation of the data.

#### *Case studies*

I selected male and female adults, young people and children in order to have in-depth portraits of the different ways of using literacy by these individuals. By gathering information about the life experiences of each of these participants I was able to have a deeper understanding of their literacy practices.

### *Collection and analysis of written documents*

I analyzed diverse written documents from the community. From school in Huancalle I gathered examples of the children's writings in class, went through many children's notebooks, and examined the school textbooks. I also analyzed the written documents of the school and a teacher's planning notebook to gain a deeper understanding of the uses of literacy by teachers in the context of the school. From the community, I collected written documents both sent and received by the community. I revised the *libro de actas*<sup>9</sup> and other documents used to keep records of communal affairs. Within homes, I had the opportunity to examine the books and printed material that were available, such as Bibles, religious songbooks, notebooks that belonged to adults and children, and brochures provided by institutions.

### **Being an outsider in Huancalle**

Some difficulties emerged during fieldwork. First, in spite of the fact that I have taken approximately two years of Quechua language instruction, there were situations in which I did not understand or could not fully communicate with Quechua monolinguals. I looked for several ways of solving this difficulty. First, I conferred with bilinguals in Huancalle. Almost all people in Huancalle were bilingual to different degrees. Only older people and some women are Quechua monolinguals. I could communicate in Spanish with most people from Huancalle. Whenever I did not understand something I asked the people next to me to clarify anything I did not comprehend, at the moment or after the event. Since I had developed close relationships with key informants, they generally tended to give me the information I asked for.

Often this solution was not sufficient since Quechua is the language mostly used within the community, and the language that participants of the study feel more comfortable using. I employed a second strategy. I chose to look for the assistance of a bilingual translator and research assistant. She is an anthropologist and has great experience on fieldwork in the Andes. She helped me translating during the interviews, and transcribing and translating the transcriptions of interviews, tape and video recorded

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<sup>9</sup> The *libro de actas* is an official notebook where the secretary of the community wrote every important event or decision they made.

literacy events and interactions. Two other assistants helped me only with some transcriptions and translations. They had previously worked with me during a sociolinguistic study for which I had trained them before and during fieldwork. I discussed my observations with the research assistants, especially any doubts and uncertainties I had. I felt we made a team and built relationships of friendship and trust. I chose not to work with assistants from the community, because they were immersed in the Huancalle community. I wanted to avoid any possibility of fear that the participants' opinions and experiences might be made a public matter.

A second complication of the study may have been that I lived outside the community. However, the closeness of the community to Cusco, where I lived, and the long period of time in which I was involved in this study allowed me to establish rapport relationships and maintain the integrity of the research.

Third, being part of the IBE program smoothed the progress of my entry into the community, opening doors with its established structure and facilitating the relationship with the community. Communal authorities, for example, accepted my research immediately and presented me to members of the community, recommending that they support my research. Some of the problems I found because of my affiliation with the IBE program were related to people giving me the answers they thought I wanted to hear. During conversations with people who knew the program I was especially aware of their answers to questions such as “ what do you think about teachers teaching children how to read and write in Quechua?” I made a point in rephrasing the questions and probing the answers if they sounded too simple and aimed at satisfying me. With the teachers, being an “insider” in some ways was an advantage, because it facilitated my access with the teachers who participated in the program. Being an “insider” obligated me to continuously think about the relationship between theory and practice. My position made me reflect on how much of my findings and conclusions would I be able to put into practice within the framework of a teacher-training program; and in what ways could I put them into practice.

The fieldwork has been a growing experience for me not only academically, but also personally. In addition to what I learned about literacy practices in the community, I acquired strategies in order to overcome uncomfortable and painful feelings during the fieldwork process. I had to deal with contradictory feelings about different values and behaviors I encountered. I had to control feelings of disgust towards some of the teachers when I observed certain practices in the classroom and particular interactions with children. In the beginning of the fieldwork, I had to step aside when I had the urge to react against their behaviors. My intention was not to intervene with their natural actions and behaviors. I chose to comprehend the situation from a sociological point of view, so as not to hold responsible the teachers personally. Sometimes I also felt sympathetic feelings and understood that theirs was very hard work, for which they were not prepared. In time, I made good friends with some of the teachers and we were able to freely discuss their points of view.

In time, I also developed close relationships with *comuneros* of the study. I developed intimate relationships with a few but important informants of all ages, who confided their love letters and painful memories with me. People shared not only their opinions with me but also their food, their homes and their lives. But not all was easy. I had diverse reactions to my presence in the community. The hardest to swallow was the indifference of some of them, especially at the beginning of the study. Sometimes people were suspicious about what I was doing in their community, walking around all day, with no work to do just “talking.” One girl asked me if I was from the police, others asked me why a teacher was going around asking questions. Although I got this kind of reaction, I also talked to people who were not suspicious. Some of them just gave me the information I asked for. Others elaborated much more than I expected and sincerely shared their opinions with me. Others tried to get something in return for their participation in my study, usually some contribution for the community or a picture of their family. I usually took with me some bread, sugar or coca leaves, pictures and videos to give them back their time and help.

When I started going to the community I could not help thanking the tranquility of being in the field with no other noises but the ones made by animals, the wind or a few people talking. I loved to watch the diverse colors in the mountains as I walked up the only road of the community. Nature was pleasing to me in a way I had not experienced before. I just let myself observe and enjoy nature, no thinking included. Something different occurred with people. I was constantly aware of and reflexive about how my privileged position as middle-class, Spanish-speaker and university student impacted my research. When I started going to the community I remembered my ideas about “peasants” when I was a child. Being a middle-class Spanish-speaking *mestiza*, my perceptions about Quechua-speaking people were influenced by my parents who always tried to resist racism and discrimination against *cholos*, *indios*, *poor* people within the “white” group in Peru. At the level of discourse they tried to defend peasants’ rights and never let me use expressions I frequently heard on the street or at school from classmates, such as *indio flojo* (lazy Indian). I always remembered my father eagerly defending the rights of Andean people and spurring against “racist whites in Peru, who do not like the *cholos*. Why don’t they leave and go to Miami?!” This context allowed me to have at least a respectful idea about Quechua-speaking peasants.

However, I only interacted with Quechua speaking maids at home and my friends’ homes. I did not live with Quechua speakers nor did I make friends with them until I started doing fieldwork in 1992, at 22 years of age. During the present fieldwork I was continuously surprised about the meeting points between my life and the lives of *comuneros*, especially young people from Huancalle. I could find similar experiences with most of them regarding their lives going back and forth between two worlds. Having been an immigrant myself and working as a maid, I related feelings I had working in a host environment, cleaning other peoples’ homes and watching for other people’s children. I shared the experience of going to a foreign context, having to learn a second language and automatically enter the “minority” identity in the new context.

With women I could not share the knowledge of knitting, which was essential to their identity as women. However, I shared with them the experience of being a mother

and having a husband. With men I shared the experience of needing to find any job in order to survive in a new context, and needing to learn new ways of using literacy for everyday purposes (i.e. filling out applications or paying the electric bill by mail). With the young members of the community, I shared their experience as students or workers in a host environment. I do not intend, by any means, to say my experience was the same as Quechua-speaking peasants living in two worlds. I am aware of my advantages being a graduate student in the U.S. Nevertheless, I considered Abu-Lugod's (1990) contribution with respect to how to conceptualize relationships in the field: "by working with the assumption of difference in sameness, of a self that participates in multiple identifications, and an other that is also partially the self, we might be moving beyond the impasse of the fixed self/other or subject/object divide that so disturbs the new ethnographers" (p. 25-26). Taking Abu-Lugod's words with me it was easier to think my relationships with participants of the study.



CHAPTER TWO:  
THE COMUNIDAD CAMPESINA<sup>10</sup> OF HUANCALLE

**General description of the community**

The *comunidad campesina* (peasant community) of Huancalle belongs to the district of Taray, the Province of Calca, the Department of Cusco. It is located at a distance of 25 kilometers from the city of Cusco, on the road of Cusco-Urubamba. It was constituted on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1927 as the “indigenous community of Huancalle.” People lived in the area long before; however, it was when it was “inscribed” with a written document in the public registers that it was officially recognized as a community.<sup>11</sup> The community was a *hacienda* until the 1970’s. This historical context --which will be developed in the next chapter-- shaped the way *comuneros*<sup>12</sup> interpret and perceive literacy.

At present, Huancalle is the name of the community. Originally the community was known by the name of *Wanqaqaqa* (rock of the eagles) or *Wanqapampa* (plains of the eagle). *Wanqa* comes from *anqa* --eagle in Quechua. Members of the community told me that there were times when there were many more eagles inhabiting the area. According to don Pablo, a resident of Huancalle, “people say that one day an eagle was flying over this area and was carrying a child held by its claws. The eagle let go of the child in this place [community] and that is how this community was born.”<sup>13</sup> This story explains the “nickname” by which people from Huancalle were called by neighboring communities:

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<sup>10</sup> *Comunidad Campesina* (peasant community) is a term to name the indigenous rural communities in Peru introduced during the Agrarian Reform in the period of Juan Velasco’s authoritarian regime. Its origin is the *ayllu* from the Inka times (basic unit of Andean society, based on kinship and a shared mythical origin), which suffered changes with the Spanish invasion: the *reducciones* during the colonial times and the government of the vice-royal Toledo. Only during the 1920’s the *comunidades indígenas* (indigenous communities), in 1969 called *comunidades campesinas* (peasant communities), were recognized by the constitution and officially inscribed (Bonilla, 1987).

<sup>11</sup> The registration of the title of ownership of the community was made in the “Directorio de Comunidades Campesinas” (directory of peasant communities) of the Department of Cusco, tomo 275, folio 205, asiento 1 (Proyecto Especial de Titulación de Tierras –PETT--, Cusco). According to the Law of Peasant Communities, the recognition of the community conferred by the state is obtained when the community is registered in the “Libro de Comunidades Campesinas y Nativas del Registro de Personas Jurídicas” (The Book of Peasant and Native Communities of the Registrar of Juridical People).

<sup>12</sup> I will use *comuneros* to refer to men and women from Huancalle to favor readability. In Spanish *comuneros* refers to men and *comuneras* refers to women.

<sup>13</sup> All translations are mine.

*anqas puchun* (the eagle's leftovers). Thus, the symbol of the community is the eagle and this symbol is seen on the letterhead of their written documents.

The community is adjacent to three peasant communities and one district seat and is 379.17 hectares in size. It is located in a small river basin (Huarcamayu river basin). Presently, Huancalle is divided into two sections: 1) Huancalle Alto (High Huancalle), also called *Musuq Llaqta* (New Town/Community) or *Musuq Huancalle* (New Huancalle), and 2) *Llaqta* (Town/Community) or *Huancalle Bajo* (Low Huancalle). Most people presently live in Huancalle Alto. Huancalle has a population of 355 people (children and adults). It has 148 *comuneros calificados*<sup>14</sup> and three *mediano propietarios* (private owners of their land, who do not participate in the communal assemblies). From the 148 *comuneros*, 70 are men and 78 are women. There are 207 children in Huancalle, 120 boys and 87 girls.

Huancalle has four stores where the owners sell a few industrial products in great demand in the community such as sugar, salt, oil, noodles, rice, bread, crackers, cookies, cigarettes, beer, and soda. These stores serve many functions at once being grocery stores, banks and even the telephone office of the community. Almost all homes are provided with electricity and all of them have potable water. The community has a medical post.

The most important economic activity is agriculture and animal breeding, which are interdependent activities conducted in a landscape characterized by slopes. Farmers of Huancalle grow corn, potatoes, vegetables and herbs. The community has a large diversity of products and a high demographical density. This fact has the result of land becoming a scarce resource and “the dispersion of the property in small parcels, because each family will look to take advantage of the ecological diversity offered by the community's land” (Kervyn & CEDEP Ayllu, 1989, p. 15, my translation). They also

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<sup>14</sup> *Comuneros* are women and men, who have been born in the community, *comuneros'* children, and people who have been integrated into the community --generally because of having as a spouse a member of the community. The *comuneros calificados* (qualified *comuneros*) are those men and women who have been inscribed in the *Padrón Communal* (official book where all *comuneros* are registered), who are 18 years-old or older, and live for more than 5 years in the community. *Comuneros calificados* have the right to participate in the *Asamblea General* (general assembly), which is the most important political organ of the community. They also have the right to vote for and be elected as authority of the community.

raise animals, like cattle, pigs, hens, and guinea pigs. Most of the families' efforts are spent working the *chakra*, which is a piece of land cultivated for subsistence, and taking care of their animals. These activities assure *comuneros* and their families of their survival. Most of what they harvest is for their own consumption and to be used as seeds; animals (bulls) are grown to be used working the *chakra* or to be sold (hens, guinea pigs). Raising cattle is a way of saving. Families sell their animals when they need money.

The weather is generally dry, especially during winter time, and it only rains during the summer (November to April). Due to the weather, the management of water is central to the agriculture of Huancalle. Therefore, the *comuneros* have implemented an irrigation system, which is shared by three communities constituting a *micro-cuenca* (micro-basin) and depends on the communal and inter-communal organization. The geographical and demographic characteristics of the community have shaped an agriculture that needs the interdependence of the producers (Kervyn & CEDEP Ayllu, 1989), in terms of water management, interchange of labor, seeds and tools, and care for the animals, who left alone can destroy the *chakras*. Thus, the characteristics of the main economic activities of the community demand the organization of the community, regulations which manage the access of the *comuneros* to the communal resources.

#### **The relationship of the *comuneros* with the urban and semi-urban areas**

Huancalle is located in close proximity to Cusco and Písaq, urban areas which receive great numbers of tourists every year. The proximity to these areas influenced the economic activities of the members of the community. First of all, this relationship shapes the perception of *trabajo* (job), which is that of a job found in the city. Agricultural work was not considered as *trabajo* (work). Many adult males and females said they were jobless because they were not able to get jobs in the cities.

Adult males tried to get temporary jobs as construction workers in Cusco or other nearby cities on a daily or sporadic basis. Men often waited on the side of the road to be picked up by trucks that took them to Písaq or Cusco in order to work during the day in construction sites or carrying sand. There were a couple of male and female *comuneros* who worked for a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) that implemented

developmental projects in the area. Other men worked in Cusco as truck drivers or security guards. Men also got jobs as *porteadores*, carrying the tourists' camping equipment when they walked the *Inka trail* (a tourist circuit). Men migrated on a temporary basis during the months of inactivity of agricultural work to "the valley" -- Quillabamba-- an area where labor was needed to work on coffee and *coca* leaves production. Young people also migrated temporarily with their parents to this area.

Women generally had less frequent contacts with urban areas. However, usually once a week they went to the markets of nearby urban centers such as Písaq, Calca, and Cusco, in order to sell their agricultural products or to buy industrialized products that they could not easily find in the community. Saturdays and Sundays were the preferred days for women to go to city. In addition, when *comuneros* had planned work in the *chakra* in *ayni*,<sup>15</sup> they usually went to Písaq to get *aqha* (ceremonial beverage made out of corn) or *trago* (alcohol). The women who owned the four stores in the community usually went to Cusco to stock their stores. Women and men whose children were enrolled in schools of Cusco, Písaq, or Calca attended parent assemblies in those urban centers.

The community's school comprised *inicial* (kindergarten) through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. There is no local school accommodating older children. Therefore, the older children generally went every day to different close urban and semi-urban areas to attend secondary school (7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grades). In spite of the fact that most children of primary school age attended the community's school, some of the younger children were sent by their parents to schools in Cusco and nearby towns. Other young people lived in the nearby cities, where they studied and worked with their *padrinos* (godparents) or relatives. They usually came back to Huancalle to visit their families on the weekends, during holidays and for community festivities. Therefore, young people who live in Huancalle go back and forth from their community to the nearby cities, in order to attend school or to work in these cities. A few attend institutes of superior education (an equivalent of college), others work in grocery stores, mechanic shops, bread factories, informal vending, or domestic work.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ayni* is symmetric reciprocity. It is a service to someone else without receiving anything back immediately, but expecting a similar work in return.

Many members of the community do work of *artesanía* (crafts) to be sold to the tourists in local (C'orao, Písaq, Chinchero, Cusco) and international markets (Bolivia or Brazil). They produce highly demanded crafts such as necklaces, earrings, or board games (chess). All members of the family participated in the production. It is very common to see children making crafts in the afternoons after they finish school and during vacation. Most of the time, they sell their crafts to intermediaries. A few young people sell their crafts in the local tourist markets. Patricia (twenty years old), for example, studied to be a tourist guide. She went to Cusco to attend classes in an Institute. In addition, every day she attended English lessons in the Language Program at the University San Antonio Abad of Cusco. Her family produced necklaces, earrings and painted crafts --ceramic chess sets with Inka and Spanish motifs-- to sell in the tourist markets of Ccorao and Chinchero. She usually went to these markets twice a week to sell these articles. When she finished her studies she wanted to work in her profession. However, she was unable to find a job. Then, she continued her English lessons, with the purpose of having better chances to find a job, but over all, in order to be able to communicate with the English-speaking customers when she was selling crafts. She also went sometimes to Písaq in order to get paint or other materials to produce the craft articles.

Temporary or seasonal migration is a common behavior among the peasant population in Peru. Historically, Andean people have made great efforts to gain access to resources in order to reach self-sufficiency, an important ideal of ancient Andean society (Klarén, 2000).<sup>16</sup> Currently, peasants of the community migrate inside and outside the Department of Cusco in order to offer their labor.<sup>17</sup> Emigration constitutes a survival strategy for the peasant family and community. Most *comuneros* mentioned their

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<sup>16</sup> “Communities often farmed parcels of land in different ecological niches in the rugged Andean terrain. In this way they achieved what John Murra called ‘vertical complementarity,’ that is, the ability to produce a wide variety of crops –such as maize, potatoes and quinoa—at different altitudes for household and community consumption” (Klarén, 2000, p.15).

<sup>17</sup> The peasants of Huancalle migrate to Cusco --the capital city of the Department-- and other cities of the Department (Quillabamba) to find work. They also migrate to distant places such as Lima, Arequipa, and Madre de Dios.

children's education as the main reason to look for jobs outside the community. Families needed money for school supplies, uniforms, shoes, and transportation.

Besides individual and familiar relationships with the commerce and job markets, people from Huancalle need to go to semi-urban and urban areas because of their relations with the state. Communal authorities frequently go to the district seat (Taray), the province seat (Calca) or the city of Cusco, in order to do *gestiones* (paperwork) with diverse instances of the state (the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Education, and the Municipal governments at the level of the District, Province and Department). For example, when the school started in April of the year 2001, the first and third grades of the primary school of Huancalle were not assigned teachers on time. Children in these grades were placed in the meantime with the available teachers, sharing the room with children from other grades. For this reason the director of the school, communal authorities, and parents went to the *Dirección Departamental de Educación* (Departmental Educational Directorate) --the office of the Ministry of Education located in Cusco-- in order to accelerate the placement of the missing teachers.

The trips communal authorities made to the cities, as well as other situations of contact with urban areas described above, have brought more opportunities to read and write to the community. Following Luykx (1996), who stated "when global capitalism and other belief systems penetrate daily practice in the remotest corners of the globe, indigenous groups can no longer be treated as closed social systems" (p. 239). I take into account this idea in my study of literacy practices in Huancalle. As shown above, *comuneros*, children, young, and adults have frequent contacts with urban areas and social institutions from the urban world. Furthermore, they live in a constant movement from the community to the cities, especially children and young people. This is the reason for introducing the concept of *contact zones*, developed by Mary Louise Pratt (1991). Examining the case of the manuscript of the indigenous author Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala,<sup>18</sup> Pratt proposed that *contact zones* are "social spaces where cultures meet, clash,

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<sup>18</sup> The manuscript titled "The First New Chronicle and Good Government" is a letter and a chronicle that was dated in 1613 and contains 1889 folios. It is written in Spanish and Quechua and contains caption line drawings. Guamán Poma de Ayala is believed to be a *cacique* (authority in the Inka times), who wrote

and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (1991, p. 34). Huancalle is not a self-contained community, thus, the literacy practices I found are part of the social practices that originate, transform or are reinterpreted in the “contact zones.” Therefore, my study recognizes those contact zones, the processes of cultural “meetings,” “clashes” or “grappling,” as well as the asymmetrical relationships surrounding literacy practices.

Due to this situation I utilize a concept of culture that takes into account the situation of *hybrid* cultures (Rosaldo, 1989). Then, the concept of culture I rely upon is far from being the static view of culture already widely criticized by anthropologists (Clifford, 1994; Rosaldo, 1989). I presuppose that culture emerges from social interaction, and social structures are constructed in interaction.

### **Reciprocity and social networks**

As a result of the above-mentioned historical, economic, geographic and social reasons, *comuneros* have developed a way of life characterized by the continued movement back and forth from their community to the urban areas near the community. The *comuneros* of Huancalle presently depend on social networks built inside their community, as well as outside their community in the urban areas around the communities. Inside the community they have constructed social networks that provide them with the necessary social resources to secure their lives within the community. The inhabitants of Huancalle have a *masa*, or a group of people on whom they rely to do work in the *chakra*. The work in the *chakra* is mainly done in reciprocal relationship with other families. Reciprocity entails a relationship of mutual help, mutual rights, and obligations. It also explains an idea of incompleteness and *complementarity*, where people, animals, and divinities need each other.

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this letter directed to Felipe III, King of Spain. The letter is clearly a vindication of the Quechua people, which represents not only the voice of the author but also the voice of his people. According to Lienhard (1992) the importance of this letter is that, among other things, it is the first time that the Quechua people are not just tellers of their story as mere “informants.” In the case of this manuscript it is clear that the author of his text is an Andean indigenous. He represents the history of the conquest and colonialism from a critical perspective, using Andean systems of spatial symbolism and Spanish literacy for his own needs and purposes.

Most of the everyday activities (agriculture, house building, food preparation) are done in *ayni*, the most common form of reciprocity (Alberti & Mayer, 1974). Networks are formed and reciprocity guarantees the interchange of labor and products. *Comuneros* receive services (labor), products, seeds, tools, and animals from other *comuneros*. Day-to-day, *Huancallinos*<sup>19</sup> follow “a careful etiquette in exchanging, serving, and consuming food, hard liquor, maize beer, coca, and cigarettes. (..) The forms of etiquette powerfully condense the principles and forms of reciprocity” (Mannheim, 1991, p. 93). It is very interesting that, in spite of the fact that paying for the cost of feeding an *ayni* is higher than actually hiring labor (*jornaleros*), *comuneros* prefer *ayni*. According to Kervyn and CEDEP Ayllu (1989), the *ayni* is not so much an interchange of quantity of work as an interchange of quality of work. If an *ayni* does a lousy job, it is probable he would get a lousy job in return. This system also minimizes the level of theft, risks and costs.

*Comuneros* also developed reciprocal relationships with relatives, godparents, *compadres*, *comadres*, friends, or *patrones* (bosses) who live in the nearby cities. The relations between *comuneros* and urban people are varied. They developed relationships at the familiar and communal level. For example, the community looked for the *residentes*<sup>20</sup> to gain support in the organization of the community’s anniversary, while the parents looked for their *compadres* to obtain room and board for their children who attend school in the cities.

It is evident that *reciprocity* and *complementarity* are basic principles that regulate social life in Andean communities in spite of the great changes that the Quechua culture has undergone. The concept of *syncretism* is useful to understand the transformations of the rural Quechua culture in the last decades. According to Ansi3n (1993), *syncretism* 1) accounts for a culture in contact with another culture linked to the dominant society, and 2) assumes that the influence of the dominant culture has not been enough to destroy “the principles from which it reproduces itself, so that people from that culture are able to change it from its very own way of being” (Ansi3n, 1993, p. 7, my translation). This

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<sup>19</sup> I will use *Huancallinos* to refer to men and women from Huancalle to favor readability. In Spanish *Huancallinos* refers to men and *Huancallinas* refers to women.

<sup>20</sup> *Comuneros* who live in the cities.



concept explains the transformations in Quechua communities, as well as the elements that persist and that ultimately will shape the transformations for Quechua people's own purposes and from their own logic. Furthermore, understanding the role reciprocity plays in Huancalle is meaningful to this study because literacy practices were understood within this kind of relationship.

### **Bilingualism in Huancalle: The use of Quechua and Spanish**

Bilingualism is a result of the increasing relationships between the *comuneros* and the cities, the commerce and labor market, the state, and Western social institutions (like school and church) that have become part of the community over the years. Quechua is still the most frequently used language of communication in the community. However, code-switching and borrowings are frequently used. Bilingualism is an expression of the *hybrid* culture (Rosaldo, 1989) of *comuneros* of Huancalle and of the fluid relationships with urban sites and people. To understand the literacy practices in Huancalle it is necessary to be aware of the sociolinguistic reality of the community, because literacy practices occurred within these oral practices and were submerged in the oral use of Quechua and *Castellano* (Spanish).

The everyday ways of communication among the *comuneros* of Huancalle included the use of the Quechua and Spanish languages (de la Piedra et al., 2001). In the contexts of the home, the church, the field, communal assemblies, children's games, Quechua was always the primary language spoken. Only at school did Spanish predominate in children's interactions with the teacher.

However, adults and children of Huancalle frequently used borrowings from Spanish and code-switched from Quechua to Spanish. Because of the continued contact with the urban areas there were Spanish-speaking models in every family of Huancalle. Code-switching was widely perceived as a bad Quechua or *Castellano*, thus, as a problem. It is very common among teachers, educative authorities or bilinguals to make negative comments about the "Quechuañol"<sup>21</sup> and to look for solutions to correct it. However, code-switching, far from being a mix of two languages because of the lack of

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<sup>21</sup> The term "Quechuañol" is the equivalent to the "Spanglish" in the U.S.

knowledge of either code, it is a common practice in bilingual and multilingual societies, where there has been contact across time (Timm, 1993), as it was the case of the rural communities close to urban areas. The use of code-switching is intimately related to the identity of the speakers, an identity which is constituted in relation to these two worlds. For people who have access to two languages, the selection of one of them, even the option to select both is an act of presentation of the self (Bucholtz, 1995).

The code-switching and the use of borrowings are clear examples of the situation of cultural and linguistic contact. A lot of the borrowings were words or phrases that did not exist in Quechua, such as *modernizarse* (to modernize oneself) and *reservorio* (reservoir). These were words gathered from urban and Spanish-speaking contexts and related to cultural elements from outside the community, which had been incorporated in the everyday life of the *comuneros* of Huancalle, such as food, industrial products, school, music, irrigation systems, and television. *Comuneros* have incorporated cultural elements from the city into their lives in the community, as well as the language needed to talk about those things.

The borrowings were frequently used by everybody in Huancalle.<sup>22</sup> Even the elder people used borrowings although they tended to use them much less than younger people.<sup>23</sup> The social networks within the community and outside it were networks through which resources flowed. Reciprocity worked not only in the case of borrowing of labor, tools or seeds. It also worked when people shared useful information about the necessary strategies and skills to live in this continuous movement from the community to the city. The information and resources that were available to some members because of their everyday contact with the city, was later shared among other members of the community, analyzed and discussed by them. The very same language turned out to be a necessary resource to survive in the *contact zones* and was transmitted through social networks.

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<sup>22</sup> Young people tended to use slang in Spanish among themselves. This is a clear example of how the relationship of people of the community with the urban areas affected their language use (de la Piedra, et al., 2001).

<sup>23</sup> The fact that many borrowings are considered by the speakers as Quechua words shows that they are already integrated into the communicative patterns of the members of the community.

Thus, I understand code-switching and the use of borrowings as a form of communication and a resource that belong to people who are bilingual. The *comuneros* know that both Quechua and Spanish constitute needed resources in order to move in both worlds with which they interact in a daily basis. Code-switches were motivated by diverse factors (de la Piedra, et al. 2001), which I will not elaborate here. However, it is important for the purpose of this study to understand that code-switching was frequently motivated by the presence of outsiders (Spanish-speakers or bilinguals) or topics of conversation related to urban practices and people. It was also motivated by the presence of members of the community who went to the cities on a regular basis (to attend school or to work). On the same lines, when children played, they often interpreted diverse roles, bringing to the interaction located within the social space of the community, texts and contexts (i.e. the talk of a bus driver and the context of the bus) from outside the community. They used language accordingly.

Then, Spanish oral texts and outside contexts were brought from the experience of children and adults into everyday conversations and activities in the community. Literacy practices are part of this reality of cultural and linguistic contact, as was in the case of the religious literacies.

### **Religious beliefs in Huancalle**

Andean religiosity, Catholic religious beliefs and two Protestant churches coexisted in Huancalle. The belief of Andean deities --Apus<sup>24</sup> and the Pachamama,<sup>25</sup> springs, lakes, meadows and rocks-- which survived the Catholic evangelization still persisted among

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<sup>24</sup> According to García (1998), the *Apus* are indigenous guardian deities. They are identified with a mountain, a spirit who lives inside the mountain, a Saint or a person. They watch the behavior of the people and protect them. Each community has its local Apus, who are called “tayta” (father in Quechua), “señor” (mister/lord in Spanish) or “padre” (father in Spanish).

<sup>25</sup> *Pachamama* means mother earth in Quechua. “The *Mamapacha* or *Pachamama* is the most important concept of the Andean religiosity. It represents the profane and sacred world. (...) It is a female being and has maternal functions because it takes care of her children, which are the men [and women] and all the beings that live in it. For that reason it is identified as the mother, the being to whom people owe respect and reciprocal care, and the man [and woman] offers her the first bite of his products, obtained because of the resources that it [Pachamama] provides him” (García, 1998, p. 51, the translation is mine). “It is the principle of agricultural fertility and provides the needed food for life, but it is also the place where the human being builds his or her home and where it is buried after his or her death” (Marzal, 1988, p. 25, the translation is mine).

members of the community. When starting a job in the *chakra* or when they built their homes they do the *t'inka*. It is a libation for their divinities. They spread drops of *aqha* or *chicha* (ceremonial beverage made out of corn) or other alcoholic beverages into the air and on the ground, asking their divinities to protect them and help them complete their tasks. They blow *coca k'intus* (offering of three *coca* leaves in a bunch) showing their respect for their Apus and the Pachamama.

Together with the beliefs in their divinities, residents of Huancalle are always aware of showing respect and nourish their relations with the souls. The day of “Todos Santos” or “All Saints” (November 2<sup>nd</sup>) was a very important celebration in the community. This day the souls of the loved ones who had died came back to visit the living. It was celebrated by making or buying bread in the shape of babies (“wawas”) and horses, making the offerings for the dead in the form of their favorite food, and visiting them in the graveyard. In the graveyard people drank and shared the beverages among them, always initiating the libation to the Pachamama and the Apus. For example, an old woman looking at the *Apu Pukara* and holding up her glass of *t'rillo* (alcohol) said:

Pukara, daddy, watch for your children, watch for your children, Inka Pukara, daddy.

In February or March, during the time of *carnaval* (Carnival), people of Huancalle do their *linderaje*, which is the recognition of the community's territory. On this day adults and children trace on foot the boundaries of the community's land with other communities. The *alcalde de varas* (major of sticks)<sup>26</sup> takes with him crosses decorated with flowers in order to place them on the mounds of rocks that signal the limits of the land. Each time they arrive at the mounds an elder member of the community calls on the *Apus* of the community, asking for their protection. Thus, they teach the young residents of Huancalle the limits of the community and also the relationship between the community and the Apus.

The main Apus of Huancalle are the *Pukara*, the *Willkarrayan* and the *Ñawsaqaqa*. According to don Apolinario, they are the

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<sup>26</sup> Member of the traditional organization of the civil-religious hierarchy of Andean communities.

main chiefs of the community. They see how we work and when we are in disgrace they go to the *altomisayuq*<sup>27</sup> and they tell the daddy “my name is so.” And [the Apu] tells if you have not given to them. He says “when you have eaten you did not give to me, when you were drinking you did not give to me. Now that you are in disgrace you ask for my help.” That is how he tells you. When you do not work, they talk [to each other] and say “they are not working their *chakra*.” They always look to see what the community is doing.

In addition, these two mountains are the home of the *ñawpas* or *gentiles*, who are spirits of the people who lived in the area before human beings. They lived in the community before the *Ninapara* (the rain of fire). There was a time when the *ñawpas* climbed up the Pukara in order to build their homes because they were told that the sun was going to come out. According to an informant, the *ñawpas*

had said “now the sun will come out, what are we going to do?” They all were in the mountain prepared to kill it, but before they were able to do so, the ray of light before the sun rise had burned the *ñawpas*. It dried them. That is why now the skin of the *ñawpas* is stuck to their bones. That day it rained boiled water. The lakes were turned over, it was like a pest. And then came the *Ninapara* (rain of fire) that burned the *ñawpas*. This was when the *ñawpas* died.

Catholics of Huancalle celebrate Andean Catholic festive rites like *Cruz Velakuy*. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> the Catholics venerate the cross. It is celebrated through a system of *cargos* (burdens), in which the Catholic members of the community take turns in order to be in charge of organizing and paying for the celebration of the festivity. The *cargo* is a duty of Catholics. Presently, there are three *carguyuq* (person who hold the *cargo*), who are in charge of the celebration of the fiesta, providing the candles for the mass, the *detente* (a present with a religious image), the food, and *aqha* (ceremonial beverage) and *trago* (alcohol) for the guests. The *carguyuq* are also the sponsors of the three dances (*K`achampa*, *Qhapaq Qulla*, and *Saylla*) performed during the celebration. In order to be able to afford the expenses, the *carguyuq* has different financial sources, such as doing *ayni* and temporarily emigrating to earn money.

Reinterpreted Catholic transitional rites and Andean transitional rites still persist in Huancalle. For example, children go through baptism, in which the *compadrazgo* (the

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<sup>27</sup> Andean religious specialist who was struck by lightning and is able to speak with the *Apus* and perform Andean religious functions (Marzal, 1988). It is a religious specialist of the highest level.

relationship between the parents of the baptized child and his/her godparents) has become a way of enlarging the social network and the *rutuchikuy* or *corte de pelo* (hair cut), an Andean transitional rite, is still practiced. In addition to these syncretic and reinterpreted religious practices,<sup>28</sup> there are two Protestant religious groups in the community. The Church of Christ and the Peruvian Evangelical Church brought important changes in the religious and literacy practices in the community. Their introduction occurred during times of political violence and economical crisis. The beliefs and practices proposed by the Protestant churches were adopted by *comuneros* and reconceptualized from their own cultural framework and oral communicative practices. This situation influenced the Quechua and Spanish literacy practices in the community, as will be presented in chapter seven.

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<sup>28</sup> Syncretism is produced when there is contact of two religious systems (including their beliefs, rites, norms and organization) and “both religions are integrated in a new one, but it is possible to identify the precedence of each element of itself” (Marzal, 1988, p. 175, the translation is mine).

## CHAPTER THREE

### LOCAL IDEAS ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND LITERACY IN THE COMMUNITY

Quechua people, to different degrees, have been in contact with the national Peruvian society and have gone through a process where “cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). The school constitutes one of the clearest examples of a “contact zone” in that is a social space where belief systems, values, and social practices penetrate the indigenous way of life in Huancalle, in a context characterized by asymmetrical relationships.

In order to understand literacy practices, it is essential to be aware of the introduction of the institution of the school and literacy in the community. The purpose of this chapter is to present the historical, social and cultural context of the school and literacy in Huancalle. I will present the historical perspective on literacy practices in Huancalle and the way formal education and literacy were incorporated into the local concepts of education.<sup>29</sup>

Formal education for their children was an important preoccupation and a matter of pride for *comuneros* of Huancalle. In order to understand why, I will explain the educational experiences of adults from Huancalle, the local ideas about school and literacy, and a historical perspective on literacy.

#### **Schooling experiences of adults**

Most parents in Huancalle struggled to go to school in varying degrees. Almost all of them concurred that they wanted to study. Education was “a dream.” They wanted to be “something in life.” However, they had to quit school at different levels of education

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<sup>29</sup> I define education as a broad concept, meaning not only schooling but also education that occurs outside of the context of schooled instruction. A broader definition of education is important for my study because it is based on the assumption that literacies are defined by the society and the culture of the people who use them. The concept of literacies negates the existence of only one literacy, one way of knowing, or one way of being educated. “All cultures and social formations develop models of how one becomes a fully ‘knowledgeable’ person, a person endowed with maximum ‘cultural capital’ [...] Indigenous conception of the educated person is variably present in all known cultures and societies. Even *within* societies, subgroups such as those based on race or gender may develop distinct conceptions of the educated person, distinct ‘ways of knowing’ (Luttrell 1989)” (Levinson & Holland, 1997, p. 21).

(most of them during their primary school years) because of lack of economical resources, the death of a parent, the need to emigrate for work or the “lack of support” of their parents, especially when the child was a girl.

In most cases, the dream of attending school was not fulfilled by *comuneros*. Moreover, the experience of schooling was not a pleasant one for most participants. *Comuneros* --mostly female *comuneras*-- described the experiences of shame, suffering and failure at school. They felt inadequate at school because of the way they dressed, spoke, and because of being peasant children. Many reported that for peasant children, going to school was a degrading experience because they had to go with “ojotas”<sup>30</sup> and without a uniform.<sup>31</sup> Also, they felt shame when they started school because they were older than their schoolmates and they spoke their mother tongue, Quechua. As children, ashamed by their inability to speak Spanish, they could not understand the lessons given by the teachers and could not communicate with them.

When adult *comuneros* were children, the school in Huancalle only had three grades; thus, children went to urban or semi-urban areas in order to attend school. They felt ashamed when they were seen by the *mestizo* children, the children of the *señoras* (ladies). Finally, adults attributed their negative experiences at school to the fact that their parents did not get involved in their education. The *comuneros* frequently told me things like: “My parents did not buy me a uniform, or shoes. I went to school like that, ugly, unkept, and just with *ojotas*. Then, some other girls, those of the *señoras*’ went with nice shoes, nice uniforms. That is why I was ashamed.”

The suffering and shame experienced at school resulted from comparing themselves to an idealized notion of what a student should be. This was reinforced by hegemonic discourses about students. Peasants were told by teachers and the school institutions--and in turn they constructed their own images-- of how students should be: they should resemble students from the *mestizo* sectors of the population. Despite the hardships and experiences of marginalization faced in schools, the *comuneros* believed that if their

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<sup>30</sup> Ojotas are sandals made of rubber, which are characteristic of the typical attire of the peasants.

<sup>31</sup> Children were required to wear a uniform (1970’s and 1980’s), an outfit that only some children presently wear to school. To wear a uniform is an aspiration of all students in Huancalle but not all parents are able to afford it.



children were not educated within this formal system they would suffer economic and social inequalities. The next sections will explore the historical context of these beliefs.

### **Literacy, land and the city: Inter-ethnic relationships and local history of literacy**

When I was doing life history interviews, I was told two narratives related to the history of the introduction of literacy in the community: 1) the story of the construction of the highway, and 2) the Agrarian Reform and a lawsuit over land against the *hacendado*.<sup>32</sup> The account of the introduction of the school in the community was weaved through these stories. Both stories show the two faces of literacy from the symbolic representations of the *comuneros* of Huancalle. These are stories that are told to outsiders, like myself, in order to explain the importance of literacy. The sentiments conveyed during interviews and conversations with *Huancallinos* revealed that circumstances of the individual and collective histories, as well as the dominant discourses of literacy, jointly defined local ideas about literacy. Literacy was perceived as a tool for oppression and as a tool for “progress” and “freedom.” With these two stories as a starting point I will explore in this chapter local ideas about literacy. I entirely agree with the need to have an understanding of how literacy practices are historically situated, which has been suggested by the new literacy studies perspective:

Literacy practices are culturally constructed, and, like all cultural phenomena, they have their roots in the past. To understand contemporary literacy it is necessary to document the ways in which literacy is historically situated: literacy practices are as fluid, dynamic and changing as the lives and societies of which they are a part. We need a historical approach for an understanding of the ideology, culture and traditions on which current practices are based (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 13).

By becoming acquainted with local ideas about the history of the introduction of literacy in the community, I was able to better understand the perceptions of the *comuneros*. In these stories, literacy came with the arrival of outsiders, who came to live in the community before there was a school there. The relationships with outsiders were mostly characterized by *comuneros* as abusive. Thus, illiteracy was associated with

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<sup>32</sup> *Hacendados* or *gamonales* were the owners of the land where peasants lived, before the Agrarian Reform in the 1970's.

“suffering.” Thus, from the perspective of the community, literacy in the hands of outsiders was related to oppression, while literacy utilized by insiders was associated with success and victory.

It is important, before presenting the narratives about literacy, to make clear that I could not present these stories as true or false. As has been proposed by Foucault, I will try to see historically “how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true or false” (Foucault, 1980, cited in Rabinow, 1996, p. 35). As Rosaldo states it, “doing oral history involves telling stories about stories people tell about themselves” (1980, p. 89). After all, there are some events that are remembered and reshaped, and some that are not remembered (Vasina, 1985). “Reminiscences are then not constituted by random collections of memories, but are part of an organized whole of memories that tend to project a consistent image of the narrator and, in many cases, a justification of his or her life” (Vasina, 1985, p. 8). The narratives I collected were not an “official” version of their history, but a reconstructed story about their stories elaborated by myself. However, these narratives were recalled by numerous interviewees I spoke to. Thus, they were part of the social memory (Connerton, 1991) of the community.

#### *The construction of the highway*

Older participants, who shared their life histories, told me that when they were children most members of the community were not *leiyachaq* (one who knows how to read). There was no school in the community and peasant’s children did not get to attend school in the nearby urban centers. In the words of the interviewees, the *antiguos* (ancient people) were *indígenas* (indigenous) “who did not know the school’s door,” they were Catholic –as opposed to Protestant,<sup>33</sup> *ñawsa* (blind), and dressed like the inkas: they wore *ojotas*, knee-length *bayeta*<sup>34</sup> pants, and vests. Don Nemesio, an old *comunero* said that presently *literate* people in the community dressed differently: “Now all who know how to read wear long pants, [they went to] school, secondary school.”

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<sup>33</sup> Two Protestant churches have been established in the community during the early 1980’s. For older *Huancallinos*, their members (*hermanos*) are very different from the Catholics, in terms of values and practices. The elderly associated *hermanos* with *musuq kawsay* (a new life), in which people spoke Spanish, were schooled, and were *leiyachaq* (*literate*).

<sup>34</sup> Woven material made by peasants.

*Comuneros* told me that it was with the construction of the highway that the first *leiyachaq* came to the community, people from semi-urban areas who had attended school there and, therefore, had learned to read and write. Thus, the highway is not only the symbol of the link of Huancalle with the nearby cities and the *mestizo* culture, but also the symbol of the arrival of the first adults who knew how to read and write.

Elder *comuneros* told me that the highway was constructed during the government of Augusto B. Leguía (1919-1930). Leguía's government was characterized by the centralization of the power in the state with the goal of "nation building." In addition, Leguía's government brought changes<sup>35</sup> that led to urbanization and capitalist expansion (Klarén, 2000). The highway construction was essential for Leguía's project of capitalist expansion. Therefore, he implemented the highly criticized "highway conscription law," a massive road building and labor recruitment program, by which highways were constructed all over the country.

Road building brought greater influence by the state as well as a greater economic connection among the provinces. Some *gamonales* (*hacendados*) took away the neighboring communities' land in order to participate in the modern capitalist economy. Additionally, it was during Leguía's government that indigenous communities were recognized by law (Bonilla, 1987). According to Mallon (1983), this law "would in the long run accomplish more than any other laws to integrate the peasantry into the developing capitalist economy" (p. 232). During this time, the "number of students in the country rose by 62 percent" (Klarén, 2000, p. 242).

The fact that *Huancallinos*' social memory identified the highway construction with the introduction of literacy in the community does not occur by chance. The highway resulted in easier access of the community to possible migration destinies, urban markets, and schools. This connection accelerated the transformation process in the community, as *comuneros* repeatedly told me. In this context, from the perspective of the *comuneros*, with the construction of the highway, *literate* people came whose arrival had an impact on the life of the *comuneros*. Some of them married women from the

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<sup>35</sup> Emphasis on public work, urban services, and construction. He claimed a new program of modernization "La patria nueva" (the new fatherland).

community and stayed as *comuneros*, while others brought their own wives, obtained land settling as *vecinos*<sup>36</sup> (neighbors) or *pequeños propietarios* (owners of a small piece of land). In the words of don Apolinario, the *vecinos* were people who “were born in different places but have gotten land in this community and until now usurp that land.”

From the *comuneros*' perspectives the *pequeños propietarios* exploited peasants. *Comuneros* had developed narratives that explained the ways in which *literate* people (especially the *vecinos*) had fooled them. Several times, I was told that non-literate people had been sent with a note --written by the *vecinos*-- to the judge incriminating themselves. Since they did not know how to read they could not have avoided being incarcerated.

Other times, I was told that the *vecinos* obtained their land by changing written documents of debts that peasants had. Don Apolinario told me that when peasants needed money, they borrowed it from Alberto García, the *capataz* (the person in charge) of the workers of the highway and “the one who most exploited people.” “Then he [Alberto García] made the written document for more, for a higher quantity. He wrote according to what he wanted.” Alberto García made the indebted stamp with his fingerprint on the paper where the adulterated debt was registered. The land was the warranty of the debt. According to *comuneros*, this is the way Alberto García obtained his land and labor force, by lending money and writing higher quantities on the debt documents.

In these narratives, *vecinos* used their knowledge of literacy and their relationships with authorities to take away their land: “Since people did not know a letter [literacy] they charged peasants what ever they wanted.” Another way in which the *vecinos* “fooled” peasants was by trading cloth and alcohol for land. According to my informants, the *vecinos* gave peasants hats, shirts, *ponchos*, and *llikllas*<sup>37</sup> in exchange for

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<sup>36</sup> *Vecinos* is a term that is used by old people in the community; however, younger people do not know this term and call them *pequeños propietarios*. Other words to designate them were “sapaq allpayuq” (the ones who have separated land) and “gente respetable” or “gente de respeto” (respectable people). They were perceived as “different” and “superior” than the *comuneros*, therefore peasants looked to have relationships of “compadrazgo” with them.

<sup>37</sup> Woven shawls used by women.

a piece of land. Don Tomás told me “since they [*vecinos*] were the knowledgeable ones, they knew the law, they made his land recognized as private property.” The narratives about the *literate* included also the ways peasants felt about being *illiterate*. Doña Asunción reported that peasants “since they were not educated they were fearful of the *vecinos*.”

In these narratives, *literate* people were also knowledgeable of the law and the official system. Thus, *vecinos* became authorities, increasing their power in the community. When I asked why were they authorities for such a long time, *comuneros* responded that the *vecinos* had the needed knowledge to hold their positions. This knowledge was related to literacy and legal procedures to become an authority. Additionally, there were no *comuneros* who had this kind of knowledge. As maintained by doña Asunción, “before, he [Alberto García] was like the king, he controlled the community.”

The *vecinos* established symbolic and asymmetrical reciprocal relationships of *compadrazgo* with peasants. The latter made the *vecinos* their children’s *padrinos*, while *vecinos* contributed to the community. For example, Alberto García made the arrangements to build the school and the church. As stated by Florencia Mallon (1983, p. 151), in the case of *vecinos* in the central Andes,

Given their generally higher level of education, wider commercial and personal connections, and overall monopoly of political office, the most effective way rich peasants could vindicate their position vis-à-vis the rest of the village was by representing individuals, or the community as a whole, in their dealings with the outside world.

Narratives about literacy and schooling in the community present a dual situation: the past and present times. The past times were related to the stories about the *vecinos* and the *hacendados*, and the present times were related to the Agrarian Reform and the school.

*The Agrarian Reform and the lawsuit against the hacendado*

The *hacienda*'s<sup>38</sup> expansion meant the loss of land for peasants<sup>39</sup> as well as forced labor in exchange for a minimal salary. This system implied a situation of social domination. The relationships between land owners and peasants were hierarchical, in which peasants lived and worked in the *hacendado*'s land in exchanged for protection, especially from the state (Flores Galindo, 1988). *Gamonales* maintained their authority by paternalism and clientelism (Klarén, 2000). *Huancallinos* compared the domination of *hacendados* over peasants with the domination of Spanish conquerors over the Inkas. Doña Matilde told me:

Peasants were the *hacendado*'s slaves. There were *hacendados* everywhere. Peasants were enslaved. They used to kick them, mistreated them. Like the Inka suffered with what the Spaniards did, they were the same. Like the Spaniards, they called peasants *indio*.

An unfair situation of domination supported by the state, as well as the lack of literacy skills and Spanish oral language, were the primary reasons given by peasants to explain the permanence of the *hacienda* system in Huancalle. According to *comuneros*, the *hacendados* and their children knew how to read and write, and did not want peasants to become *literate*. The *hacendados* used to tell the *comuneros* “study has no worth in this life, [only the work in the] *chakra*. [If your son goes to school], he will become a thief. They did not let the [peasant] children get ahead.” People in Huancalle believed that the exclusion from schooling was a form of discrimination against peasants. *Huancallinos* reported that *hacendados* did not want peasants to study in order to avoid their reactions against the injustices and abuse perpetrated by *hacendados*. According to

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<sup>38</sup> According to Cotlear (1989), the *haciendas* of the Peruvian highlands started during the late eighteenth century, but a large part of the *haciendas* were constituted during the wool “boom” during late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

<sup>39</sup> The pressure for land has been strong during and after the *haciendas*' system. During the colony, land was owned by Spain, and was assigned to “the Spaniards, the Church and the indigenous communities” (Cotlear, 1989, p. 44). Communal land was “inalienable.” With the independence, in 1824 a new legislation “eliminated the inalienability of the land” (p. 45) and speeded up the privatization and partition of the communal land, along with more influential factors, such as demographic growth (Cotlear, 1989). With the *hacienda*, indigenous communities lost their land, which increased the struggle for it. Before the agrarian reform, 30% of peasant families were landless (Klarén, 2000).

*Huancallinos*, *hacendados* wanted *campesinos* (peasants) to stay *ignorantilla* (just ignorant) in order to maintain a situation of slavery:

[The *hacendado*] never allowed [peasants] to be professionals, only slaves for the *hacendado*. Now they teach them much better, children have learned to read well. Now [schooling for peasants] is not prohibited. Before there was not even a school. The school was only for the rich. That is the way it was, *compañera*.<sup>40</sup> Only the child of the rich went to school.

According to doña Asunción, “there was no one who could stop the *hacendado*, because people did not know absolutely anything, reading, writing, they did not have their word.” By having “their word” she meant speaking Spanish. Doña María reported *hacendados* “thought [peasants] would rise against them, they would become equal, awaken. That is why they did not want [peasants] to learn how to read and write.”

These statements about the attitudes of the *hacendados* towards peasants’ schooling are found in diverse places in Peru. Montoya (1990, p. 95) heard from the *hacendados* of Huancavelica phrases like: *indios leídos son indios perdidos* (Indians who read are lost Indians) and *los indios educados son los demonios encarnados* (educated Indians are incarnated demons).

In spite of this oppressive situation, peasants believed that since the Agrarian Reform<sup>41</sup> “the life in the community has changed.” They said the community “awoke” with the Reform. Some of the *yernos* (sons in law), who became *comuneros* by marrying women from the community, came from semi-urban areas. Thus they were *literate*, knew about the laws and became authorities.<sup>42</sup> They were mediators between the community and the outside world. *Comuneros* believed they made people “reflect” and “react.” They

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<sup>40</sup> *Compañera* (mate) is the way most *comuneros* called me. This is the way *comuneros* called each other in the context of the *asamblea* (communal meeting). Adults, young and children who did not know me very well called me *señorita*. Children and young people who had a close relationship with me called me by my name.

<sup>41</sup> The Agrarian Reform during the government of Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) was established in order to get rid of the *hacienda* and the Peruvian and foreign landowners and distributed nearly 60% of the land for agriculture. The decree law was proclaimed on June, 24, 1969.

<sup>42</sup> At that moment there was a school in the community, however, young men who had gone to school did not have the legal age to become communal authorities. Some of the *yernos* became authorities, because they had being schooled out of the community and “saben entrar a oficinas” (know how to get into the offices [in the city]).

supported the community by doing the paperwork needed to get the land from the *hacienda* during the Agrarian Reform. In the words of doña María, “they have defended the community.”

The narratives about the Agrarian Reform were told by *Huancallinos* in a tone of victory. These narratives represented the struggle for land and the victory over the *hacendado*. According to the men who participated in the struggle with the *hacendado* over their land during the Agrarian Reform, the young men of the community “invaded the *hacienda*” by taking the *hacendado* out of his home “fooling him” and locking him out. This time, the *comuneros* were not fooled, but they fooled the *hacendado*. After three days, people from the Ministry of Agriculture told the *comuneros* they had to elect a president. The first president of the community did not know how to read and write, therefore another man who was *literate* --because literacy “was necessary in order to receive documents”-- substituted him. In those times, there were few *comuneros* who knew how to read and write, and the ones who had learned “were forgetting” how to do it because they did not use it.

Then, within the context of the Agrarian Reform in the 1970s, *Huancallinos* became the owners of their land. However, their struggle for land did not finish with the end of the *hacienda* system. The last *hacendado* initiated a legal action in order to get a portion of the land back. He claimed peasants in Huancalle did not work the land and did not take care of the livestock properly. According to social memory, the fear that *Huancallinos* had of the *hacendado* and the *vecinos* started to turn into actual confrontation. They decided to follow the lawsuit: “the community, eventually with capable, prepared people, started a lawsuit in 1974.” Another *comunero*, don Melchor, after narrating about the lawsuit against the *hacendado* finished his story reporting: “The *hacendado* finished in poor shape, then we defeated him, and the gentleman deserted.”

The story of the lawsuit is perceived as one of success for the *comuneros* of Huancalle, a victory which resulted from having “prepared,” “educated,” and “literate” people in the community. *Comuneros* placed importance on don Gerardo, the secretary of the community, who was *literate*. He was in charge of explaining the community



members about the course of the lawsuit and translated the written documents related to it. They understood this victory as a consequence of the struggle of *comuneros* who had the needed tools, which were oral and written Spanish, as well as the knowledge of the laws and legal procedures (legal and bureaucratic literacy).

Narratives about literacy showed that the collective consciousness of *Huancallinos* held that outsiders, who became part of the community (the *yernos*), and later, the presence of the school in the community, had promoted the end of the abuse and the defense of the community. I found the perception that in present times things have changed and people from Huancalle do not put up with the abuse of foreign people anymore. For example, I was told that presently there have been some situations when the *pequeños propietarios* had yelled at or even hit children from Huancalle who came on their property. The narratives emphasized that the community reacted against these situations. Doña Filomena informed me that *comuneros* told the García family: “Before you could have beaten up our great grandparents. Now, no more. No more!”

Local history perceptions about literacy practices introduced us to the construction of *Huancallinos*’ conceptions of the written word, through their versions of their relationships with the people who had this tool when most of the *comuneros* did not have it. *Comuneros* from Huancalle have the idea that literacy is a tool that has been used by *mestizos* and urban people in order to take advantage of peasants and take away their land.<sup>43</sup> In contrast, this tool was presented as an instrument to react against discrimination and exclusion. The collective memory of *Huancallinos* refers to the inter-ethnic relationships as well as the relationships with peasants and the state. They saw, on one hand, the domination of the *mestizos* and the state with the purpose of control of land and labor. On the other hand, they saw the need of appropriating the oppressor’s tools (oral Spanish, literacy and information about legal procedures) in order to be able to confront *gamonales* and negotiate with the state.

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<sup>43</sup> The struggle for land, has been an important one for *comuneros* who were landless until the Agrarian Reform. Alphabetic literacy has not been the only means to fight for land. *Comuneros* every year follow the limits of their community in their *linderaje*. Older people asked their Apus for protection of their land. Abercrombie has called this practice “an Andean ethno poetic of space” (Abercrombie, 1993, p. 146).

The narratives presented summarize the views of *comuneros* about the two faces or possibilities of literacy: 1) to be used as a tool against peasants, which has the result of suffering and domination or 2) to be used as a resource for the community, which allow *comuneros* to defend the community. In regard to these findings, Zavala (2002), in her ethnographic study in Umaca, a rural Quechua-speaking community in the Peruvian highlands, found that both faces of literacy were part of the same situation: the high value of the *literate* in Peruvian national society. Zavala argues that “in spite of the fact that within the official discourses it is believed that literacy is a fundamental good which conduces to a better life, the existence itself of literacy generates suffering for people who do not have access to it” (p. 97, my translation).

### **Local ideas about literacy and illiteracy**

#### *The two faces of literacy: suffering and confrontation*

The stories presented are illustrative of the views about the possibilities of acquiring literacy in Huancalle. Literacy in and of itself does not dominate or liberate people. It is how it is used in context and in relationships among people which defines the possibilities of contributing to the liberation or domination of people. I have discussed that the experience of schooling for all *comuneros* has been one of shame and suffering because they could not measure up to the ideal of the *good student* following the urban and Spanish-speaking *mestizo* student. In the same way, *comuneros* defined *illiteracy* as the cause of *sufrimiento* (suffering) and being *engañado* (fooled). *Comuneros* thought that if they did not become *literate*, they would not measure up to *mestizo* Spanish-speaking sectors of society.

The perception of being fooled and suffering because of not having literacy skills is widely held in Huancalle and it was framed within the narratives of *comuneros* about the interethnic relationships described above. Suffering was seen as a result of being fooled and abused by outsiders and, sometimes by members of the community, both at the individual and the collective level. Individuals said they could be fooled by *mestizo* buyers of agricultural products, authorities, and *pequeños propietarios*. From their perspective, land --which is a precious and scarce resource for peasants--was taken away

from them by the *vecinos* and *hacendados* by using literacy and knowledge of the legal procedures. Individuals could also be fooled by their children (especially regarding schoolwork), and their siblings (regarding land heritage). Women could be fooled by their *literate* husbands (sending letters to their lovers or telling lies to their wives about their salaries).

“Suffering” reported during my conversation with *comuneros* revealed a sentiment related to oppression. As stated by Portocarrero (1993), “the suffering [that] people confront is related to the existing poverty and domination in the society in which they live” (p. 227, my translation). Portocarrero argues that historically oppressed people have had three different ways of reacting to suffering in Peru. The first has been an attitude of resignation and even value of suffering, as a way to expiate sin, as in the case of religiosity during the colony. The second strategy reflects an attitude of awareness and disagreement with the situation, with no sense of an alternative. The third strategy towards suffering is an attitude that considers a possibility for change and control over the situation. These attitudes coexisted in Huancalle, and sometimes even in the same person. When *comuneros* related illiteracy with suffering they undoubtedly communicated a situation of unequal conditions and oppression. Older *comuneros*’ words presented an image of helplessness to overcome this situation, while adults in their forties and thirties, young people and children conveyed possibilities to face this situation.

In order to understand why suffering is so strongly related to literacy I should present now the account of the meeting of the Inka Atahualpa and the Spanish priest Valverde in Cajamarca. This account has been found in diverse sources, such as cronists and contemporary oral tradition and represents the encounter of different cultures and the legitimation of the indigenous domination in the name of civilization and religion.

On November 16<sup>th</sup> of 1532, Spaniards and Indians met in Cajamarca. With the intention to capture the Inka Atahualpa, Pizarro waited along with his soldiers hiding near the Plaza. When Atahualpa arrived to Cajamarca, Pizarro instructed the priest, Valverde, to talk to him. Valverde, assisted by Fillipillo (an indigenous interpreter) and, in the words of the cronist Xerez, “with a cross in the hand and with a Bible in the other one”

(cited in Porras Barrenechea, 1962, p. 96, my translation) tried to convince Atahualpa about his conversion to Christianity and his political subordination. Valverde read the Bible to the Inka and later gave it to him. The interpreter told the Inka that the book was the word of God. The Inka put the Bible close to his ear, trying to listen to the words. When he could not hear anything, he furiously threw the Bible on the floor. Valverde shouted “Santiago!” and Pizarro ordered the attack on the Inkas.

“This is the way the conquest of the Inca Empire was justified” (Degregori, 1988, p. 13, my translation). It was legitimized by Atahualpa’s rejection of the Bible. This legend represents the first contact of the Indians with the written word. It is not only “a very old symbol of the intercultural misunderstanding” (Ansión 1986, p. 10, my translation), but also it presents an image of defeat and fear in which the written word intervened as the reason that legitimated the Spaniards’ violence and oppression. Since the Bible and the Christian faith were dishonored, Spaniards could “take revenge” and do “justice.” “The written word of a religion considered superior was the symbol of a rising power” (Montoya, 1990, p. 94, my translation) and remains a symbol of power. The sacred attribute of the written word of the Bible impregnated alphabetic literacy and conferred it with power (Quispe-Agnoli, 2002). Literacy has been associated with oppression and colonization in the Andean world (Ansión, 1986, 1989; Landaburu, 1998; Lienhard, 1992)

From this time on, orality and literacy have been conceptualized as oppositional. Literacy identified with the European culture and orality with the Andean culture have been asymmetrically valued. Literacy was identified with civilization and orality with ignorance and barbarians (Montoya, 1990).<sup>44</sup> On the same lines, contemporary oral tradition also expresses this attitude of fear, amazement and impotence towards the written word as the unknown powerful tool of the conquerors.<sup>45</sup>

The narratives about the construction of the highway and literacy presented above represented an attitude of fear of the *mestizos* and their knowledge (literacy and the

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<sup>44</sup> As will be discussed in chapters four and five, these conceptions are widely held among teachers of Huancalle.

<sup>45</sup> For example, the narrative of Isidro Huamani, gathered by Ortíz (1973).

Spanish language). People in Huancalle remembered the times of abuse of the *hacendados* and the presence of foreigners as times of suffering. However, they always finished their story by presenting an image in which *comuneros* “were conscious” of the abuse and deceit and “reacted” against them. All *comuneros* think things have changed in Huancalle and they have a different attitude towards literacy and schooling.

Thus, the counterpart of “suffering” is being able to “defend” themselves and the community. *Comuneros*, young and children think that by having at least some *literate* members in the community they were able, to some degree—to turn suffering and shame into confrontation. Confrontation meant to leave behind their fear and to be able to “talk” to anybody (outsiders). Even children held this perspective. For example, Elías, a ten year-old, told me “knowing how to read we are fine.” And later he elaborated that he wanted people in the community to be teachers or policemen, because they are the ones who are “part of the government.”

#### *Concepts of the body and learning in the local discourses about literacy*

Dominant discourses about the *illiterate* and the *literate*, in which *the letter* or being *letrado* (man of letters) or *alfabeto* (literate) is a sign of civilization (Mignolo, 1994), have shaped the local meanings of literacy. Cultural institutions, such as school and the mass media create public discourses that constructed images about the *illiterate*, who are not by chance the most marginalized populations of Peru (indigenous, women, and poor people). The dominant discourses are interpreted by *comuneros* from their own life experiences and their concepts of the body and learning.

In Huancalle the non-literate were designated as *ñawsa* (blind),<sup>46</sup> *qhawaq ñawsan* (blind people who see), *sin estudio* (with no studies), who *no tienen una letra* (do not have a letter). They are *winch'urisqa* (abandoned) and *preocupasqa* (worried) people. Also, *illiterates* were considered people who do not think right and do not have “good heads” (good memory), who forget things quickly. They are not *despiertos* (awake). They are not able to express in words what they want to say. They are not able to articulate an

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<sup>46</sup> The image of being *illiterate* associated with “not having eyes” is a result of the experience of conquest and --as stated by Montoya (1990)-- it is used by Felipe Guamán Poma in his “El primer Nueva Crónica y Buen Gobierno (s. XVII).

argument in public. *Illiterate*, then, are considered “nervous,” “timid,” and “fearful” people. The *illiterate* were sometimes related to “alcoholic” people, especially by the *comuneros* who were part of the Protestant churches. In sum and in the words of don Juan, “*mana kunanqa valenchu analfabeto kay*” (now it is not valued to be illiterate).

The *literate* are, on the contrary, considered people who are able to “talk to anybody,” express themselves properly, think well, “walk anywhere,” and have a better education. From *Huancallinos*’ perspectives, knowing how to read and write helps *literate* people to lose the fear of confronting people from outside the community, especially urban Spanish-speaking people. *Literates* are people who are “cultured people.” *Literate* people also have economic advantages because “work is only for the one who knows how to read and write.” Literacy was identified with a change of thought, in other words, a change at the cognitive level. This change was not identified only with individual and familial progress but it was also related to the gradual “progress” of the community. The idea is that since at least some people of Huancalle have changed their language to Spanish and their condition of *illiterates* to *literate*s, they have acquired a different “science” (knowledge), which has led the community to be similar to the city. The changes that have operated in the “heads” of the people are related with the capacity of acquiring new knowledge, but also with attitudes towards that knowledge. Those changes in the community have been gradually attained and can be seen from generation to generation and lead the community towards “modernization.” Thus, most *comuneros* believed that literacy contributed to the progress of the individual, the family, the community and even the country.

Even if not recurrent, I also found the perspective that the *literate* were morally superior to the *illiterate*. Doña Vicenta said that people who have been schooled have more respect for their relatives and *comuneros* do not usually insult them. Don Apolinario told me that since he knew how to read and write, he was responsible with his children and educated them. In addition, when his relative went to visit him at home, they always found him *sano* (sober). The following are quotes of *comuneros* that represent the majority of opinions:

In earlier times, [parents] did not even introduce [children] to the school door, having eyes. Now I am blind, I don't know what paper is. I do not know even how to speak Spanish.

They [the illiterate] should say to their children “teach me,” “what does this say?” [so they would be] more knowledgeable, more “cultured,” in order to be that way, right? --neither the women [are literate]-- so we do not become so, like it was before, abandoned and neglected people.

Now people, the majority of children are studying, because earlier they were very analfabetos [illiterate]. They also were older, but they did not study. Earlier only getting drunk was all they wanted. With that they did not worry [about education].

I remember about my mother and father, I feel much better [than them]. I know about things better. Before they did not have that knowledge, probably not. Our grandfathers, our grandmothers did not teach his mother, his father. So they were not “awake” [smart, sharp, quick], they have not awoken [to knowledge], they did not think things well. Therefore, they have raised us without a good education.

*Comuneros*, especially women, usually associated learning, not learning or forgetting literacy, with their body. *Illiterates* were often called *ñawsa* (blind) and literates were called *ñawiyuq* (who has eyes). Learning is conceptualized in the Andean world as something that goes inside the head (*uma*) through the eyes (*ñawi*). *Comuneros* believed that their children learned “by looking,” and later, by trying to do by themselves the new thing they saw. Then, through the eyes, by looking at their parents, older siblings or relatives, children receive the knowledge or information into their heads, and later in the same process, they “do” what they have learned. Rodrigo Montoya (1990) also argued that in the Andean Quechua world the eyes are fundamental organs in order to learn. According to Arnold and Yapita (2000), “mediated by the senses, knowledge comes to be deposited in the heart and the head through a constant dynamic of exteriorizing and internalizing knowledge. Child’s learning through the sight is giving much importance” (p. 211, my translation). Furthermore, there is a metaphorical association between the body and the land (Bastien, 1983). In a similar way in which a mountain is conceptualized, “the human head is where air, food, water, and images enter

the body: the eyes are like the highland lakes from whence the reflective images of creation emerge” (p. 6).

I also found the commonly held belief that parts and fluids of the body influenced the process of learning or unlearning. For example, many women told me they had forgotten how to read and write because of an incident involving their body. Many said they went to school for some months or maybe one or two years; however, they forgot due to an accident or illness that made them lose blood and, therefore, their memory. Sickness of the head or the heart (*sunqu*) were the most common ones that made people forget what they had learned. In the case of doña Matilde, a sickness as well as an accident were the causes of her *illiteracy*. She reported when she was young it was easy for her to read and write, however, she got sick because of having too many fights with her husband due to his drinking habits. While she was sick, she did not eat well, she did not breath well and lost a lot of blood. Therefore, she was very weak. Also she split her head open in an accident and lost even more blood. All of this contributed to her loss of memory and literacy:

I got sick ten years ago, I could not get well. That is why I think I have lost my memory ... When you get sick, you do not eat food normally, not how it should be. When you are in bed you do not even breathe. Then you get weak, when you get sick. Also I had an operation a long time ago now. I have lost a lot of blood. With that should be [that I lost my memory]. Also traveling in the bus I had an accident. Then, from my head it came out, my head was split open. Then, I lost a lot of blood. With all that I think I lost my memory, it is not normal.

It is important here to understand the Andean conception of the body. According to Bastien (1983), “fat and blood are important principles of the body: blood is limited and circulates throughout the body to provide vitality [...] Basically, the body is a hydraulic system with distillation processes: the circulation of primary fluids and elimination of secondary fluids” (pp. 1-2). Breath is also an important concept from the Andean vision of the body. *Samay*, an Inka term, designates spirit, wind and breath (Bastien, 1983, p. 3). Breath, also called *alma* or *ánimo* (soul), then, is a life force, which is regularly seen when *Huancallinos* recite their offering to the *Apus*, by blowing coca leaves. If breath leaves the body the person gets sick or dies (Bastien, 1983).



From doña Matilde's perspective, "symbolically, blood is a principle of vitality" (Bastien, 1983, p. 7). Since blood is an essential, but limited, body fluid, and it came out through her head –where knowledge is accumulated<sup>47</sup>-- it is not surprising that doña Matilde attributed her loss of memory to a pathology in her body.

*The relationship with the city and the state: Spanish literacy, talk and cultural knowledge*

Literacy was defined as a required tool "to know how to walk anywhere" and to "know how to talk with anybody." Literacy was not defined by *comuneros* as a resource in and of itself. It was always related to two other resources: oral Spanish and cultural knowledge about urban areas, especially institutions located in urban areas. The relationship between literacy, talk, and walk, reflects one quality of local literacies in Huancalle: it is mainly defined and used as an instrument for the *comuneros*' relationship with the outside and the outsiders. When *comuneros* used these expressions they meant that by knowing how to read and write they were able to move around confidently in the city and that they were able to talk in Spanish with no fear to *wiraquchakuna* (the gentlemen),<sup>48</sup> *señorakuna*, (the ladies) *allin runakuna* (the good people). Literacy, talk and cultural knowledge were interrelated and were also linked to the feelings that *comuneros* have when confronting people from the urban areas. The history of the relationships between *comuneros* and *mestizos* illustrated above as well as the personal histories have shaped this desire to be able to know how to walk anywhere and to be able to know how to talk with anybody in the city.

Speaking Spanish was a resource valued as much --if not more-- as literacy. I found that the arguments supporting the assertion that being *literate* helps to talk and walk were of two kinds: linguistic and affective. People believed that those who had learned to read and write Spanish understood the language, and, therefore, they knew how to speak it correctly. This is the result of the schooling experience of most Quechua

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<sup>47</sup> As stated by Arnold and Yapita (2000), the heart and the head are the corporeal elements that organize memory and where knowledge is deposited.

<sup>48</sup> *Wiraqucha*, a divinity, was the term used by the Inkas to call the conquerors. Thus, Spaniards were seen as Gods or God's descendants. Presently, it is used to refer to the "gentlemen" or Spanish speaking people from the urban areas. Literally means "sea of fat."

speakers, who are taught at school how to “read” and “write” before learning how to speak Spanish. The affective consequences of literacy were by and large given by *comuneros*. From their perspective, *literate* people (in Spanish), know how to face anybody, they leave behind their fear. “Even being peasants” --in the words of don Juan-- they could talk to the *wiraquchas* (gentlemen) and the *señoras* (ladies). *Illiterates manchakun* (get scared) when they interact with people from urban areas, generally Spanish speakers, staff from institutions, and authorities at the district or departmental level. People who do not *tienen estudio* (have studies) are in the need to ask others to talk on their behalf. If people said *non-literates* were *ñawsa* (blind) or did not “have a letter,” monolingual Quechua speakers were said to not have “their word.”

The references made to the *hacendados* and *vecinos* oppressing and abusing people from Huancalle reveal that *comuneros* believed that along with acquiring literacy skills and oral Spanish, *comuneros* needed to understand bureaucratic and legal literacy, as well as the ways of interacting with outside authorities. Participants valued Spanish literacy in order to learn how to get around in an unknown office. Doña Rosario told me *noqaq purini leyespay* (I walk [in the city] reading). *Comuneros* said they needed at least to know how to read the signs in the streets, the names of the streets and institutions. The possibility of moving in the physical space of the office is what gives them some of the needed security in order to be able to talk with the *ingenieros* (engineers) and *jefes* (bosses) leaving the nervousness behind.

Along with some skills they got from school, the experience of temporary migration and their participation in the military service –as reported by *Huancallinos*-- have been a learning experience in dealing with urban people and learning cultural codes needed to communicate with them. Then, it was also necessary to know how to move in a different context: the urban context, which not only represents a work market (for individual purposes), but above all, represents the space of the authorities, the institutions and *oficinas* (offices) where they have to go in order to solve judicial problems, solve difficulties related to the school, register their children as citizens, get married or ask for resources or support for the community.

In general, *comuneros* feel that by having some *literate* members in the community they are able to construct more horizontal relationships with ingenieros, authorities, and urban people. By having members of the community who manage these three instruments (oral Spanish, literacy, and the knowledge of the cultural rules of the city and the authorities), peasants think they are able to participate in the national society and become citizens. The relationship between being *literate* and being able to demand their rights as citizens has been previously found by Ansi3n (1989), Montoya (1990) and Zavala (2002).

Although *comuneros* said *illiterates* could not *talk* well, with one exception, they all referred to speaking Spanish. It was clear to *Huancallinos* that *illiterate* people were able to *talk* in their mother tongue within their community. The problem is clearly framed from the Spanish language and the relationships with the urban areas. Don Augusto, for example, told me:

(About what you were saying, that literacy is useful for you to talk. Explain me more. How knowing to read and write is useful to talk?) Well, to talk, the language, at least to talk with other institutions. Sometimes I have the favorable [situation] so that I talk to engineers or bosses. That enables me to talk but I notice my associates, sometimes they are nervous to be able to talk in the offices. But I am not, I talk with anyone. Sometimes I could make a mistake, but I do talk. (And the ones who do not know how to read?) They are a little timid, they cannot talk like me. Well, here we do talk, the problem is when you go to Cusco, to an institution.

If children and young adult *comuneros* presented an image of having an attitude in which they did not fear anymore because of being literate, most *comuneros* felt literacy was a resource that had not been completely acquired. Most of them said things like: “Maybe I do not know everything, but I know something,” “but I need to know better in order to teach anything to the others.” Both women and men compared their literacy “skills” with a “high” and ideal standard placed by hegemonic discourses about education, literacy and modernization. As a result, both women and men felt *poca cosa* (little thing). They felt “better” than their parents, but still they were not satisfied with their knowledge of literacy.

Thus, in spite of the fact that *Huancallinos* reported feelings and situations in which they had a greater control over the conditions, they had an ideal of being *literate*, which was far from being reached by people in the community. Thus, suffering –contrary to what most *comuneros* wanted to let me know—was still part of most *Huancallinos*' experiences. Their hope was that their children would reach the educational ideal, become professionals and “progress.” With the progress of their children and young *comuneros* they saw possibilities of “progress” at the individual, familial and communal levels.

### *Literacy as progress*

*Huancallinos* believed that they needed to become *literate* in order to have a better life and move towards “progress” and “development” of themselves as individuals, families and community. All parents wanted their children to get a formal education, become “professionals” and find a job outside the community. All children wanted to go to the university or technical institutes and become lawyers, police officers, seamstresses or “at least” teachers and maids. For most adult *comuneros* being able to study meant a real struggle; thus all of them believed their children had an opportunity they had lost. Parents did all they could to get their children to school, even though it meant costs they could hardly afford.

Universally, *Huancallinos* reported that schooling was the most important vehicle towards social mobility. Education was seen as a way to escape the community, especially among the young people. It was a way to “get ahead,” to get out of “backwardness.” Together, it was a way of coming out from a position of discrimination, marginalization and poverty. Parents said “I do not want my children to be like me,” “[I want] the situation of peasants with no education to end with us.”

Even though there are not many examples of young people who have succeeded outside the community by being educated, literacy was related by adult *comuneros* to the individual progress that their children could attain. *Comuneros* did not refer much to themselves as the beneficiaries of acquiring literacy at the individual level. They desired it so that their children could become professionals and the first step to do that was to

support them so that they could learn to read and write in primary school. Especially women reported that their children needed to become *literate* so they would not be *asnos* (donkeys), peasants, and suffering people, like them. They wanted their children to learn how to read and write so they could be “free,” and defend themselves. From the parents’ perspectives, their children needed to become professionals because it was no longer possible to live only from agriculture.

For all of the children to whom I spoke, formal education was a way to get out of their life in the community which was characterized, from their point of view, by never ending work and a situation of poverty. As don Juan said,

the young nowadays with their writing skills, with their letter (literacy), with the words (Spanish oral language) do not want to stay here anymore. They want to go to other places, be better than other people.

Young *Huancallinos* wanted to *seguir adelante* (keep on going ahead), *para no quedarse atrás* (in order not to be left behind), *defenderse* (defend themselves) and “go to the city.” Their perspective is that literacy will help them, among other things and overall, to get out of their lives as peasants in the community and get a job in a city, or outside of the country. Martín (9 year-old) wanted to become a lawyer because “if I am a professional I will earn money.” José saw literacy as a resource in order to become a mechanic and leave the community. He wanted to go to Arequipa, Lima or a foreign country. In order to do that it was necessary to “be competent.” In other words, to know how to read and write because that knowledge could help him to talk to his clients --the *empresarios* (business managers/owners) and owners of the cars. According to José, reading, writing, and speaking Spanish allowed him to fill out job application, and not be afraid nor timid.

Literacy was perceived as a resource shared and used for the benefit of the family. There was a sense of duty to the family among the young. The children and the young adults of the community often reported wanting to become professionals in order to help their parents: provide them with money (a scarce resource in the community) so that they would be able to leave their condition of poverty and hard work. In addition, they wanted to help their younger siblings, cousins, nieces and nephews. A ten year old boy told me “I

would also become a professional and I would bring everything to my dad. That is how I want to do it.” They also wanted to support the family to “get ahead.” José told me:

I have to move my family ahead with a profession... Then, my brother has to follow me, he has to *superar* [get ahead] better than me. That is the way to *sacar adelante a la familia*.

“*Sacar adelante la familia*” (get the family ahead) was related to economic benefits for the family, educational benefits of younger siblings, as well as the prestige that having “educated” and “professional” children gave the parents. Having members who are professionals the family “*se crece*,” (feels superior) and other people admire the father of the family, because the head of the family has been able to “educate” the children.

Literacy was also associated in Huancalle with the progress of the community and the country. For *comuneros*, now illiteracy is over. The complement of the idea that literacy conduces to progress is that illiteracy belongs to the past. *Huancallinos* think that in the present times it is necessary to finish secondary school because Peru is a different country. According to this perspective, presently Peruvians speak a different language – Spanish-- and the rules in this different country demand people to know how to read and write. When I asked why was it important to have literacy skills, don Juan told me: “it is always necessary, in other words, for the well being, in order to progress our Peru.” Don Juan told me:

Earlier here in Huancalle people did not know how to read or write, people stayed at the same level, [Huancalle] did not progress. From that time, there have been changes. The children studied, and they finished [school] --sometimes they do not finish—and they know how to read and write. They already think in another way, with another science. Then, the language changes. They improve a little... The community itself changes. It is not like before, made out of little straw houses. Now people live in homes like the ones in the city. That is why learning how to read has brought [possibilities] in order to change other things.

From most *comuneros*’ perspective, literacy helped to avoid the *fracaso* (failure) of the community and to avoid “walking backwards” by defending the community. In order to defend the community, *comuneros* believed they needed to elect *literate* people as authorities, at least some of them, so that they can go to the city to negotiate with

district or departmental authorities. The usefulness of literacy for the community's *progress* was related to the role of communal authorities as mediators between the community and foreign people, as will be seen in chapter six. In addition to guaranteeing the community's relationships with outsiders and defending their land, having some young *literate* and professional members in the community *comuneros* hoped to *modernize* their agricultural production.

When male adults thought about their own experience and their purposes for literacy use their responses were related to their contribution to the community as members of the *junta directiva* (the organism of local government of the community). Most of the *comuneros* think that reading and writing help them to become communal authorities. Literacy is considered a resource that helps *comuneros* to "serve" the community in its relationships with the outside world and also inside the community. Felicia (13 years old) told me she thought there should be *literate* women in Huancalle so they could become secretaries or treasurers and be able to read official documents.

The value of education and literacy has to be understood within the framework of the relationship between the community and the penetration of capitalism in the rural areas. The symbolic representations of school among Andean populations have been widely studied. Montoya (1980) presented the *mito contemporáneo de la escuela* (the contemporary myth of school), by which the Quechua people relate their sociocultural world with the "world of night" because they do not read or write. They are *eyeless* and *blind*, therefore they have to *awaken* by going to school (Montoya, 1980). Thus, education and literacy were valued by peasants as tools that only *mestizo* sectors of Peru had access to. Schooling was seen as a way out of backwardness and subordination. Degregory (1986), proposed the idea that the *myth of Inkarri*<sup>49</sup> was left behind and replaced by the *myth of progress* (reached by access to schooling), which was a view towards the future that entailed the appropriation of the dominant tools (Spanish and literacy) in order to leave behind their situation of subordination. Ansi3n (1989), also

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<sup>49</sup> A myth found all over the country. It illustrates the longing of the Andean populations to go back to the past, meaning that the Inka times would return when the Inka's body parts integrate again, as a metaphor of the reconstitution of the Inka empire.

found this representation of the school.<sup>50</sup> The school was seen as an instrument which allows for the Quechua people to “appropriate” the “unknown” knowledge (mainly Spanish language and literacy). In the case of Huancalle, this perspective was clearly expressed in the historical narratives presented above and the meanings they had for literacy. This vision reflects a new attitude towards the future, a belief that “progress” is possible through education (Ansión, 1989, 1993). This is mainly an attitude which implies individual and family benefits, and may imply the abandonment of the Quechua language and culture.

The position in favor of studying a career in order to come back to the community was not frequent. This position is illustrated by a young male *comunero* from Huancalle who wanted to become professionals with the intention of helping the community by learning about new technology for agricultural work. In Huancalle, as Ansión has found (1989), the school was seen as a “*trampolín hacia afuera*” (spring board towards the outside) and a way to get out of discrimination, subordination and a situation of poverty.

As has been shown, local meanings of literacy were clearly influenced by the dominant discourses about “literacy” and “education” that are presented in chapter one, in which, as stressed by Street (1984, 1993, 1995), being *literate* is the same as being schooled. The association between being *literate* and progress has been proven to be a myth promoted by dominant discourses about literacy and education. Street (1984, 1993) has widely discussed that literacy in and of itself is not an instrument that leads to a better life. Other factors, such as relationships based on race, gender, age and class are much more important than literacy itself. Literacy has served as a marker for difference (Giroux, 1988), and the *comuneros*’ words about the *illiterate* and the *literate* show that

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<sup>50</sup> Ansión (1986, 1989, 1993) showed the tensions of the images of school in rural communities. He found three different conceptions of schooling among Andean people, which coexist, but also show a change in symbolic representations of the school. Along with the perspective that education was a tool to be appropriated in order to get out of the situation of subordination and ignorance, he found a “traditional” conception of the school. The latter was the result of the experience of colonization, which expressed fear and rejection. This Andean conceptualization of schooling has been expressed in oral narratives. This view of education represents an attitude that allows subordination and that needs to maintain distance from the dominant world (Ansión, 1993). I also found this representation of schooling when *comuneros* reported about the idea of schooling their parents held.



these meanings impregnated their ideas about literacy. As has been stated by Quispe-Agnoli (2002),

In the moment of the conquest and colonization of America, alphabetic writing and its bearer, the book, received a set of valuations that placed them in a superior position to other means of communication, like the oral and the visual ... Those semantic and ideological valuations were brought to the New World, therefore illiterate societies were, and are, considered less developed... ( p. 237, my translation).

Although my findings are consistent with the findings of Zavala (2002), who found that literacy is conceived “as the instrument which transforms us in terms of sight (the senses), decency (the moral) and intelligence (cognition)” (p. 114, my translation), my data suggested that local meanings of literacy are not only shaped by official discourses about literacy. The latter were redefined in part from local conceptions about the body and the process of learning.

In addition, along with official discourses about the benefits of literacy for the *progress* of the individual, the family, the community and even the country, *Huancallinos* defined education with a broad understanding. It included both formal education and the education imparted by parents and *comuneros* in the communal and domestic contexts. Furthermore, education and literacy were conceptualized from the local cultural value of reciprocity.

#### *Education broadly understood*

All parents believed school taught their children useful knowledge for their lives, especially in their relationships with the outside world; specifically the urban areas. In their opinion, among the most important things that school taught children were reading, writing, numerical operations and good manners. Most *comuneros* identified the knowledge of the school with a *musuq kawsay* (new life), *vida moderna* (modern life), a *nuevo Peru* (new Peru). For example, the construction of the highway, their more fluid relationships with the market, the departure of the *hacendado* from their land, the adjudication of the communal land, the construction and subsequent growth of the school, the insertion of Protestant Churches in the community, the new kinds of houses being built, the new kinds of clothes available, and the community’s increasing bilingualism.

Schooling was seen as primary to live in this *musuq kawsay*, which was characterized by the relationships with the economic market and the urban areas, while still living within Huancalle.

The knowledge of the school was valued as an instrument to relate to the national society in its practical uses outside the community. From the perspective of Carolina, a seventeen year old, mathematical knowledge was the most important thing she was taught in school. She explained why:

Ok, look, when you learn math, you know how to add, how to subtract, how to multiply, like that. There are some who do not know, and they go to Cusco, or to Lima and do business and they do not know even to count money.

Besides wanting children to get a formal education, parents considered it their obligation to teach their children their values and norms of conduct. When asked where children learn important things for their lives, parents mentioned the home, the school and the church. Don Agustín told me “I teach [my children] according to my life.” The education that parents imparted was related to the behavior into which children should be socialized: to *respect* both adults and children. By *respect comuneros* meant greeting adults; treating younger children with care; to talking “well” (not insulting their friends); avoiding fights with others; being obedient; helping their parents, siblings and relatives; sharing food and beverages with people who visit the community; and so on. According to Bolin (1998), who has done fieldwork in Chillihuani, a community of herders in Cusco, “respect is the essence of life” (p. xiii) and it is “the moral code that permeates all thought and action” (p. xiii).

Honesty, responsibility, cooperation, solidarity and hard work were also values that parents felt obligated to teach their children. The *faenas* (communal work) are an example of the values of hard work, responsibility and solidarity. People in Huancalle have built their school through communal work, and they do all kinds of required communal tasks, such as cleaning the road and paths in the community or making a fence for the school.

In addition, parents taught their children the productive activities needed in the community. Fathers taught boys how to work the *chakra* and build houses. Mothers

taught girls to do domestic chores -washing clothes, doing dishes, cooking according to the “customs of the community,” feed the animals, knitting, and gathering wood. Thus, these social and productive skills needed for life in the community were valued by parents. Moreover, some parents wanted their children to value their way of life. For example, doña María told me during an interview that she liked her children to help her work the land “so they also learn our way of life, how we live, if we really sacrifice ourselves or not, so they value us.” Some parents also explicitly said that knowing how to work the *chakra*, knitting and weaving was necessary for their children’s lives. According to doña Manuela, “the teaching of my children includes studying [at school] and learning to make knitted garments, woven garments. It is necessary for my children to know all that.”

There were also communal activities which socialized children into the life in the community. The *linderaje*, explained in the first chapter, is a clear example of an event that provided children with the knowledge about the limits of the community, the value of the community’s territory and the relationships with the *Apus*. The celebration of the *Todos Santos* also socialized children to have respect towards the dead. The reciprocal relationships and cooperative work expressed in everyday activities taught children the values of the community. In addition, along with the education provided by parents at home, members of the Peruvian Evangelical Church and the Church of Christ emphasized the socializing role of the church. For example, Don Juan said children learn in church “a better way of life.” By reading the Bible and going to the *culto* (service), parents got an orientation about how one should live, how to guide their children, how and where to correct their conduct, and so forth. Children also told me that in church they learned important things about how to act in life.

As the above evidence demonstrates, education was broadly understood. In conjunction with valuing the knowledge of the school (mainly for the relationship with the outside world), *Huancallinos* valued the knowledge, values, norms of conduct, and cultural practices of the community. Children were also supposed to acquire values and skills needed to live in the community. At the level of discourse most parents said they

wanted their children to become professionals and get out of peasant's life. At the level of actions parents socialized children into the language, values and culture of the community, for life in the community. This life was characterized by the contact with urban areas. Thus, parents also were concerned about their children having the necessary skills to move successfully in the cities.

Thus, there was a view among *Huancallinos* about the knowledge which was useful for their children. The *complementarity* of the Andean knowledge and the knowledge of the school is clear, as it was found also by Ansi3n (1989). Since the introduction of the alphabetic literacy in the Andean world, being *literate* has been highly valued and associated with the educated and knowledgeable. However, literacy meanings were also saturated by conceptions of the body, education (broadly understood), and by local values of reciprocity.

#### *The critical view of schooling*

Parents were critical of education and school of today. They kept believing that their children should go to school but their experiences with school had the consequence of creating a critical view of formal education, as was found by Ames (1999). The most important problems they identified were related to discriminatory practices by the educational institution, the quality of the teachers, the economical situation of peasants, which does not provide opportunities to educate their children, and the irrelevance of school for the local culture and practices.

From the parent's perspective, the "third-class teachers" sent to rural schools provided their children with third-class education. According to many parents, teachers do not have a sincere interest in their children's learning nor do they dedicate themselves enough to their job. As said by don R3mulo,

When we live in the communities people from the city think --because we are people from the community-- that we do not deserve teachers with a title, but teachers with a contract, third-class teacher.

The quality of education is certainly a concern for parents who chose to send their children to the urban areas when the economical situation of the family permitted. Most of the children in Huancalle attended the primary school of the community. However,

there were some parents who started sending their children as early as third grade to Písaq, Calca or Cusco. This was not an easy decision and it often brought with it worries for the parents.<sup>51</sup> Sending children to school in urban areas meant a high cost to the families, including economical costs, the effort children needed in order to get transportation, the cost of putting the children in dangerous situations, and the cost of the separation between parents and children.

Most parents were extremely concerned with their difficulties of affording their children's schooling, due to a lack of economic resources. Because of their consciousness of having limited resources for the education of their children, some parents taught their children their own profession (i.e. construction work) so their children could get a job. Others lowered their expectations regarding the kinds of professions their children could get from lawyers and engineers to truck drivers, teachers, and maids.

Another concern about school was the fact that education did not take into account the values and way of life of the *comuneros*. As a consequence, some parents believed children were changing their ways of relating with older people in the community and with agricultural work, which is seen as a loss by these parents. These parents thought that, in contrast with "their times," presently teachers did not care about teaching to act with *respect* at school. Children, by attending school had lost their interest in agricultural work and domestic chores. Finally, doña María did not agree with the amount of homework given to her children, because as peasant children they had different responsibilities than urban children. She stated, "They have twice as much work: they help us in the field and with the pasture of the animals, also during the mornings. When they get a lot of homework, there is not enough time."

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<sup>51</sup> Some parents preferred to send their children to Calca or Písaq, so they could avoid dangerous circumstances for their children. Children usually needed to attend the afternoon period of the school because the public transportation did not pick them up early in the morning. So parents preferred sending their children in the afternoon. However, this meant children needed to ride the bus back to the community at night. Parents were worried, especially when they had daughters attending the schools in Cusco. Then, some parents decided to send their children to schools in Calca or Písaq. Others decided to send their children to a relative or *compadre's* (child's godparent) home to live there, so they can attend school in the morning.

### *Literacy and education within reciprocal relationships*

Formal education was defined within reciprocal relationships. Don Tomás, for example, told me that he was able to finish secondary school because he had the support of his older brothers. Though his brothers could not finish school, they however, provided him with a formal education so don Tomás would reciprocate by helping his nieces and nephews. Formal education was also defined by parents as a heritage they wanted to leave to their children, as was found by Ansión et al. (1998). Many parents, when asked about what they wanted for their children's future, said they wanted their children to become professionals so that in the future, when the parents were dead, children would remember them with care, gratefulness and would not "damn" (*ñakay*) them. Thus, education like land was the legacy of the parents.<sup>52</sup>

Literacy was also conceived --and practiced, as will be seen in chapter six-- within the values of reciprocity. In spite of the fact that official discourses of literacy and education impregnated local ideas about literacy, women and men were not always expected to learn how to read and write. Even children thought there were some people who were old and should not be forced to learn. Many *comuneros* said they felt *tranquilo* (relaxed, at ease, satisfied) in not being *literate*. It was accepted by some *Huancallinos* that "*algunos no se hallan leyendo*" (some are not inclined towards reading). Many times *comuneros* told me that they read or wrote only when it was necessary. For example, Sabino, a forty-one year old *comunero*, told me that he just does not like to read or write, and that he does not really need it. He only writes "*cositas sencillas*" (simple little things). He openly told me "sometimes, from time to time it is necessary, then I just write. When there is not the need, why would I pick it up? If I don't need to, I am not going to be picking up the pen."

Why, then, if old people and a good number of women in the community are not able to read or write nor are inclined to learn, is there the widely held perception that in Huancalle illiteracy is over? I propose that literacy is seen as a resource which is shared

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<sup>52</sup> Land is a scarce resource in rural communities, where the population grows and the territory is maintained. The former struggle for land has now become a struggle for education and good jobs, as has been found by Arnold and Yapita (2000).

within the community and the family. Repeatedly *Huancallinos* presented an image of literacy as a collective performance, in their discourses and in their actions. Literacy was seen as distributed in different domains: religious, communal, and domestic. Literacy was viewed as a resource distributed (as an obligation) among siblings and cousins. Spreading the word of God was conceived as an obligation, within the religious domain (as will be presented in Chapter Seven). All *Huancallinos* viewed literacy as a needed resource that should be shared in order to contribute to the function of the community. Finally, social networks established in the cities were considered resources of literacy.

I found that literacy practices in Huancalle were immersed in the social relationships among *comuneros*. Literacy was shared like tools and labor are shared in *ayni* (symmetrical reciprocity). Real or constructed kinship relations were what allowed many *comuneros* to satisfy their needs of literacy resources. As was presented in chapter two, *Huancallinos* have constructed social networks that provided social resources to guarantee their lives within the community. *Comuneros* exchanged services (labor), products, seeds, tools, animals, knowledge of house construction, information about their children's schooling, about the possible careers their children could follow, information about medicines and vaccines they should provide for cattle, among other things. Along with this distribution of things, services, and knowledge among family and community members, literacy skills were also distributed within the community. I consider literacy a part of the *funds of knowledge* (Gonzales et al., 1995; Moll et al., 1993; Velez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992) that are exchanged and flow among households that engage in reciprocal relationships within the community and with the outside.

In sum, literacy has been conceptualized in Huancalle within inter-ethnic relationships, which occurred in what Pratt calls the *contact zones* (1991). Local literacy definitions are a result of the conceptualization of *Huancallinos* of their asymmetrical experiences in these contact zones, as well as their reinterpretation of literacy from their own cultural framework and values (i.e. reciprocity, notions of learning, and the body). The Western domination of more than five hundred years prompted that Quechua-speaking indigenous people found themselves in the need to appropriate alphabetic

literacy. In doing so, they also appropriated some of its symbolic representations. However, this appropriation did not happen in a vacuum. *Huancallinos'* values, concepts of learning and the body, their hopes and dreams, their use of oral language, as well as their local and national history also intervened in shaping the local literacy practices.

Formal education was highly valued by adults and children in Huancalle and “the myth of progress” still persisted among the young and adults from Huancalle. Literacy was seen as a good that young people wanted to obtain. Illiteracy was stigmatized, but at the same time was taken as part of the reality of the community. Along with the high value of schooling, education was defined broadly, including schooling and socialization at home, church and the community. Moreover, the local practices maintained and affirmed local values, norms of conduct, and beliefs. I also found a critical view of education. The appropriation of the knowledge provided by the school has not meant an uncritical process of cultural loss (Ames, 2002) by *comuneros* in Huancalle. Moreover, their strategies guaranteed their children both the knowledge of the school and the skills needed to live in the community.

In closing, this chapter presented the ways in which school and literacy were defined in the community, and incorporated into the local concepts about education and learning. In the next chapters, I will describe and discuss the sociocultural world of school. The focus of the next chapter is to discuss how practices (including literacy practices) in the classroom and the interactions between the different actors (students, teachers and parents), produced and reproduced asymmetrical relationships in the school, as well as the subordinate position of the Quechua language, orality and culture of the peasant Quechua-speaking students.



## CHAPTER FOUR: THE SCHOOL: CIVILIZING AND “LITERAZING” STUDENTS

In this chapter I introduce the context of the school in the community. I describe the physical setting, the educational model that traditionally has been implemented and the current approaches to Intercultural Bilingual Education. I also present the attitudes of the teachers regarding their students. Understanding how teachers and children constructed, in their everyday interactions, an environment where the Quechua language and the children’s culture were discriminated against frames the way literacy instruction occurred in this context. Spanish language teaching and literacy instruction were part of the role of teachers as civilizing agents and mediators between the city and the community. Finally, I will briefly present the beliefs and meanings of literacy that teachers bring with them to literacy instruction and how literacy instruction was conducted.

### **The school**

The community has a primary school, which has been operating since the 1920’ s. According to *Huancallinos*, in those times the school did not have a name, and only one teacher attended children up to second grade.

This teacher, since she was the first known teacher in Huancalle, was the most important [person] in the community. She intervened in domestic issues when there were problems because it was thought in the community that the teacher was the most prepared and adequate person to solve these domestic problems (don Rómulo).

The first school in Huancalle operated in a peasant’s home, a home with the roof made out of straw.<sup>53</sup> They had only one teacher who was from Cusco. In the 1950’s, only about 12 children from Huancalle attended the school. According to don Genaro, “fathers and mothers were not interested in making their children study, because they did not have the economical means. We were poorly paid. Only some went to school and others went to pasture the animals or worked at home.” Later, in the 1960’s a new school building was constructed by the members of the community doing communal work in the area of

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<sup>53</sup> A sign of a peasant’s home as opposed to the home of the *hacendado* until some years ago. Presently, members of the community make their houses’ roofs with tile.

Bajo Huancalle. During the 1980's, the present school building was built by the *comuneros* in Alto Huancalle, where most members of the community currently live. The efforts *comuneros* made in order to have a school in the community were made by communities all over Peru. Communities perceived such efforts as a way to fight against marginalization (Pozzi-Escot, 1994).

The school is located within walking distance from the homes of the children. The adobe school building includes three classrooms with big windows, a kitchen, a dining room --which is presently used as a classroom--, a storage facility, and restrooms --two latrines for the children and a water close for the teachers. Every day a mother of a student prepares breakfast for the students with food provided by the government. In addition, due to the shortage of classrooms, two grades function in the building of the initial education area, which is located across the one road that goes through the community. The school also includes its own *chakra*, which is cultivated every year by the parents to obtain financial resources for the school. The school's infrastructure has been constructed year after year.<sup>54</sup>

The school in Huancalle has experienced growth during the last years due to an agreement signed by *Huancallinos* and three other communities. Until 1997 the school was a *multi-grado* (there were more than one grade in one classroom) educative center. Three teachers attended 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades. In 1997 the 6<sup>th</sup> grade was created. Since the year 2000 the school became a *polidocente completo* educative center, providing one teacher per grade. Presently, the school serves children from kindergarten to 6th grade, with each grade being attended by one teacher (*centro educativo polidocente completo*). Teachers are assigned and paid by the state, and depend on the public education system. There are six teachers of primary grades (one of them is the principal of the school) and one teacher of *educación inicial* (kindergarten). The school currently enrolls approximately 200 children from Huancalle and three other neighboring communities.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *Comuneros* of Huancalle started to build a new classroom in the year 2000 and they attempted to obtain financing to finish the project. The next year the sports court was constructed.

<sup>55</sup> The other three communities either do not have a school or their schools enroll only the first grades.

The fact that Huancalle had a *polidocente completo* primary school that accepted children from other communities was a matter of pride for the parents of Huancalle. They thought that the school had a higher level of education and prestige than other schools in neighboring communities. Supporting the growth of the school was thought important to the parents. The president of the *Asociación de Padres de Familia- APAFA* (Parents' Association) suggested to the principal signing an agreement with nearby communities in order to get their children to attend the school in Huancalle. The parents wanted to have a larger educative center with the purpose of "improving the community." This was a first step towards a goal they had of getting a secondary school in the community. Moreover, they would someday like to have an agricultural technical school for superior education.

Parents were constantly comparing the primary school in Huancalle with the schools in urban areas. Several *Huancallinos* told me the school in Huancalle only needed to have computers and basketball courts to be like any other primary school in the city. The sports court recently added to the school by the *comuneros*, from their perspectives, was a sign of improvement of the school, making the school of Huancalle more closely resemble urban area schools.

### **Policy and ideology in education for indigenous populations**

Schooling in indigenous communities was historically characterized by sociocultural contradictions. The school has been present in the Peruvian rural areas only in the last sixty years and has always been characterized by tendencies oriented towards promoting the integration and assimilation of indigenous populations to the national society. During colonial and early republic periods, Peruvian indigenous populations were denied schooling (Godenzzi, 1997a). The *educación para indios* (education for Indians)<sup>56</sup> (Zúñiga & Gálvez, 2002) was promoted by Christian sectors of society during the nineteenth century as a response to the idea that it was useless to educate indigenous people. Christian organizations' main argument was that indigenous people could better their lives by getting an education.

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<sup>56</sup> There is an important distinction between the concepts *education for Indians* and *indigenous education*. According to Zúñiga and Gálvez (2002), *indio* is a term which is the basis of the exclusion of the indigenous populations. This term is full of colonial prejudices. *Indigenous* is a term which denotes a reality and indigenous education is a right of indigenous peoples.

During the 1950's, the state started to implement official schooling in rural areas (Zúñiga & Gálvez, 2002). What characterized these educational policies was the goal of “integrating” indigenous populations to the nation. Thus, an assimilationist ideological position has characterized educational policies, according to the “myth of the linguistically and culturally homogeneous nation-state” (Hornberger, 2000, p. 177). Thus, the dominant educational model for Quechua-speaking populations was the same model implemented in urban areas. The use of Spanish literacy and the use of Quechua oral language for the purpose of translation and achievement of comprehension has characterized the *Huancallinos*' education.

Although bilingual education started in Peru in 1945 with Amazonian populations,<sup>57</sup> during the 1950's and 1960's the education implemented in rural areas did not contemplate a different curriculum or methodologies than the ones imparted in urban areas. In 1972, within the context of the leftist government of Velasco Alvarado and in conjunction with diverse reforms such as the Agrarian Reform and Education reform, the first National Bilingual Education Policy was promulgated. In 1975 the Quechua language was recognized as an official language along with Spanish. After these initiatives, a few bilingual educational programs began to function in the Andes and the Amazonia; however, these policies did not have an important impact in the classrooms attended by rural indigenous children (Zúñiga & Gálvez, 2002).

With the change of government (1979), the implementation of bilingual education was ignored by the state, while some projects were implemented by private organizations and NGOs. Despite the fact that evaluation studies of bilingual programs in Peru have demonstrated the advantages that Quechua children have when they are taught in their first language (Hornberger, 1988; Jung, 1992; López, 1996; 1997; Rockwell et al., 1989), IBE has had “sporadic support, once again depending on who was in power” (Coronel-Molina, 1999, p. 172).

Created in 1991, the National Intercultural Education and Bilingual Intercultural Education Policy promoted the implementation of diversified curricula which should

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<sup>57</sup> The Instituto Lingüístico de Verano (Summer Institute of Linguistics) implemented bilingual education for clearly religious purposes.

respond to the linguistic and cultural plurality of the country (Ministerio de Educación, 1991). This educational model was not given the needed status and recognition.<sup>58</sup> Since 1996, the UNEBI (National Bilingual Education Unit) or DINEBI (National Bilingual Education Directorate) implemented the *Plan Nacional de Capacitación Docente-PLANCAD-IBE* (National Plan of In-Service Teacher Training in IBE).

In spite of these efforts, Bilingual Intercultural Education (IBE) has not been widely implemented in the classrooms. The majority of the teachers of Huancalle, for example, presently do not implement IBE. Only two teachers were trained in IBE recently (2000-2001). IBE is not supported by the public, most educational authorities, parents and teachers. The main problem of the policies and implementation of the Intercultural Bilingual Education in Peru is that it is still considered a model for the indigenous people (López, 1996; Speiser, 1996). In spite of the good intentions, IBE has become a form of remedial education (López, 1996), an “education for Indians” (Zúñiga & Gálvez, 2002) perceived as deficient by most parents and teachers. The fact that it is not implemented at the secondary level makes it appear as though this program is solely a transitional bilingual education program.<sup>59</sup>

In the beginning, bilingual education only emphasized the use of the mother tongue during instruction, but culture was not considered as part of this educational model. Later, bilingual education was also seen as *intercultural*. In the 1970's, the concept of *interculturalidad* (interculturality) was coined in Latin America.<sup>60</sup> “Interculturality can be conceived as a paradigm or as a state of affairs” (Godenzzi, 1997b, p. 20, my translation). Interculturality as a *state of affairs* refers to a real situation characterized by asymmetrical linguistic, economical, political, social and cultural relationships (Howard-Malverde, 1996). This meaning of interculturality implies conflict,

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<sup>58</sup> During this period, the National Bilingual Education Directorate was replaced by the National Bilingual Education Unit (Unidad Nacional de Educación Bilingüe-UNEBI), which depended on the National Initial and Primary Education Directorate.

<sup>59</sup> Even primary teachers from 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade had difficulty conceiving bilingual education as a suitable model for their students. They were worried about the readiness of their students to start secondary school, which has a Spanish-only curriculum.

<sup>60</sup> The concept was an alternative to the concept of *biculturalism* used within the framework of *multiculturalism*, which presupposed two separated and opposed cultural systems.

discrimination, and ideological domination. Interculturality *as a paradigm* refers to an ideal situation in which democratic relationships are established in a condition of equal opportunities among parties. Interculturality aims to demolish the hegemonic historical relationships between a dominant culture and its subordinate cultures in order to build everyday relationships of respect (Walsh, 2000).

To complete the definition of interculturality, it is important to understand that it is also related to identity and supposes processes of negotiation. Ansi3n (1994) stated that since cultures are not things but they belong to the internal world of people, we cannot see interculturality as

the product of the clash between cultures understood as monolithic units [...] Interculturality should be understood, then, as the situation lived by people who are in permanent and intense contact with contexts with very distinct cultural influences; a situation that generates in his or her internal world a complex process of accommodation, incorporation, integration, etc. of the forms of thinking, feeling, behaving, which come from these diverse horizons (Ansi3n, 1994, pp.4-5, my translation).

Ansi3n's perspective is similar to Bhabha's (1994, 1998) conceptualization of a "third space," in which there are not rigid boundaries nor plain assimilation, but a process of negotiation between cultures.

Hornberger (2000) has argued that there still exist ideological tensions in the policies of IBE between assimilationist traditional tendencies and recently promoted pluralism. In spite of the fact that policies are based on a discourse that advocates for pluralism, assimilationism is the main ideology of the most recent Bilingual Intercultural Education policies. In the next sections of this chapter I will discuss what was proposed by the Bilingual Intercultural Education Program<sup>61</sup> ("the IBE program"), the discourses held and appropriated by the teachers and the social reality that was actually produced in the classrooms.

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<sup>61</sup> The only Bilingual Intercultural Education Program that has worked in the community.

### What did the IBE program propose?<sup>62</sup>

All teachers in Huancalle have been trained during the last ten years within the framework of the *nuevo enfoque educativo* (the new educational perspective),<sup>63</sup> promoted by the government within the *educative modernization*.<sup>64</sup> Within the framework of these efforts, the *Plan Nacional de Capacitación Docente* (PLANCAD) (National Plan of In-Service Teacher-Training) was implemented, first oriented towards urban and Spanish-speaking populations, and in 1996 from the IBE perspective. Teachers of Huancalle attended the PLANCAD program in Spanish, because Huancalle due to its closeness to Cusco was not considered a community that needed IBE.

Of the six primary school teachers in Huancalle, only two participated in the IBE program.<sup>65</sup> As a result, the majority of the teachers working in Huancalle were not trained in IBE. The latter taught all their sessions in Spanish and used Quechua only when they thought children could not understand an instruction or a concept. The school in Huancalle received textbooks produced by the State in Spanish and had clearly an urban orientation, and were the only material used by teachers who were not trained by the IBE program.

At the time of this research, the IBE program had been implemented by an NGO for three years in the area (since 1999). The main objective of the program was to provide in-service training<sup>66</sup> and complementary educational materials in IBE to the teachers<sup>67</sup> of Quechua-speaking children who live in rural or semi-rural communities located between

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<sup>62</sup> I worked in this program during the 2001, being in charge of the systematization of the program and two research projects: 1) the use of language in the area of intervention, and 2) the experience of peasant children attending schools in the city of Cusco. In 2003, I started to work for the program again. For that reason, I will describe the program from first hand experience, along with the use of documentation that existed before my arrival to the program.

<sup>63</sup> An educative reform currently implemented by the government since the 1990s, the *nuevo enfoque* is based on constructivism. However, this perspective was only used by teachers doing cooperative work in the classroom; and articulating the different academic areas.

<sup>64</sup> Teachers looked for in-service teacher-training because they were conscious of the lack of their initial teacher-training. Additionally, in-service training allowed teachers to improve their choices of getting a place in the education system.

<sup>65</sup> This program is not implemented by the state. It is financed and implemented entirely by an NGO.

<sup>66</sup> The training activities included workshops and on-site support.

<sup>67</sup> Teachers of first to sixth grade participated in the program.

thirty minutes and an hour and a half from the city of Cusco. These communities depend on agriculture and animal breeding to meet basic needs; however, due to their closeness to the city they maintain a fluid commercial relationship with Cusco. Because of this geographical closeness to Cusco, the perception of educational authorities and teachers was that these communities should be considered within the urban area and be provided with Spanish-only schooling. Thus, one particular characteristic of the program was the schools that it served: they were not considered schools in need of IBE. Another characteristic that was unique was that all teachers attended the program on a voluntary basis, in contrast with the IBE program implemented by the Ministry of Education (PLANCAD-EBI).

An in-service training program which took into account both the linguistic and cultural reality of these communities was implemented. As well as proposing the use of Quechua (L1) as the main language of instruction during primary school, including literacy instruction, and developing Spanish as a second language (L2), the program proposed a curriculum which was relevant to the everyday experiences of the students.

Spanish instruction as a second language (L2) since the beginning of the school experience was an important strategy to motivate the approval of the program by both teachers and parents. A communicative methodology was proposed. Quechua literacy was approached by the program with some caution and progressively. The program staff knew that teachers were doing literacy instruction using traditional methods<sup>68</sup> that they learned during their initial teacher-training process, and that teachers resisted the idea of teaching literacy in Quechua. Thus, Quechua literacy was a topic discussed since the beginning of the teacher-training, however, it was not until the year 2001 that the emphasis of the training was placed on that content area.

The IEB program proposed an eclectic method that included strategies from a whole language approach, and the natural method (language in its natural and spontaneous use). The program promoted the view of literacy learning as a process, using

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<sup>68</sup> The teachers mostly used the syllabic method. Teaching strategies included making the children fill out numerous pages with letters, syllables and words. Literacy, from this perspective, is out of context as will be seen later in this chapter.



texts created by the children and creating opportunities where children could use their imagination in order to work “representation” of the real world in paper, and then writing from their own interests and purposes.<sup>69</sup> However, the program was flexible regarding teachers who preferred to use the syllabic method.

The work on the development of reading and writing in Quechua emphasized the creation of communicative spaces in which children could freely develop written Quechua during meaningful and relevant activities. The approach was very similar to the whole language approach defined by Pérez and Torres Guzmán (1996, p. 52) as:

the emphasis is on meaning derived from interacting with language presented in a natural context. It goes from the whole to the parts, with the individual parts such as letters or syllables analyzed in context and the encoding and decoding processes presented in an integrated way. The focus is on authenticity –on children creating their own texts and engaging in the purposeful reading of other texts.

Orthography was not emphasized as an important skill to develop in the children; however, there were courses about the Quechua alphabet and orthography for teachers, which reinforced teachers’ regular literacy instruction practices, as is seen in the next chapter. The program was not implemented as it was proposed by teachers in Huancalle. Teachers’ frame of reference and hegemonic ideologies about language, literacy, and education played a stronger role in their pedagogical practice in the classrooms than their in-service training.

The program also emphasized the need to develop the Quechua language, using the methodology of *Proyectos de investigación escolar* (School research projects). By

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<sup>69</sup> The bilingual program used a method developed by the NGO in 10 years of experience implementing a school in the city of Cusco. However, the training given to the teachers in Huancalle (during two years) was not sufficient to change these teachers’ ideas about literacy nor their instructional practices. Moreover, since the bilingual program only met with teachers approximately 15 sessions per year (3 hours each session) and these sessions needed to be distributed between the different content areas (Spanish as a second language, Development of oral and written Quechua, the methodology of “School Research Projects,” and the relationship between teachers and students), the time allotted for Quechua literacy development was insufficient to prepare all teachers for these new concepts and instructional practices. Teachers had their own *frameworks of references* (Inostroza de Celis, 1997) about education, language, and literacy. These were the result of their life histories, especially their schooling and training processes. Mostly these frameworks of reference acted against the in-service teacher-training process. Thus, the program has developed a personalized monitoring system in order to support the learning and reflexive processes of the teachers.

using these projects, teachers worked new concepts through topics known to the children by creating spaces that motivated inquiry, dialogue and debate. This methodology is oriented to not only valorize but also to use the knowledge and cultural practices of the children to enrich their educative process. The proposed school research projects also sought to facilitate the ability of teachers to take into account the sociocultural context of children and include parents and members of the community as experts in the learning process. The school research projects were designed by teachers with the advice of the program's staff, following a communal calendar elaborated by the teachers as a small piece of research. By taking as the starting point the topics from the everyday lives of the children to develop concepts required by the national curriculum, the program considered the relationship between the sociocultural world of children and the sociocultural world of the urban areas and the school.

The concept of *interculturality*<sup>70</sup> was worked on with the teachers from two angles: 1) the relationships in the classroom (mainly teachers-students relations), and 2) implementing the *school research projects*. The objective was to work with the sense of self-worth of teachers as rural teachers. The teachers worked on recognizing situations of discrimination in their own schooling experiences, which resemble their students' experiences. The objective of the school research projects was that by their use, children would come to the conclusion that the curricular contents of school are not the only true knowledge, but that local knowledge is also valid and useful.

In sum, as it is stated in the program's written project, the objective of the IBE program was to provide the teacher with a program

that affirms the children as persons, that allows them to learn from themselves and their immediate environment, value their culture and confront the unknown, in order to recognize and understand other cultures. In sum, [the program provides the children with an educational model] that allows them to develop skills to establish dialogical and negotiating relationships, which contributes to the

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<sup>70</sup> Intercultural education includes the relationships between teachers and students, the use of relevant curricular contents and educational materials, using active and participative methodologies, construct new concepts starting with the notions known to the students, take into account the local ways of learning in the learning process. Most of the time, the concept of interculturality used by the program has been an ideal to be pursued, leaving unattended the reality of asymmetrical relationships, conflict, and subordination that Quechua students have to deal with everyday.

construction of a progressively more democratic society based on the right that we all have to participate as diverse people in the life of our country.

Having discussed the general context of the school and the educational models operating in this context, I will next analyze the discourses used by teachers about schooling peasant children and the relationships in the school. The next sections show how ideas held by teachers about their students, their parents, and their community produced and reproduced asymmetrical relationships between teachers and students in the classrooms.

### **Transforming (“civilizing”) students**

#### *The teachers*

In order to understand literacy practices at school --an institution that historically has conceived of students as an homogeneous population-- it is extremely important to start recognizing the sociocultural and linguistic similarities and differences between the teachers and the students.

All teachers observed were bilingual and had different degrees of Quechua proficiency. All teachers but one had no difficulties in communicating with children in Quechua, however, they felt much more comfortable speaking Spanish as it was their native language. Teachers had learned Quechua at home as they were growing up, speaking with their grandparents or domestic workers. Most teachers had Quechua-speaking parents who used the language only among themselves but preferred using only Spanish with their children. Thus, in the teachers’ home the linguistic policies enacted the hegemonic linguistic ideologies that subordinated indigenous languages. Consequently, since childhood, teachers learned to deny the Quechua language and preferred using Spanish.

They all were born in the department of Cusco and were *mestizos*. Almost all of them were born in small towns where the urban-rural dimensions were not clearly defined. However, the teachers --no matter their upbringing--took civilizing roles and were agents of socialization of the city for the peasant children, who probably would emigrate sooner or later. Initial teacher-training in Peru has been dominated by an

orientation that emphasizes the effects of the “efficiency” and “efficacy” of public education on the students’ paths towards their performance in a competitive society (Rodríguez, 2000). Within this framework, a “normalizing-disciplinarian” tradition has saturated teacher training practices in Latin America (Davini, 1995). This tendency conceptualizes the teacher as a civilizing agent, legitimating school practices --which are related with the city and a Spanish-speaking *mestizo* environment-- negating the cultural practices of the students. The teacher --as a representative of the institution of the school—creates the norms and decides what is or is not *normal* (Ryan, 1991).

To compound the situation, teachers did not have a teacher initial training that could prepare them to teach Quechua-speaking indigenous students. Initial teacher-training in general has been poorly practiced, and the specialization in Bilingual Intercultural Education does not exist in Cusco, except in one Pedagogical Superior Institute. Teachers’ training did not address the need to use IBE to teach Quechua-speaking children. To compound the situation, the population of young people who study education are the poorest and least motivated (Palacios & Paiba, 1997).<sup>71</sup> In general, the image of the teacher lacks prestige and “is considered within the Peruvian society as a second rank profession” (ME, PHUD, GTZ, 1993, p. 15).

Culturally teachers considered themselves very different from rural children. Parents also viewed the teachers as *mestizos*, even though teachers had indigenous parents. Linguistic and cultural differences between teachers and students, then, are a reflection of the asymmetrical relationships that have existed since the colonization of the indigenous populations by Spaniards. Furthermore, this asymmetry was a consequence of their own process of schooling and teacher-training, which lacked opportunities for teachers to be trained to teach in a bilingual rural situation.

All teachers wanted to leave the rural areas and work in the city of Cusco. Since I started fieldwork, the principal of the school and the most experienced teacher in Huancalle applied for her transfer to a school in Cusco. In the year 2001 she was re-

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<sup>71</sup> The difficulties in order to find jobs in Peru has as a consequence that young people choose the teaching career because it is easier to be accepted.

assigned and left Huancalle.<sup>72</sup> All teachers had the same feelings. Career-wise, working in a community was not valued by the teachers, nor by the educational authorities from the Ministry of Education. The most experienced and better prepared teachers usually worked in urban areas. According to the Census of 1993, more than half public teachers had not obtained a title. From these teachers almost all attended rural schools (Palacios & Paiba, 1997). In terms of social prestige, an urban teacher was considered better than a rural teacher. The city, and therefore, the students of urban areas, were the ideal place of work and the ideal students to work with, respectively.

Furthermore, teachers' families lived in the cities of Cusco and Urubamba. Their children were schooled there. Huancalle, in spite of being a rural community was, to those in the process of getting closer to Cusco, a transition point between more distant communities and the city. The closeness of the community to the cities of Cusco and Urubamba --where teachers lived-- made it possible for them to go back and forth to the community everyday.

These characteristics are key to understand the discourses that teachers held about the students, their parents and the community, as will be discussed next.

*Teachers' discourses about the students, the parents and the community*

In the school in Huancalle, the hegemonic discourses about literacy were inserted within the larger and more general discourse of *modernization*. During interviews and informal conversations, the teachers presented this discourse boldly. According to Juvenal, for example, the first year he went to teach to Huancalle, he was shocked because the community was “*muy retrasada*” (very backward, behind its time). Juvenal explained the *backwardness* of the community as being due to the use of the Quechua language as the main language of communication within the community, and having cultural customs which were not shared by this teacher and the school as an institution. Juvenal felt “uncomfortable” with the language and the cultural practices of the children. He placed great emphasis on the lack of hygiene, something he could not stand.

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<sup>72</sup> This was an enthusiastic teacher of the IBE program. The fact that teachers were constantly trying to get out of the rural school –the permanent movement of the teachers—represented a great risk of the sustainability of the IBE program.

Hygiene, for example. Hygiene was what made me feel like I wanted to escape from here the most (...) That, which was natural for them, was something that made me react in a little strong way. Then I opted to form those discipline, cleanliness committees.

Juvenal opted for giving the students a bath if they came to class dirty. He also was very worried about having the students get hair cuts. The emphasis placed on the hygiene habits represented not only a preoccupation of health issues. As have been stated by Marisol de la Cadena (1994) in her study about the discourses about “decency” in Cusco,

the hygiene campaigns were not only related to the material cleanliness because they were oriented to clean the city’s dirtiness, but they also had to eradicate or at least dissimulate the presence of those ethnic urban images that supposedly did not deserve the cleanliness and moral order which should prevail in the city (p. 108, my translation).

This was a way to “erase” the indigenous existence in the city. De la Cadena argues that “decency was the sustaining notion of ethnicity” (p. 118, my translation). This ideology of “decency” also impregnated the political and academic discourse of the *indigenistas* about rural people: “the uncivilized Indians had to be educated” (p. 118, my translation). The characteristic of the discourse of the 1920’s of this group of academic and politicians resembles the ideas of the teachers, who, by educating children wanted to take them out of their “ignorance,” transform them into morally, physically and psychologically “healthy” people.

Not all the teachers had such strong deficit views about the community and the children, and not all used such strong words as Juvenal; however, they all wanted to change their students’ culture and language use. As was argued by Juvenal while speaking with me about literacy and Spanish learning by his students, “it depends on the work of each teacher if they have been able to change their students.”

One teacher, for example wrote in her planning notebook that bilingualism was one of the “weaknesses of the children” along with being timid, aggressive, abandoned, tardy, not well fed, having a low level of self esteem, learning difficulties, and loss of values. These characteristics were mentioned by teachers repeatedly. Although teachers

who participated in the IBE program stated that the Quechua language was part of the identity of the students; thus it should be fostered because of cultural reasons, Quechua was seen as a problem. There was the clear belief that Quechua was a second-class language, and its speakers were also second-class people. The subordination of Quechua is related to the subordination of its speakers and a result of the asymmetrical relationships with the *mestizo* and urban population of Spanish speakers.

I also found among teachers a romanticized version of peasant children. According to the teachers peasant children are sincere, warm, loving children, frequently poor and carelessly treated by their alcoholic parents, and exploited and treated unjustly. From the perspective of the teachers, children were not treated as children but as adults in their community. Peasant children were defined as sad children who did not have the opportunity to enjoy childhood:

They are children who assume their parents' responsibilities. It makes me sad, because they have to work hard and sometimes their parents exploit them (Marlene, second grade teacher).

Teachers wanted to change the *backwardness* of the sociocultural context of children --which was clearly identified by their ethnicity-- by cutting their hair, assuring their cleanliness, teaching them Spanish (oral and written) and making it possible for them to have access to secondary school. From the teachers' perspectives, peasant children were children who were **“easy to correct”** (Verónica, fifth and sixth grade teacher).

Although teachers thought parents were sometimes cooperative and interested in their children's education, they also had deficit views of the parents. Teachers talked a great deal more about the parents who drank, exploited their children, and physically punished them, than about the cooperative parents. According to the teachers, abandonment, violence, and indifference characterized the children's homes. These homes' environments were seen as the cause of children's difficulties at school, as stated earlier (Ansión, 1989). Teachers valued the parents' relationships with the school and their children's schooling but seldom valued their ways of life. Teachers had a narrow

understanding of the family lives of their students, according to their perspectives as *mestizo* middle-class professionals.

The first day I went to the school, after I explained the research project to Luzmila (a first and second grade teacher at that moment), she immediately told me that this was not a good school to study the topic of “literacy.” From her perspective, peasant children were not well prepared and “did not learn well.” The parents did not provide any form of support because most of them did not know how to read and write. Parents who were *analfabetos* (*illiterate*) did not help their children with schoolwork. She advised me to do my fieldwork in a school in Cusco, where children unquestionably learned to read and write more easily.

From the teachers’ views, difficulties at school arose from the children (not well fed, lack of intelligence, timid, lack of character, lack of motivation), and the children’s families and the community (values, language use, cultural practices, and so on). Teachers tended to explain cultural differences by demeaning their students, their parents and their sociocultural environment, which is not surprising considering that teachers were trained to perceive diversity as a problem (López, 1996). Teachers have been trained from a perspective that conceptualized the teacher as a civilizing agent. Their discourses valued school knowledge (i.e. reading and writing in Spanish) over the Quechua linguistic and cultural knowledge. Most teachers perceived Quechua culture and language as partly explaining the peasants’ backwardness. Thus, civilizing children meant they should act like *mestizo* and urban people.

It is important to mention that some of the teachers had very good intentions. They were sincerely worried about the success of their students and tried their best to help their students to learn. However, the views of the teachers were a result of their histories as students --as children and adults-- and of the way they internalized the dominant views about the Quechua culture and language. The fact that almost all of them had Quechua-speaking parents tells us that they have indigenous backgrounds that have been lost/unlearned during their life experiences. As Jung (1993) states:

The fact that many teachers speak an indigenous language and come from cultural contexts different from the coastal criollo context is not at all taken into



consideration in the teachers' training system. [Teachers' backgrounds] are unknown, silenced and negated. This person, who has become a professional, has lived twice the devaluation of his/her cultural baggage by the education system: during her own schooling experience and during her training as a teacher (Jung, 1993, p. 2, cited in López, 1996, p. 30, my translation).

Despite the fact that teachers were poorly paid, they still saw their profession as a strategy of social mobility. By becoming teachers they entered a world different than the indigenous world of their parents. They became assimilated to the *mestizo* urban world and left behind their indigenous backgrounds.

Furthermore, deficit views were not individual opinions of the teachers. These kinds of discourses are part of the school as a cultural institution, as described by Gee (2000). Based on poststructuralist and postmodernist works of Bakhtin, Foucault, Bourdieu and Fairclough, Gee defined the concept of Discourses as follows:

“Discourses” are characteristic (socially and culturally formed, but historically changing) ways of talking and writing about, as well as acting with and towards people and things (ways which are circulated and sustained within various texts, artifacts, images, social practices, and institutions, as well as in moment-to-moment social interactions) such that certain perspectives and states of affairs come to be taken as “normal” or “natural” and others come to be taken as “deviant” or “marginal.” (Gee, 2000, p. 183)

Two main positions illustrate teachers' ideas regarding children and their sociocultural context, I found two main positions: 1) A blunt racist discrimination of the children and their environment and 2) the construction of a romanticized image of the children which demeaned their parents and the community. Teachers holding either position had clearly embraced the attitudes and dominant discourses of *mestizo* sectors mentioned by Ansión (1993). They were professionals who wanted to “bring ‘culture’ to the rural areas, who believe that there is a need to ‘civilize’ the Indian, that they should be taught Spanish so they would have access to a true language” (Ansión, 1993, p. 12, my translation). I would add that literacy instruction was framed within this civilizing role for teachers. Thus, children should be *literate* in order to access a higher mode of language and culture.

In sum, it is unambiguous that peasant Quechua-speaking students were conceptualized from a “cultural-deficiency perspective” (Foley, 1997; Sleeter, 1993; Valencia, 1997). It is also clear that teachers aimed to transform indigenous children culturally and linguistically. In a national context where education has been intensively questioned because Peruvian students are “failing,” this cultural-deficiency perspective – which is not new— saturates teachers’ behaviors and their relationships with students in classrooms. Dominant discourses discussed in this section are produced and reproduced in interaction, as will be seen next.

#### *Normalizing practices in the classroom*

A main trait of the culture of the school was the use of strategies to control the students. Classroom activities were directed by a set of rules. The class rules asked students to be quiet while working, sit “right” (straight), be silent while the teacher was speaking, have their hair cut, arrive clean, raise their hands in order to talk to the teacher, and so forth. When children followed these rules they were sometimes rewarded or at least ignored, and when they did not, they were sanctioned in diverse ways: children were yelled at, teachers made fun of them in front of the class, and they were criticized.

The teachers were constantly asserting their authority over the children, and this was observed in their discourse and actions. As reported by Ames (1999), “a great proportion of time in the classroom is invested in the effort of silencing the children, situate them, immobilize them, and getting them to follow the given instructions” (p. 277, my translation). Teachers controlled the ways children moved their bodies. They constantly ordered children to sit down and be silent. I frequently observed teachers giving the children orders like:

You will go out to recess, and then you will start working. Go out in order and in a row. First that row. After recess you come to the classroom.

Teachers were constantly repeating “sit down!” and “silence!” to the children. Sometimes if the child was not sitting “properly” (she was leaning on one side or with her head on the desk) the teacher told the child to sit “correctly.” Teachers were also constantly reminding children they should have their hair cut.

Some teachers disapproved of the practice of “copying.” The following example shows how “copying” was defined in this classroom not only as cheating during exams or copying from someone else’s notebook when the task required creativity. One day the children were copying words from the blackboard to their notebook. The teacher verbally disapproved the behavior of one child who was taking notes from his classmate instead of from the board. After this interaction, these two children had a notebook standing between them as a barrier. When the notebook fell on the table, the girl immediately picked it up and stood it again in the middle of the desk.

The control of the children’s bodies occurred also when the behavior of the students was not really interrupting the lessons. For example, one second grade teacher called two girls to go to the blackboard to solve addition problems. They both came to the board holding hands. The teacher told them to let go of each other’s hands. They did so, however, they solved the operation consulting with and helping each other in a low voice.

This example is interesting to me because even though children did what they were asked, they, in some way, resisted teachers’ control. When they found a good time to do it, they shared their answers to the exercise on the board, a practice that was normally sanctioned by the teachers. Children, in fact, had ways of resisting the power of the teacher: speaking when they were not supposed to, speaking loudly, getting up and walking around the classroom, refusing to work, or “copying” a solution to a math problem.

Controlling the movement of the bodies, in and out of the classroom, controlling their posture and the use of their voice, and even their habits of holding hands (expressing care, togetherness and support) was part of the idea of transforming the children, so bluntly stated in the teachers’ discourses. It seemed to me it had something to do with the attitude of civilizing, which was found in teachers’ discourses. These behaviors also corresponded to teachers’ beliefs about an ideal: children should behave orderly (Ames, 1999). Some of them allowed interactions among the children during certain cooperative activities; however, most of them did not have that kind of interactional structure in their classroom.

Similarly to Ames' (1999) findings, teachers had different ways to get the class "in order." Sometimes they took time to give explanations to the children about why it was important to be silent. However, most of the time they made fun of the children in front of the whole class, yelled at them, threatened students and punished them as an example to others. Teachers often criticized students in front of the class and sometimes made the criticism extensive to all students in the class. The following are examples of teachers reprimanding students in order to get them "in order:"

1. One morning, while the teacher was correcting the children's notebooks, a child came crying because another had hit him. The teacher said to him: "Oh! these children are horrible ones! Shut up, shut up now, next time I will beat you!" Later she said to another boy: "Pedro, are you working? You haven't done anything. Your dad or mom will come tomorrow and I will show them your notebook."

2. When a girl was walking around the classroom the teacher yelled: "Hey you! Go to your SEAT! This custom of yours, all of you! The same as your classmates! You have to be sitting quietly in your seat!"

3. Two boys were not doing their work of copying from the board. After taking out the pages they were working on, the teacher sent them to work on a bench, kneeling down on the floor. She yelled at them while pulling the arm of one of the boys: "Both vagabonds have gotten together!" Then, she turned to the whole class and threatened the rest of the children: "Work, or else you will be like that!" Moreover, the teacher then said to the class that these two boys had repeated second grade, as a warning for the rest of the class. These children did not work and the teacher yelled: "I will knock his head right now!"

These examples of the methods teachers utilized to create an ordered classroom engendered the feelings of shame and inadequacy that children often expressed through their faces and bodies: closing their eyes, as if they were going to be beaten, lowering their heads watching the floor and sometimes crying. It was clear from these examples that children were constantly presented with an image of themselves as children who were not able to succeed and should be "corrected" all the time. As will be seen in the

next chapter, during literacy instruction, errors were also constantly remarked upon and corrected in the ways described above.

These teacher behaviors were patterns I found. However, the frequency and the intensity of these ways of controlling children varied with the teachers. Teachers who participated in the IBE program tended to explain to the children more than yelling and threatening them.

Generally, my observations in the classrooms revealed teachers who were continuously normalizing students. As stated by Ryan (1991)

as one of a multitude of institutions that employ disciplinary technology, schools adopt a pervasive regime of observation and supervision in its efforts to normalize students. But like so many other institutions in the modern world, schools systematically produce inequalities despite official policy statements to the contrary (p.106).

Ryan (1991) argued that normalizing students is related to docility and productivity, which are valued by the institution of the school. It also creates standards of “normal” and “abnormal.” Children were classified by teachers as “good students” and “bad students” according to how they complied with the norms. It is important to mention that power is not held by individuals, but rather

domination and the subsequent production and maintenance of inequalities are the overall effect of a strategic relationship that is inextricably intertwined with institutional practices (e.g. disciplinary technology) and a multitude of discourses (e.g. productivity) (Ryan, 1991, p. 116-117).

Classroom interactions showed that the norms in school about how to behave, how to move the children’s bodies, what language to speak, were not only socializing children into the world of school, but they were clearly socializing them into a framework that devalued their language and culture. Language use in the classroom was also controlled by the teachers. Images about the Quechua and Spanish languages were constructed in the interactions between teachers and children, as will be discussed in the next section.

### *The unauthorized language in the classroom*

In Huancalle, the children's mother tongue is Quechua. They speak mainly Quechua from birth until 5 years old, although there is an increasingly used linguistic policy at home that promotes the use of Spanish with infants<sup>73</sup> (de la Piedra, et al., 2001). Although children of Huancalle arrived at school being mainly speakers of Quechua, school instruction was conducted mainly in Spanish.

While the classes were in session, most of the time teachers' interactions with the students were in Spanish. The class sessions were done almost at all times in Spanish, regardless of the participation of the teachers in the IBE program. Teachers in the first grades tended to use more Quechua than teachers in charge of the upper grades (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grades). Teachers from the first grades used Quechua only when they felt their students had not understood an explanation or instruction. They switched from Spanish to Quechua to be sure the message was clear. The reduction in the use of Quechua language in the upper grades responded to the belief that children should be prepared to go into a secondary school in the urban areas, where teachers spoke and taught only in Spanish. To be prepared for *colegio* (secondary school) meant, from the teachers' perspective, being able to communicate in oral Spanish and having acquired literacy skills in Spanish. Verónica, the fifth (2001) and also sixth (2002) grade teacher was worried about her students not having acquired the sufficient Spanish skills in order to be able to succeed in secondary school.

Quechua language was openly or covertly unauthorized in the classroom: One of the teachers prohibited the children to speak in Quechua inside the classroom, and the others did not use it frequently. Verónica, a teacher trained in bilingual education stated:

We only speak Spanish, just pure Spanish, but we do not speak Quechua. But I kept doing Quechua literacy, in my own way, doing dictation and correction of it. We just avoided speaking Quechua during class hours because outside the classroom they always spoke Quechua. Sometimes I had to tell them a word in

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<sup>73</sup> "The *wawas* (infants and little children) are participants whose presence triggers code-switching of both adults and children. In situations where *wawas* participate, we frequently found that parents spoke to other adults and older children in Quechua, however, they chose to use Spanish with the *wawas*" (de la Piedra, et al. 2001, p.33, my translation).

Quechua and I used to go out and from the window I talked to them in Quechua. It was prohibited just in the classroom.

The case of Verónica was frustrating because in spite of having participated in the IBE program for two years and having a fluent relationship of trust with her students, she opted to prohibit speaking Quechua in the classroom. This was not characteristic of most of the teachers in the program. However, it is an example of how difficult it is to modify the ideas acquired during initial teacher training. In addition to this teacher's comments, I observed several times that when she started to speak in Quechua inside the classroom some students immediately yelled: "No!" The teacher explained that using Quechua at that moment was fine because they were going to do a lesson or discuss a reading in Quechua. The next excerpt was recorded while Verónica was conducting a class of religion. The teacher was talking about the Holy Week with a little cube containing pictures related to the topic. Showing the picture on the cube the teacher said:

Teacher: Here is God and there are the men. And he says "I have to do something so we will be together, **kuska kananchispaq.**" **Ima, a ver, noqa ruwasaq** ... (so we would be together. Let's see, I am going to do...).

Child: ((Raises his hand making a sign of "stop," looking at the teacher as if to say that speaking Quechua inside the classroom was not allowed)).

Teacher: Yes, it is fine, I have to explain them because some are from sixth grade who have repeated and they will not understand me. Then, that is why ... With my students of fifth grade I know I should not talk [in Quechua]. And well, God tells us "I do not want you to be separated...." ((the teacher kept on explaining in Spanish)).

As the teacher was explaining in Spanish, she decided to code-switch to Quechua, so the children who had just repeated the sixth grade could understand her. A child reacted by raising his hand. This child's action was immediately interpreted by the teacher as a reaction triggered by her use of the Quechua language. Thus, she felt the need to explain why she was using Quechua in the classroom. This teacher did not use Quechua anymore during the school day. This illustrates the active participation of the children in the production of the hegemonic position of the Spanish language and literacy.

Teachers of Huancalle who participated in the IBE program were aware of the difficulties children went through because of being taught in their second language. They were aware that understanding was easily reached in Quechua, while in Spanish children could not understand and express as much as they did in their mother tongue. However, they still chose to use mainly Spanish for instruction. In addition, although teachers who participated in the IBE program<sup>74</sup> reported they valued their students' home language and that they talked to their students about the cultural benefits of maintaining the language, their actions conveyed a message that devalued the students' home language.

Teachers ignored consciously or unconsciously the principles of bilingual education. By choosing Spanish as the language used to conduct the class, the teachers were behaving according to their beliefs that Spanish is a more suitable language for instruction and contributed to the construction of an image of the Quechua language as an inadequate language for teaching. Cummins (1986, 1996) and Ernst-Slavit (1997) have cautioned us about the role of teachers' language use at school, concerning the message sent to students about the value of native language and culture.

Generally, teachers did not question the Spanish-only approach to literacy instruction. At the discourse level, teachers who participated in the IBE program knew that children needed to be taught in their first language. One teacher, for example, attributed the difficulties of students to acquire literacy skills to the fact that children were "violently" taught in Spanish and that such practice was a shock to them and created insecurities and confusion in the students. However, in their teaching practice they used mainly Spanish as the vehicle of instruction.

In spite of the fact that 16.5 % of the Peruvian population (more than 3 million) older than five years of age speak Quechua as their mother tongue, that 85.8% of the rural population speak Quechua as their first language (Godenzzi, 1997a) and that Quechua is

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<sup>74</sup> I will only refer to these two teachers from Huancalle. The case of these two teachers is not the case of all or the majority of teachers attending the program, however, they represent a sector of teachers, who in spite of being trained in IBE education, choose to apply only certain strategies but do not really change their model of instruction.



the most widely spoken language in the Andes,<sup>75</sup> “Spanish is the language of the dominant sector, and Quechua the language of the subjugated sector” (Escobar, Matos & Alberti, 1975, p. 53). Although, the sociolinguistic reality is more complex, because of the increasing bilingualism, an indisputable situation is that the inter-ethnic relationships in Peru have been asymmetric relationships based on economic, racial, linguistic and cultural discrimination (Varese, 1987). Since colonial times, the Quechua population has been excluded from national political life and has lived in extreme poverty.

Quechua language use has been stigmatized and Quechua speakers have been in a position of economic, social and political subordination. Discourses of “development” and “progress” encourage the renunciation of the Quechua language and culture (Godenzzi, 1997a). A “continuous cross-generational shift from Quechua monolingualism to Spanish monolingualism” (Hornberger & King, 1996, p. 427) is a result of the situation of Quechua as the language of an oppressed sector of Peruvian society. Presently, Quechua language is seen from a “language-as-problem” perspective (Hornberger, 1988a). Along the same lines, educational policies have been homogenizing, towards the assimilation of indigenous people, negating their knowledge and culture. Schooling has meant for many indigenous people unlearning what had been learned at home and their community (López, 1996).

Language and culture of peasant Quechua-speaking children is covertly or explicitly devalued everyday in the classroom. In the case of the teachers trained by the IBE program, they had appropriated part of the discourse about IBE education; however, they did not take into account the pedagogical benefits of using Quechua in the classroom. With no doubt the broader societal attitudes, incarnated by the teachers, contributed to create the context of literacy learning in the classroom. We will see that these attitudes and the ideology of literacy shaped the motivations of teachers and children to use and develop Spanish literacy over Quechua literacy. This is a common issue in situations of inequality, as shown by Valdés (1992).

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<sup>75</sup> Quechua has more than 10 million speakers in the Andean Republics (Hornberger & King, 1996). Quechua is spoken in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. The countries with greater numbers of Quechua speakers are Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, all former territory of the Inka empire.

In sum, I have presented the school in Huancalle. The sociocultural context of the school was impregnated by the civilizing roles of the teachers and the school about the peasant children's lives. It was characterized by the asymmetrical relationships between teachers and their students, constructed during interaction. The normalizing practices of teachers at school related to discourses about transforming peasant students and civilizing them. In my opinion, while the relationships in the school and the subordinate position of the language and culture of the peasant students are maintained, I believe that IBE is not possible. In the next section, I will further explore these issues.

### **The official world of literacy**

“*Munayllan leyeyqa, munayllan qelqayqa*” (It is just beautiful to read, it is just beautiful to write)<sup>76</sup> says a bilingual school song children sing gathered in the second grade class of Huancalle (Appendix 2). It is not surprising that the two first verses of the song are related to reading and writing. From the perspective of the teachers, these are the most important things that children learned in school.

Fieldwork allowed me to identify diverse discourses of literacy held in Huancalle by the players in the educative process: teachers, children and parents. These multiple discourses need to be presented in order to understand literacy practices.<sup>77</sup> I found that some literacies were “more dominant, visible and influenced than others” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). *Schooled literacy* was the most visible literacy for teachers and children. During the interviews with the teachers --as opposed to what I found from talking to *comuneros*-- when they were asked about reading and writing, it was clear these practices were immediately related to schooled literacy. Teachers' theories about language, literacy, and education shaped their actions in the classroom. Schooled literacy instruction was framed by the sociocultural environment of the school that reflected the theories of teachers about these issues. I have shown earlier in this chapter that teachers had a set of beliefs and premises that came from their own life experience and culture, and these were dictated to the peasant children. Literacy practices at school were framed

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<sup>76</sup> The way of saying this in Quechua is “munaymi liyiyqa, munaymi qilqayqa;” however, the teacher is making efforts to improve her Quechua as her second language.

<sup>77</sup> Local ideas about literacy held by *comuneros* have been presented in the previous chapter. The present chapter will present the teachers' perspectives about literacy.

by the relationships in the classroom based on ethnocentric positions, ideas about changing the children, and the hegemonic discourses about what is literacy and how it should be taught.

In spite of the fact that schooled literacy is perceived as a neutral and universal phenomenon, literacies are always immersed in values and ideological positions. It is clear that literacy does not reside in the individual, but it becomes a resource of a community (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). In the case of the school, it is a resource used by the community of the school that is characterized by certain values, local ideas and beliefs that will shape the characteristics of the use of literacy realized in social interaction. Literacies are “*associated with different domains in life*” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 11), --for example home, community, church or school-- and in spite of the fact that there is a crossing of the boundaries of these domains,

domains are structured, patterned contexts within which literacy is used and learned. Activities within these domains are not accidental or randomly varying: there are particular configurations of literacy practices and there are regular ways in which people act in many literacy events in particular contexts. (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 11)

Thus, the school as an institution supports a number of literacy practices which have been constructed as the only Literacy due to the fact that the school is an influential institution.

#### *Literacy instruction*

From all teachers’ perspectives, reading, writing and speaking Spanish “correctly” was the most important thing children learned at school, along with the four basic operations. Quechua literacy was not mentioned at all. Thus, all children were taught literacy in Spanish. The teachers who participated in the IBE program seldom worked literacy in Quechua. The exclusive focus on these basic skills was more prominent in the first grades (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades), where teachers dedicated themselves most of the time to literacy instruction and math. A first grade teacher told me as she gave her answer to my question, What do you teach children in first grade?: “*A leer, escribir, sumar, restar. ¿Qué más se les puede enseñar?*” (To read, write, add and subtract. What else can they be taught?). Teaching the children only these mathematical and literacy skills --

conceptualized only as technical aspects, as will be seen next-- was a result of the *deficit view* already presented, along with hegemonic definitions of schooled literacy.

According to their beliefs, the methodology used to *alfabetizar* (to make *literate*) the children is the *método silábico*. This method “goes beyond isolated sounds and uses the syllable as the basic unit for introducing the process of decoding... The vowels are taught first, but they are immediately paired with consonants to make syllables and words” (Pérez & Torres Guzmán, 1996, p. 50). The child learns to decode –generally meaningless—syllables, and then words and sentences. This method is characterized by the isolation of language structures.

Teachers do *planas*, which are pages full of several rows of the same words, following the teacher’s written model. Most teachers took examples of words from books or printed educational materials in Spanish which were irrelevant to the contexts of students’ everyday lives. Even in the case of fourth graders, I found the same treatment of the written word. When I revised the students’ notebooks it was obvious that nothing of what was written in the notebook in the area of “integral communication” was created by students. Written words were mostly meaningless to the students. For example, Alfonso’s notebook (a fourth grader) contained the following literacy activities, all of them in Spanish:

**Planas of one entire page containing syllables, words and sentences** (52 pages): I found two pages full of syllables, constructed with each consonant and each vowel in alphabetical order. There were 22 pages with four words beginning with the same letter of the alphabet on the first line. For example, one page looked like this: *Félix* (a name), *foto* (picture), *fuma* (smokes), *frito* (fried). The rest of the *planas* included sentences like *Milagros es ordenada* (Milagros is orderly). The last pages of the notebook contained sentences about the last topic worked, Independence Day: *La patria es nuestro territorio* (The motherland is our territory), *El Perú es dónde nacimos* (Peru is where we were born), *El himno nacional es nuestro canto* (The national hymn is our song).

**Copied texts from books or the board** (4 pages.)

**Copied sentences written by the teacher** (1 page.)

**Dictation** (5 pages): Dictation consisted of lists of words.

**Work of syllables** (8 pages): Lists of words, written in alphabetical order. Next to these, there was a second column containing the same words divided by syllables. Examples of these words are: *Agripina* (a name), *freno* (break), *abrigo* (coat), *grúa* (crane), *grillo* (cricket).

The teachers who participated in the IBE program used some strategies that were given during the training for Quechua literacy instruction in order to teach Spanish literacy. As seen earlier, the program suggested an eclectic approach to Quechua literacy instruction that combined the whole language approach and the natural method. The program also considered that the syllable method would be used by the teachers. A first grade teacher asked the children to tell stories, then they selected a character (an animal, for example), and the teacher wrote a small text, based on the children's oral production. Later, she took out some words of the text replacing them with new ones in order to have different texts with different meanings. This was one of the methodological strategies given to the teachers by the bilingual program. The teachers appropriated for Spanish literacy instruction some of the strategies meant to be used for Quechua literacy purposes.

In the upper grades, teachers focused also in developing concepts, keeping to a program they designed during the first months of the year, following the guidelines of the Ministry of Education curricula. They worked five content areas: integral communication, logic-math, personal-social, science and environment, and religious formation. In spite of their program, teachers from the fifth and sixth grades were worried about preparing children for secondary school, which meant basically to ensure the Spanish oral proficiency and the Spanish literacy skills of students. Thus, while they worked other areas, attention was paid to students' literacy "skills."

Let us go back to the definition of Discourses presented earlier. Discourses are ways of talking or writing in which certain perspectives become normal and other marginal. Teachers' starting point of literacy instruction was the *ignorance* of the students and their parents. Ignorance was directly related to *illiteracy* and "lack of

instruction.” They told their students that literacy will lead them out of a situation of *ignorance*:

That is why I always tell the children: “Oh! We should not be illiterate” ... I tell them that reading and writing will take them out of what is ignorance.

Then, literacy was defined by teachers as a “tool to get out of ignorance,” which was characterized by teachers as becoming professionals, leaving the community (the rural area), adopting “a different vision,” “a different way of treating people.” From one teacher’s perspective, by becoming professionals children “would understand psychology better” and treat their children and their wives better (when they have them):

Ignorance is when somebody beats you, you hit your children and your wife. And education will always provide them with a change, a [good way of] treating people, [if the peasant children become professionals] they will understand that they have to treat people better.

*Illiteracy* was described by teachers as a “sad” situation that needed to be changed. For all teachers, *illiterates* were people in “disgrace,” “handicapped,” in a situation of disadvantage, who could not use language appropriately, who did not have access to information, and were not able to handle it. Although some of them acknowledged that *illiterates* were also knowledgeable people in some aspects (agricultural work, oral traditions, weaving) and “good,” “honest” people who had not had the opportunity in life to get educated, the disadvantages and negative aspects of illiteracy were highlighted. Teachers identified literacy as a way to “solve” social problems such as domestic violence and poverty. *Illiteracy*, from this perspective, is related to morally ill behaviors: alcoholism and violence. Teachers considered *illiterate* people as *sumisos* (weak of character) who had to obey the *literate* people in Huancalle, who usually are the ones who accede to become authorities in the community. Teachers told me:

The illiterate misses information. Every person who does not know how to read and write is like a handicapped, like it is said, right? Because knowing how to read and write is part of life any way. I think now it is obligatory.

There is always a difference between the educated and the non-educated. Reading and writing gives them more opportunity of being able to relate to other people...

they can occupy hierarchical positions [within the community] and can talk at a high level with other people.

What underlies this last comment is very important to understand the meanings of literacy from the teachers' perspectives. Peasants, when they become *educated* and *literate* will be able to speak with *other people*. *Other people* are educated, Spanish-speaking people from urban areas, who are in a superior position to peasants. From the teachers' perspectives, peasants should become educated and *literate* in order to be able to establish relationships and "talk at a high level" with urban non-indigenous people. In sum, they should become like urban people. Teachers' ideas about literacy are impregnated by the hegemonic discourse about literacy by which *illiterate* are stigmatized and perceived in a racist manner because of having a *standard* of the *literate* -- towards which everybody should be headed to-- as the *educated* people, meaning formally educated people. As Ilich (1991) has argued, the notions of personhood and knowledge are being defined now by the criteria of literacy. Being *illiterate* and being indigenous was a condition frequently interrelated by hegemonic discourses of literacy. Local literacies (which will be presented in chapter six and seven) were ignored or were not valued as schooled literacy was by teachers. As McLaren stated regarding *being White*, being educated and *literate* becomes "the invisible norm for how the dominant culture measures its own civility" (McLaren, 1991, p.244).

### **Oral and written language**

Oral and written language has been perceived not only as different things but also as valued differently by the definitions of schooled literacy. As I have stated before, the traditional academic views of literacy (the 'great divide' position), which later impregnated the media and public opinion, had the consequence of generally dividing oral and written language. Furthermore, orality and literacy were seen from an evolutionary perspective. Literacy, on one hand, was associated with cognitive and social development, and orality, on the other hand, was associated with ignorance and underdevelopment. *Literate* societies, then, were perceived as higher stages of civilization than oral societies.

At the Huancalle school I found that, generally, literacy was more highly valued than oral language as the most important knowledge that was imparted by the school. This was obvious when during the classroom activities, in the first grades, there was almost no work aimed to develop oral language in the children in either Quechua or Spanish. Almost all the activities involved “reading” (decoding with good pronunciation) or “writing” (copying from the board or taking dictation). Generally all educational activities finished with a written product in the students’ notebooks. When students worked in groups, they always made a written product on a large piece of paper, which later they all had to copy in their notebooks. In the case of the upper grades, teachers always had a small conversation about the topic, in order to “motivate” the students and contextualize the lesson. Usually this part of the lesson was done quickly, superficially, and was closely guided by the teacher. In contrast, the written part of the lesson was longer and given more importance.

Even oral language activities had sometimes the goal of developing students’ literacy skills. For example, a teacher told me she used rhymes with the vowels “e” and “o” (problematic vowels for Quechua-speaking children to pronounce), as a strategy to improve children’s writing skills. In this case it is obvious that by working with rhymes, the teacher had the goal of improving the children’s pronunciation (the Quechua-speaking children’s accent when they spoke Spanish), so later they could write with the correct spelling in Spanish.

In addition, certain norms of the written language were transferred to the use of oral language. Thus, the use of a student’s oral language was evaluated sometimes in terms of written language. These behaviors constructed schooled literacy as a “standard,” sometimes even when the children used spoken language. It is not difficult to see how during literacy events -- in the moment-to-moment use of language and social interaction-- written language was constructed as a higher linguistic mode than oral language. The next example shows that, even when children were using oral language, the teacher used schooled literacy criteria for the evaluation of written texts to correct the speech of the child.



One day, the fifth grade teacher was ending a class related to “the letter.” She told the children to act as if they were asking an imaginary child his name. One student asked the question “*Niño, ¿cómo te llamas?*” (child, what is your name?), as if he were asking the imaginary child his name. When he made the question orally; he did not stress the “appropriate” intonation for a question, according to the teacher’s criteria. Then the teacher told the student that he should make the question using a “question mark.” This time, the student repeated the question using the intonation of a question. In Quechua inquiry is not marked by intonation, but by the suffix *-chu*. The teacher wanted the child to speak with the intonation of standard Spanish and referred to a written formal feature to correct him.

All of these behaviors show us that teachers believed that anything worthwhile should be written in order to preserve it, and anything written had being learned, as was also found by Zavala (2002). Actually, children’s writings were considered evidence of what was developed by the teachers. Teachers felt the pressure of the parents who wanted to find written words in Spanish on their children’s notebooks. Supervisors (from the institutions of the Ministry of Education in charge of teachers’ supervision) also checked what was written in order to monitor the teachers’ work.

In my opinion, the higher value of written language was related to the dominant discourses about literacy as a needed tool for progress and cognitive development. As Street (1993) stated, literacy

has come to be associated with crude and often ethnocentric stereotypes of “other cultures” and represents a way of perpetuating the notion of a “great divide” between “modern” and “traditional” societies that is less acceptable when expressed in other terms. (p. 7)

I also think this disparity of value is connected to the difference in the prestige of each language used at school. Although some use of written Quechua was observed, Spanish was the main language used when writing or reading. Furthermore, during the interviews with teachers, when I asked about literacy, they immediately related it to Spanish literacy, without even considering Quechua literacy. In order to have them talk about Quechua literacy, I had to be explicit asking in particular about Quechua literacy.

In oral Quechua, teachers gave explanations to students. However, what was written on the board, poster boards, and the notebooks was written mainly in Spanish. Thus, another reason to value written literacy higher than orality was its immediate association with the language of prestige.

Schooled literacy is presently viewed as the *standard* literacy. It is not surprising, given the fact that the authority of the school is constantly being reminded to students. It is clear that peasant children were seen by teachers as “the other,” because they did not share the same sociocultural background considered as the *normal, natural* way of living. Standards or *normal* behaviors generally do not allow diversity. Schooled literacy was seen as the standard literacy, and thus, it was valued higher than local literacies. Thus, as has been also found by Zavala (2001, 2002) in her study in a Peruvian rural Quechua-speaking community, schooled literacy is imposed by the institution of the school.

Teachers in Huancalle worked towards reaching a standard. They firmly believed that this was their job: to make their children read and write “correctly.” And what was expected of students from this standard? In the next chapter, I will present the main characteristics that literacy practices took in the pedagogical practices in Huancalle. I will discuss how literacy was constructed as something that should be “correct” and continuously “corrected.” Finally, schooled literacy was a “standard” perceived as “correct” but also perceived only as “Spanish literacy.” Quechua literacy was used in the school. However, its uses did not have the end of teaching Quechua literacy.

CHAPTER FIVE:  
“FIGHTING THE *ERRORS OF READING AND WRITING*”: LITERACY  
PRACTICES AT SCHOOL

The ideas about literacy go hand in hand with ideas about learning. Literacy learning “takes place in particular social contexts and part of this learning is the internalization of social processes” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 14). This assertion is valid for the context of the school, as well as other contexts analyzed here. By establishing a connection between literacy ideologies, practices, instructional structures and learning, I hope to understand how literacy was taught and learned, in order to find alternative educational strategies to teach Quechua-speaking children.

I understand learning from the perspective of the sociocultural theory, which understands children’s development within a sociocultural process, as conceptualized by Moll, Tapia and Whitmore (1993), Salomon and Perkins (1998), Wertsch (1998), Wertsch, del Rio and Alvarez (1995), among many others. This approach stresses the importance of taking into account the mediating role of culture in human cognition, as well as the fundamental part that social relationships take in the distribution of thinking. This perspective proposes that cognition is shared socially (Wertsch, 1991). Thus, knowledge cannot be owned individually, but it is constructed through social interactions among people, tools and the environment. Acquiring knowledge is always a “mediated action” (Wertsch, 1998).

An important line of research studies (Gonzales et al., 1995; Moll, Tapia & Whitmore, 1993; Velez-Ibañez & Greenberg, 1992) have focused their attention on the “funds of knowledge” --the cultural and material resources-- that families and communities distribute among their members. Some of these researchers (Moll, et al., 1993) used the same approach to understand how knowledge is distributed in the classroom. They proposed that both sociocultural settings influence “how and why people acquire knowledge” (Moll, et al., 1993, p.140). Underlying this approach is the supposition that the organization of the learning experience influences the learning

process. Thus, the school, and particularly the teacher, can really make a difference, against some ideas that have been considered determinant variables of educational attainment (i.e. socioeconomic status).

I will analyze the way in which children and their interactions with print are shaped by the relationships found in the school setting. From this perspective of learning, I will try to understand what happened in the classrooms of Huancalle and how literacy practices were constructed, adapted, produced, and resisted by teachers and children, so as to imagine better structures and environments for literacy learning for students from Huancalle.

I agree with Delpit (1995) that it is not a good idea to place literacy approaches into “skills” and “processes” boxes. What is significant is to find the ways to help children to find their own voices, which will be heard by others in the larger society. My assumption is that there are some instructional structures that facilitate literacy learning (Dyson 1993; Trueba 1987, 1989; Henry, 1996). Within the literature of children’s literacy acquisition, I have found that instructional structures promote different types of student participation during literacy events. The characteristics of a social organization of the classroom that promotes literacy learning were related to 1) the real (social) use of the technical features of reading and writing (Dyson, 1993), 2) an inclusive approach of the children’s language use (both/and approach) (Henry, 1996; Delpit, 1995) and to children’s linguistic repertoire in contexts such as their homes and communities (Dyson, 1993), and 3) the use of personal significant experiences of students and their cultural background in their own production (Dyson, 1993; Trueba, 1989). When technical features were immersed in social goals, as well as the communicative practices known to the children, they became more motivated to read and write.

In this chapter, I will present the characteristics of the literacy practices at school and the ways the instructional context was organized. School is a site in which social and ethnic relationships are constructed and negotiated, as was seen in chapter four. Literacy practices were a result of larger social and ethnic relationships: they were a result of powerful discourses about the *illiterate* and the *educated*. Literacy practices were also

shaped by the values and practices of the institution of the school. In turn, children and teachers were also producing, reproducing, and resisting these hegemonic discourses in the classroom and in the moment-to-moment interactions with print. I will reflect on how the literacy events were constructed in the classroom by using ethnographic data and transcriptions of selected literacy events, which illustrate the characteristics of schooled literacy practices. I will give attention to Spanish and Quechua literacy instruction, and to the way oral Quechua speech genres were used at school.

### **Reading and writing “correctly”**

Based on an ethnographic study with middle-class households, Street and Street (1995) proposed that literacy is defined within a framework of learning, teaching, and schooling, according to the middle-class parents’ and schools’ ways of relating with print. This process has been called by Street and Street (1995) the “pedagogization of literacy.” Thus, among multiple literacies, the literacy of the school is the one considered the standard. Furthermore, the ways of relating with print that are considered standard are the middle-class dominant ways legitimated by the school, as has been found earlier (Heath, 1982, 1983; Street & Street, 1995). In the case of Huancalle, I found something similar. I have already discussed how teachers assumed a civilizing role and wanted to change children making them closer to an ideal: *mestizo*, urban, Spanish-speaking, and *literate* children. Literacy instruction was inserted into this situation. Literacy practices were imposed by the institution of the school for every child to learn, as if literacy practices were universal and, thus, good for everybody.

Within the *autonomous* perspective, schooled literacy values written language that “exists on its own” (Dyson, 1993, p. 16), which is independent from the context and any human relationship (Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Dyson, 1993; Zavala, 2002), *cohesive*, *coherent*, *explicit* (Dyson, 1993; Zavala, 2002), as opposed to the supposed characteristics of oral language (implicitness, context-dependence).<sup>78</sup> Literacy is seen as a

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<sup>78</sup> These differences between the oral and written language modes have been contested by researchers, who have found that social uses and contexts define the characteristic of linguistic modes. Besnier (1993), for example, demonstrated that literacy was used by the Nukulaelae in order to express feelings; thus, was far from having detached purposes.

source of information, which does not change in time (Dyson, 1993). Literacy is perceived as an end in itself, as has been strongly argued by Street and Street (1995).

Within this perspective, only certain texts are considered as *correct* literacy. This is the result of behaviorism and later, the “cognitive revolution” (1960’s and 1970’s), which emphasized the individual mind (Gee, 2000). Gee (2000) states:

cognitivism saw “higher order thinking” and “intelligence” as primarily the manipulation of “information” (“facts”) using general (“logical”) rules and principles ... The digital computer stood as the great metaphor for what thought was: “information processing” (and computers process information based on its forms/structure, not its meaning) (pp. 183-184).

Thus, literacy at school is usually measured according to the children’s mistakes rather than their successes, and the teachers tend to focus on the formal issues of literacy rather than communication or understanding. As I observed at the school in Huancalle, it was clear that the teachers’ theories about literacy and the connected behaviors reflected this rigid perspective, as was argued by Zavala (2001, 2002).

The real and social use of the technical features of reading and writing has been demonstrated to be key to literacy development in contexts in which instruction is organized –like schools. How was literacy instruction practiced in the school in Huancalle?

#### *A standard to attain*

Teachers in Huancalle think that the major difficulties children experience at school are related to literacy and comprehension of oral Spanish. A main preoccupation and goal regarding literacy instruction is teaching literacy by correcting the students’ *errors*. When teachers talk about *errors* they define them by the formal issues of literacy:

(When you refer to error, what you refer to?) To the correct way of writing, that ... (For example? Define exactly what you refer to.) OK. [What I refer] to error. For example, they say “ventana” [window]... In Spanish the correct [word] is “ventana,” but they write “vintana.” Then, this message is not correct because it is with “i,” and another person reads it --because they have to focus for a future life—then, if they want to communicate with other people, they have to do it correctly. That is what I refer to. They should overcome that error. It is an “error” because it is not right. It does not give the exact message, and then anybody who

is told “vintana,” [would say] “what would that be?” [That word] is not part of the Spanish vocabulary.

As was found by Zavala (2002), along with these teachers’ perspectives, students themselves thought that reading and writing was difficult. During interviews and conversations with the children of Huancalle, this was a recurrent theme. During observations in the classroom, it was clear that these ideas were reproduced at school. The following example illustrates how, in the interactions among teachers and students, the participants co-constructed the idea that literacy is difficult and that not all students would be capable of achieving it.

“He does not know how to read”

First and second graders taught by one teacher in one classroom, were copying from the blackboard a list of school supplies they had to bring the next week. There were two boys, Pancho and Antonio, (who had both repeated second grade) sitting in the back of the classroom. They had their eyes closed, as if they were sleeping, and not copying much from the board. The teacher, who was not a participant of IBE, went from child to child making corrections of spelling and tearing out pages of the notebooks of children who had done the assignment “wrong.” Wrong meant misspelling words. Pancho and Antonio had written three items from the list when the teacher got to their seats. The teacher tore one page from Pancho’s and Antonio’s notebooks, so they had to start to write all over again. After this incident both boys started to tease each other about their abilities to write and read. Pancho turned to me and told me about Antonio: “*No sabe, es mi mayor y no sabe leer*” (He does not know, he is older than me, and does not know how to read). Then he challenged his friend to read a word from his notebook (the name of his aunt). Antonio shook his head and said he could not read. Later, angrily, the teacher came back to their seats and wrote a note in their notebooks for their parents to come. The teacher then turned to me and loudly said in front of a girl: “*Esta niña no sabe nada. Por lo menos los otros tienen noción. ¿No?*” (This girl does not know anything. At least the others have a notion of it, right?).

The previous example shows how the hegemonic discourse is being produced during communicative interactions among teachers and students at school. In a task which only demanded copying from the board, and not the creativity of the children, the teacher frequently pointed out the “mistakes” of her students. Literacy was being constructed as something “difficult” and to which not all “can” have access to, although everybody should try. The “blame” was placed on the children, who are characterized as “unable” children. Phrases like “*no puede*” (s/he cannot [do it well]), “*no tiene noción*” (s/he does not have the notion [of how to do it]) were very frequently uttered by teachers while doing “literacy instruction.” I should say, however, that some teachers (the ones who participated in the IBE program) were more careful than others about using strong or denigrating language when they pointed out errors to children.

The idea that reading and writing are difficult and the emphasis on *errors* is clearly related to 1) the teachers’ perceptions about children, 2) the teachers’ culture and the education system, and 3) the hegemonic discourses about language and literacy. The teachers’ starting point was that children were *ignorant, less capable, Quechua-speakers*. As was seen in the previous chapter, peasant children were defined as *the others* who had some *good traditions* from their culture of origin that were sometimes accepted at school. However, being urban, *mestizo*, and Spanish-speaker was seen as *natural*. In addition, teachers felt pressures to satisfy the education system goals. These were characterized by complying with norms and objectives, measuring the children’s outcomes and paying attention to children’s lack of skills. The perspective that oriented these goals was influenced by discourses about productivity and efficiency. Finally, teachers had a shared way of defining literacy, which focused on its formal issues, as will be presented next.

#### *The focus on the formal aspects of literacy*

A sixth grade teacher (2001) said he worked within the “new educational perspective,” providing spaces for students to create their own work. However, immediately after reporting this, he told me the major difficulty that he found was the students’ confusion of the vowels. Then, his strategy to solve this problem was to accentuate the work of handwriting using words with the vowels that presented



difficulties. I cite this teacher, who represents the beliefs and feelings of all teachers in Huancalle:

... and the **major error** that I would tell, the **major problem** I could find in all this is the **confusion that children have because of having two languages**, the **confusion of vowels**. There is a lot of confusion between the “i” and the “e,” as well as the “o” with the “u.” I have tried to correct that... Then **they had to read just how it was in the book, changing not one single letter, not one single word...** **Regarding writing** also those books helped me especially to **look for words in the dictionary**, and do a lot of **handwriting**. I would tell you that here I work a lot of handwriting especially with the vowels that they mistook, the words that they mistook...

In the context of the school, reading meant pronouncing *correctly* and writing meant spelling *correctly* and drawing letters *neatly*, as has been found by Zavala (2001, 2002). Pronouncing correctly meant sounding out the letters and words without the characteristic accent of the Quechua-speaking children. Spelling correctly also meant avoiding the recurrent *errors* related to Quechua-speaking children’s accents, when they wrote in Spanish. Teachers were worried about teaching the children “to differentiate the upper and lower case letters,” and to respect the punctuation marks. Before students started to read aloud, teachers usually said things like: “When I make you go in front of the class, you have to read well, because of your grade, OK?”

When reading, children had not only to pay attention to the pronunciation of the words in Spanish, their second-language, but also to formal issues such as punctuation marks. In the next example, the teacher selected children to read the parts of a text they were studying: the “solicitude,” from a text the teacher had written on a poster board. This excerpt shows how the teacher stressed the importance of reading respecting the punctuation marks:<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> See Appendix 3 for the original transcriptions of all the literacy events presented.

“She has not respected the semi-colon”<sup>80</sup>

- Teacher: From here. You have not read to me.  
Then, Claudia, Claudia, Claudia, you have to read. Stand up!  
Number three! Claudia, loudly!
- Claudia: *Name, last name...*
- Teacher: *I.D.*
- Boy 1: ((getting ahead in the reading)) *where...*
- Claudia: *where...*
- Boy 1: ((getting ahead in the reading)) *does he live...*
- Claudia: *Where does he live wor...*
- Teacher: *Wor... She has not done it, she has not respected the semi-colon. People who do not respect the signs, would get... don't you know? They get a fine. You have to respect [punctuation marks].*
- Teacher: ((turns to a different child)) *Here, keep on going son, here. Works, let's see, let's see...*

The latter is also an example of how written language was valued higher over oral language. The text had to be read “exactly” as the text went, respecting all its formal characteristics as a written text, even when it became an oral text. When the girl made the *error* of not respecting the semi-colon, the teacher sanctioned her by reprimanding her in front of the class, followed by her turning to a different child to complete the reading of this part of the text.

When “reading” was done in the classrooms, the type of questions teachers asked were “what-type” questions, typical in the context of the school (Heath, 1983), which looked for answers already known by the children and the teacher. The answers were all in the text read. Furthermore, these questions were used as a way of reconstructing the text, and did not connect the text with personal experiences of the students. In the case of Mexican immigrant students in the U.S., Delgado–Gaitan (1990) found a similar situation, in which resources children brought to the classroom were not only invalidated and ignored, but sanctioned by what was considered a “standard” way of literacy.

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*Italics*, when reading from the board, the paper or when dictating a text.  
**Bold**, when participants spoke in Quechua.  
Regular, when participants spoke in Spanish.  
Underlined, to mark emphasis.  
( ), translation.  
(( )) contextual information.

Teachers followed a manual and did not allow children to bring their emotions and experiences outside the classroom to the literacy event. The teacher and the manual legitimated the authority of the questions about content and sanctioned the incorporation of children's cultural resources.

As a result of their in-service teacher-training in the IBE program, teachers tried to have a different approach to literacy: promoting activities that created opportunities for children to understand and enjoy reading and writing. However, they returned to a "traditional" methodology of teaching reading because of their beliefs about what literacy was. They wanted to be able to control the children's pronunciation of the words and they had to guarantee that students wrote and read texts with a "*buena forma*" (in good form). For example, the IBE program gave teachers reading material in Quechua, which teachers started to use. The teachers were trained to use the books with different suggested activities and in different participation structures. They were also encouraged to have ten to fifteen minutes of "reading for pleasure" each day. However, these strategies were not as valued as the known strategies that derived from a definition of literacy as skills. Thus, teachers sometimes tried them and left them aside. One teacher told me how she gave up doing these kinds of activities because of her need to closely control her students' pronunciation:

In the beginning I did free reading, then they rotated [the books], there are nice stories. But then I said "no, in this way I will not know who is speaking correctly." They could write and speak, but I want to know if they pronounce well and if they understand what they are reading.

Regarding writing, no matter what the goals of the activities were, teachers mainly focused on correcting children's spelling, handwriting, use of punctuation marks, and the use of capital letters. I observed this in all grades, especially in the first and second grades. They also stressed the need of doing an "orderly" work, leaving the appropriate number of lines between one question and the next, underlining the title, and using the red pen to write the title and the capital letters. The correction of misspelling or mispronunciation was generally done right on the spot. I often observed children being interrupted by teachers when they were reading out loud or when they were writing.

Such emphasis in the correction of *errors* had as a consequence the use of a number of literacy practices that the teachers believed worked best: repetition of words and sentences was the most frequently used strategy to achieve the goal of having children pronounce and spell correctly. According to this goal, the following were commonly used literacy practices: dictation, correction of dictations, *planas*, copying sentences, words, or syllables from the board, looking for words in the dictionary and copying them with the right spelling, copying paragraphs from a book, etc.

In spite of the fact that at the discourse level teachers talked about working from the perspective of *el nuevo enfoque educativo* (the new educational approach), the traditional methodology and strategies for literacy instruction persisted in different degrees varying from teacher to teacher. Within this traditional perspective, in the school context literacy was constructed generally --as was schooled knowledge in general-- as a group of skills to be transmitted into the heads of children (as if children's heads were empty containers): decoding and encoding. Most of the time, it was individually performed. Individual literacy performance was valued by teachers, who mostly provided children with individual tasks or suppressed children's collaborative behaviors. It was valued in it of itself and was not seen as an instrument of communication. When asked why teaching literacy was important for children, teachers' answers showed the view that literacy is an end in itself: "*leyendo van a producir textos*" (knowing how to read, they will produce texts). Literacy was mostly seen by teachers as an instrument to be used within the school. If children learned literacy skills, these skills would help teachers to work other assignments and prepare students to go to urban secondary level schools. Ultimately, literacy would be useful for students to become professionals and morally better persons.

Schooled literacy was decontextualized and an end in itself. The sentences written by the children did not usually have any meaningful context of communication. The only purpose of writing was to write in the notebook for the teacher to read and correct spelling and grammar. Written language was isolated from any social purpose. The transmission of the literacy skills and the structure of the texts, sentences, and words were

valued over understanding, construction of meaning or the creativity of the students, as was observed by Zavala (2001, 2002). Teachers believed that students could not comprehend or produce texts unless they managed the alphabet, the pronunciation of the words (without much accent), the use of capital letters, and the use of punctuation marks. They believed that students would not be able to produce texts on their own, if they were not skilled in these formal aspects of literacy:

Well, referring to creation [of texts], I have not done that yet. I simply have focused on other topics... I had to take [creation out of my program] because one always should have more time for correction, to do it all over again. Then, I said "let's do better on basics this year" ... What good is it for to do a story if they do not know well the concepts of capital letters or the use of punctuation marks? No, it is useless for me to have them write a story. I would have to be correcting over and over. That is why I have not been able to do original creations.

I agree with Zavala (2002) when she states that the central issue is that language is perceived by the school as an "object," a concept which implies that children should be able to see the language as something located outside them. This concept is related, according to Zavala, to the ideals of "objectivity" and "rationality" sought by the school. The emphasis on the formal aspects of the written language is related to the goal of being able to manipulate the language as an object. Children, as we have seen in this chapter, are supposed to reach a high level of awareness about their use of literacy (formal aspects) before their "spontaneous and creative relationship with their language" (Zavala, 2002, p. 46, my translation).

In sum, instruction was teacher-centered, focused on rote learning and on the *errors* or deficits of learners. Thus, literacy practices were highly controlled by teachers.

*Literacy practices were controlled by the teachers*

Teachers, as presented in the previous chapter, were constantly controlling children's activities and literacy was not an exception. Constantly students were being corrected by teachers. Correction of students' errors by teachers did not provide children with spaces for self-monitoring and self-correction, which has been found to be of great help for children to learn how to read and write (Goodman & Wilde, 1992). Teachers, before the children had written anything, told them how they should write. Thus, children

did not have real opportunities to be authors of their own texts. The following are examples of interactions in the classrooms that illustrate the control of students' literacy uses.

One day, a fifth grade teacher was doing a very frequent literacy practice: dictation. In this case, the goal of this literacy practice was exclusively to "correct" children's spelling errors. The teacher took a book that had been read by a girl in the previous literacy activity --individual reading-- in order to dictate students. Students took a page from their notebooks and rapidly started to write, and the teacher dictated: "Title: *The flowers*, with red. Dot to start a new paragraph. With blue: *There are many insects that feed from the flowers' pollen.*"

Teachers of the upper grades usually dictated the instructions or questions for homework and definitions of the topic worked on during the class session. When they dictated the questions or instructions they told the students how many spaces should they be leaving, the punctuation marks, and the color of the pen they should be using. They also specified if they should use colors or markers to make a drawing. When the teachers checked homework, they asked students to place the notebooks in the middle of the table or to bring them to their desks. The examination of the notebooks usually consisted in rapidly going through the sentences the children had written, correcting the spelling and grammatical errors. Teachers paid attention to the "order" of the students' writings, as the next example shows.

One day, a second grade teacher was revising the class work of one child who was doing *planas* of letters. Pointing at the work recently done by the child the teacher said: "What is this? I don't like this!" and crossed out about five lines that the child had already written. The teacher told the child to "write each letter in each little square [of his notebook]."

Similar interactions were observed recurrently. These interactions show how literacy was constructed in the classroom as an activity highly controlled by the teacher, where students played a role of listeners and doers, but not creators of their own texts. Teachers controlled the use of literacy *mediational tools* (Wertsch, 1998) during literacy

activities. For example, they said which notebook children should use, the size and number of pages children should use when doing group work, the selection of whether they used pens, crayons, pencils or markers, the color of the pens they should use according to what they wrote, where students should place their notebooks in order to be checked, and where children should display their written work. The characteristics and positions of mediational tools in the classroom were-- in an analogical way to the bodies of the children-- controlled by the teachers. The examples presented above illustrate this characteristic of schooled literacy. Similarly, Zavala (2001, 2002) found teachers established rigid limits in order to control the written word.

The language for talking about written language was also controlled by the teachers. In their everyday communication with the students, they taught them the *correct* and *authorized* terms to talk about literacy. Children had to learn what *letters*, *words*, *sentences*, *dictation*, *reading*, and *text* meant. In the next example, the teacher corrected the word a child chose to talk about a shape. This demonstrates who was authorized to choose the terms to talk about literacy. By doing so the teacher also denied the possibility that the child made a good selection of a word.

In a first and second grade classroom, the teacher was conducting whole-class instruction. She had made drawings on the board of pictures starting with the five vowels. Beside the pictures the teacher wrote the words matching the drawings (i.e. airplane, elephant). The children had to “read” the words and later name the vowels with which the words began. The children had trouble with the recitation of the vowels, so she started to explain the letter “a” individually to each student. She repeated a similar interaction with several students:

Teacher: Which vowel is this?  
Boy: a.  
Teacher: What is this called? ((pointing at the picture))  
Boy: Airplane.  
Teacher: This, what thing is it? ((pointing at a circle she just made))  
Boy: o ((the letter o)).  
Teacher: The o? No. They are roun... What is this called?  
Boy: rounds ((the local and school way of saying circles)).

Teacher: And with this it turns to ... ((the teacher writes on the notebook, turning the letter “o” into a letter “a”)).

Boy: The aaaa.

In spite of the fact that a circle represents also a letter “o,” the teacher dismissed the boy’s answer and corrected him by saying that the shape was “round,” the way to say “circles” at school. This example clearly demonstrates that the teacher has the power to reward or sanction the children’s selection of words, even when the word selected by the child was part of the authorized terms in the classroom. By saying “o,” the child selected a term legitimized by the school. However, at that moment the teacher did not approve of it because she was looking for the name of a shape and not a vowel.

Being aware of the beliefs and values underlying literacy instruction, as well as the interactions that surrounded literacy instruction at school –which clearly placed priority to a “right” form over the content of written texts– it is not surprising at all that children were not really comfortable writing or reading at school. Knowing that they had to dominate the formal aspects of reading and writing, as well as being constantly reminded by the teachers’ words and actions about all what “they were lacking” --as the words of one teacher stated--, children’s reactions when asked to write “whatever they want” are understandable. They quickly said “I do not know how to do it,” or “it is difficult” or “I can’t.” The ones who dared to do it always wanted to write in Spanish, the language in which rules of how to use literacy have been part of their daily routine. The ones who risked to write often wanted to copy from their school textbooks or write a riddle they already knew by heart.

As Zavala (2002) has found in the school in Umaca, there is a “pedagogical voice” that

constantly is reiterating the users have to do it “the right way” according to specific constraints and rules, as if they were passive receptors of literacy. Thus, form ends up becoming the priority and content becomes an aspect permanently governed by formal aspects. (p. 46, my translation)

Furthermore, because of having this traditional skills-based approach, teachers used “reductionist instructional strategies” (Moll & Díaz, 1993, p. 74). They gave children mainly simple decoding and encoding tasks and did not look for ways to maximize



resources brought by children to the classroom. The problem is that, as seen above, literacy instruction at school was approached from a traditional skills-based perspective. As Walsh (1995, p. 93) has stated:

Traditional skills-based approaches to literacy assume that knowledge is neutral, universal, and verifiable information that must be formally acquired and taught. Instruction breaks this knowledge down into manageable, discrete pieces that are systematically fed to students in a controlled way ... These approaches try to exacerbate racial/ethnic, language, class and gender stratifications, [and] deny what it is children do know.

The traditional skills-based approach I found in the school in Huancalle included a patterned social organization of literacy instruction, which constantly drew students' attention to the written language as something "difficult," "highly valued," something about which to be careful. The social organization of literacy instruction did not consider students as active participants in their interaction with print. The next section presents the roles teachers and students took during literacy events. I will focus on how the definition of schooled literacy influenced these roles, and in turn, how in the moment of interaction students and teachers reinforced and --a few times-- resisted schooled literacy practices by playing these roles or "conquering" new ones.

*The social organization of literacy events: "the solicitude."*

Literacy practices are defined at school by the social rules around them. "There are social rules about who can produce and use particular literacies" (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 13) and also when, what and how to read and write. Usually, teachers took the roles of evaluators and the experts, while children took the passive roles of learners and the ones evaluated. The participation of children in the decision of what they write, when, to whom, and how they do it was minimal. Usually they wrote texts for their teachers to read. Although sometimes they had to write for an imaginary reader, the one who decided who the imaginary reader would be was the teacher. I gathered numerous examples of the decisions made by the teachers about literacy use of the students, which show that children were not really authors of their own texts. When they had an opportunity to be creative, the characteristics of schooled literacy --already internalized by them or made

explicit at the moment by the teacher-- hindered their possibilities of creating their own texts.

Many constraints were taught by the teachers explicitly (as rules) as well as covertly (during social interaction) and were learned by the students as the *normal* behaviors regarding literacy. Consequently, when given an opportunity, children could not always freely create. I found these same behaviors in decision-making about what and how to write across different grades. I selected one literacy event that reflects the construction of literacy practices in the interactions of the roles of teachers and students: The session of the solicitude.

The 5<sup>th</sup> grade class was organized into 6 groups of children who worked cooperatively part of this session. The class was all conducted in Spanish (oral and written), but the children talked among themselves for the most part in Quechua. This literacy event occurred during a session of *comunicación integral* (the language arts period). The goal of the session was to write a solicitude to be sent to one of the public or private institutions that worked in the community with the intention of asking for a donation of prizes for their kite-flying contest. At the beginning of the session the teacher worked in a whole-class participation structure. Later, the children worked in groups in order to write one letter of request per group. The following were the texts the teacher wrote for children to read out loud --a definition of the solicitude, its parts and a model of the text:<sup>81</sup>

***The solicitude***

*It is a document utilized in order to ask authorities (institutions) for a service or favor.*

*Its parts-: are:*

- 1. Summary: Summarizes what is asked for.*
- 2. First name and title of the functionary.*
- 3. Name, last names, I.D., where does the solicitant lives, works, or studies.*
- 4. Text or body, which indicates what is asked for.*
- 5. Ending or farewell.*
- 6. Place and date of the solicitude.*
- 7. Signature and post-signature.*

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<sup>81</sup> See the original texts in Appendix 4.

The model of the solicitude written by the teacher was the following:

*I solicit: work  
Mister Mayor of the district of Taray  
S.A. [this is a formal resource to start a letter]  
Marcelino Sosa Peña with I.D.  
24600846 with residence in the community  
of Rayanniyoc. I present myself before you with all respect  
and request:  
That having finished my mechanical  
engineering career, I need to work  
in the vacant position there is in the  
Occupational Center of Studies that you direct,  
for that reason I attach a curriculum vitae.  
I beg attention of my petition for it is fair.  
Rayanniyoc August 20th 2001  
Signature and post-signature*

The teacher introduced the new text by asking children to read the definition of the “solicitude” and its parts. Even when introducing the topic, the teacher paid attention to the “pronunciation” of students when reading. This introduction framed the development of the activity within the rigid limits of the structure of the text. Just by placing the definition, the parts of the text and the model on the board, the teacher was indicating to the children the “right” way to write the solicitude. Furthermore, the teacher’s writing (the model) was presented as the legitimate text, the one to follow. The teacher made some explanations of the parts of the text after a child read from the board:

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1. Teacher: Very well, it says that his name, his ID, where he lives, where he studies should go here, but of the person that soli...
2. Child 1: cits.

The teacher at this moment not only explained the contents of the text, but started to show the children how they should adapt the model of the text to their own situation, giving them keys to accommodate the information according to the purpose of asking for

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<sup>82</sup> Every line is numbered to facilitate reading of the linguistic data. See Appendix 3 for the original transcriptions.

a present for the kite-contest. She guided the students, through the information that should be present in the text:

3. Teacher: For example, Juan will write his solicitude. Your complete name! ((asking the child for his complete name))
4. Child 2: Juan Raya Cruz
5. Teacher: Where do you live?
6. Child 2: Wata
7. Teacher: Ok. Juan Raya Cruz ((she used a *puntero*<sup>83</sup> to mark each word in the air, as if she were pointing to the written name of the child on the board)).
8. Teacher: With residency in ... let's see, with residency in ...
9. Children: Wata!
10. Teacher: Wata. He studies in...
11. Children: Huancalle!
12. Teacher: Huancalle. Is that how is said [correctly]?
13. Child 2: educative center
14. Teacher: in the educative center number...
15. Children: fifty zero forty-two
16. Teacher: Let's see, center fifty zero forty-two of ...
17. Children: Huancalle

Again the teacher continued framing children's writing according to the model. In addition, the teacher oriented the children to be explicit --one of the values of schooled literacy—when a child responded that he studied in Huancalle and the teacher negated that answer. Instead, she looked for a more explicit way of communicating the place where he studied by telling the whole name of their school, including the community.<sup>84</sup>

After going through the definition of the text, its parts and the model of the solicitude, the children worked in groups. This participation structure should give the children more opportunities to participate actively in the learning process of writing and reading. I found it is potentially an opportunity for more participation of the students, and in some ways, the interactions reflected a little more participation than other participation structures. However, schooled literacy practices also pervaded the interactions during cooperative work, leaving few opportunities for the students to make decisions. In the next excerpt, the teacher selected the institutions to which each group was going to

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<sup>83</sup> Stick which is used to point the words at the board. It is also commonly used to beat the children when they are not behaving well, although I have not seen any situation of physical violence.

<sup>84</sup> Both ways of writing it communicated the same; however, schooled literacy looks for explicitness within the written text, as opposed to dependence of the context of communication.

address its petition. Even when a child tried to select an institution for his group, the teacher ignored this attempt for decision-making and selected a different institution for the group. She also told the children the content to write:

18. Teacher: You will write for the health post of Huancalle ((The teacher points at the next group))
19. Child: to the kindergarten ((suggesting the addressor to this group's letter))
20. Teacher: to "the NGO" ((the institution that implements IBE))
21. You will solicit a prize for Monday.
22. Yes, Tuesday of next week is the 28<sup>th</sup>.
23. For the 28<sup>th</sup> you will solicit a prize for the kite-contest.
24. I solicit... you should not say "give me a prize," but you
25. should say "donate." A synonym of "to give" is "to donate."
26. I will put "a prize donation," OK?
27. And you write to the institutions I have given to you, OK?

After the explanation it was clear because of the children's questions that they did not understand what they should do. Until this moment, the class consisted of reading the definitions in formal language. The model of the solicitude was also in a very formal language, unknown to the children. During her explanations, the teacher stressed the use of formal Spanish as when she call attention to the use of "donate" instead of "give" (lines 24-26). Although the teacher tried to explain to the students how they should write the text by using children's personal information, the formal structure of the text guided her explanation. She was teaching the children how to follow the structure instead of promoting some creativity in their use of written language. By doing that, she did not give the children the opportunity to really understand what they should do from their every day experience –in this case their kite contest.

Children knew this was a written document, however its structure and the formal Spanish used were unknown to them.<sup>85</sup> However, they did not respond passively when they did not understand what to do. They actively participated and collectively constructed their progressive understanding about the purpose of the text by asking the teacher questions and making comments about the assignment:

28. Boy 1: **After writing "major", what else will we write? We do not**

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<sup>85</sup> The community (as an organization) frequently used this document.

29. **know his name. So?**
30. Teacher: No, no, no, no. His name does not have to go in the solicitude.
31. You only write Mister or Misses.
32. and the position, major, doctor, president, manager.
33. I don't know what it would be, OK?
34. Boy 1: Aaaaah! ((smiling)) Our school will send [the solicitude]. That he will read.
35. he will read.
36. Teacher: Ok? Donation of what? ((children do not respond))
37. Teacher: donation of prizes, right?
38. Girl 1: **The prize will arrive to us?**
39. Girl 2: **Yes, to both of us, of course.**
40. Teacher: ((reading from the board)) *of prizes.*
41. Boy 2: **To me, too?**
42. Boy 3: **Yes! Sure!**
43. Boy 4: **Uhuh!**
44. Teacher: And in the body you explain to me what that prize is for, for the kite-contest, from what grade ... you put that.

In the previous excerpt it is clear that children started to understand what they had to do when they related the text to themselves and started to think about the purpose of the text in terms of their own personal experience. In addition, it is not a coincidence that they used their mother tongue --a linguistic resource-- to construct meaning of an unknown text. After the students discussed the meaning of the written document, the teacher returned to her explanation of the structure of the text and what should be written, leaving aside the connection with the personal lives of children.

After finishing the whole-class instruction, students started to work in groups in order to write the solicitude. The interactions among students and also sometimes among students and teacher showed how children usually tried to adapt to schooled literacy: they were worried about the color of the ink they had to use for the upper-case letters, where on the page they should write the title, they discussed the punctuation marks they had to use, they expected to receive dictation either by the teacher or by a classmate, they copied from the board most of the text. The next example is an excerpt of the group work. Usually there were two or three children who took the roles of teachers within their

groups, as well as with other groups.<sup>86</sup> They often went to the groups that were struggling and helped them. Sihuar --a boy who took this role-- started participating in his own group and later helped a group of all girls. In Sihuar's group:

45. Sihuar: ((Dictating to the writer of the group in Spanish, and giving the  
46. explanation in Quechua)). *Mrs., Mrs. Of "An NGO", Mrs.*  
47. **What? How would you put it there? According to that.**  
48. **What position does she have? Is she a journalist, president,**  
49. **what is she? Is she a major? What should go here?**

Sihuar goes to an all-girl group to help them, where all students were reading from the board trying to figure out how to write the assignment. Sihuar dictated the writer of the group:

50. Sihuar: ((reading)) *be ... fore you I present myself and request.*  
51. ((Girl 1 wrote the phrase on the paper))  
52. Teacher: ((comes to the group and reads from their writing)) *with all*  
53. *respect, very well, continue, continue, very well.*

After some minutes:

54. Sihuar: *I need... a prize donation in order to fly kites. It's ready!*  
55. ((Sihuar starts to go towards his group))  
56. Girl 1: ((looking towards Sihuar)) **How? How?**  
57. Sihuar: ((looking at the girl who is writing)) *Prize donation.*  
58. ((Sihuar started to go again))  
59. Girl 1: ((looking at Sihuar)) **Hey, hey, little boy! Donation of prize?**  
60. Sihuar: **Teacher, is it right?**  
61. Girl 1: **Teacher, come on!**  
62. ((the teacher comes to the group))  
63. Sihuar: ((reading)) *I need prize donation...*  
64. Teacher: Uhuh. What for?  
65. Sihuar: for the kite-contest...  
66. Teacher: kite-contest. From what grade?  
67. Children: from fifth...  
68. Teacher: from fifth grade. When will it be?  
69. Girl 2: for the 28th.  
70. Teacher: Very well, that is what I wanted here.  
71. Sihuar: See, see, I told you!  
72. Girl 1: ((looking to Sihuar)) **Ah! That?**  
73. **Should I put it like that?**

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<sup>86</sup> This is an example of the potential of the cooperative work to make the children's participation more active during literacy activities.

74. ((smiling and looking at the members of her group)).  
 75. Sihuvar: **Won't you write yet?**  
 76. ((pointing at the piece of paper started to dictate to girl 1.))  
 77. *of the contest...*  
 78. ((Girl 1 started to write))

After a couple of minutes the teacher came back to the group:

79. Teacher: Let's see ... What does it say? ((reading))  
 Ah! *The 28<sup>th</sup>, what will be on August the 28<sup>th</sup> ...*  
 And where will you fly them?  
 80. Sihuvar: Huancalle  
 81. Teacher: ((shaking her head negating the answer))  
 82. What is the name of that little hill that is up there? ((pointing))  
 83. Sihuvar: Which?  
 84. Girl 1: Ah! Erapata!<sup>87</sup>  
 85. Teacher: Ok, then, which we will be doing in Erapata ((Making imaginary lines on the paper as if she was writing))  
 86. Girl 1: ((immediately started to write what the teacher dictated, stopping when the teacher was in silence)).

In the last excerpt, the teacher dictated the text to the girl and she wrote exactly what the teacher said. Furthermore, she stopped writing when the teacher stopped dictating. In this literacy event --as in most I gathered-- it was evident that the teacher was the one who imposed everything on the children: the kind of text to write, the theme of the solicitude, the use of the formal structure, who to send it to, etc. It was obvious observing this class session that the text was totally unrelated to the students' experiences because the form of the text was given priority over the act of communication.

In spite of the fact that some of the solicitudes were actually sent to the institutions, the children were forced to follow a structure and write in a formal register which was extremely difficult to them. The emphasis placed on the formal issues about literacy, as well as the behaviors learned in five years of schooling about literacy practices by children, inhibited children from being creative. Children were so used to copying from the board already written texts, that it was very difficult for them to create a text for their own purposes.

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<sup>87</sup> The name of a sector of the community.



This example is very interesting to me because it shows both the pedagogical practices of the teachers and the schooled literacy practices as they were adopted by children. The texts that resulted from this literacy event evidenced that children tried to adapt to schooled literacy practices by following the structure of the teacher's model and using red ink to write the title and the upper case letters. The problem was that in their attempt to follow the model without really understanding the words and the purpose of the text, children copied parts of the model, adding some new information relevant to their assignment: the information of the solicitor or the solicitation of prizes for the contest. The following are examples of the texts written by the students.

**Written product 1:** <sup>88</sup>

*I solicit: donation*

**PRIZE**

*Miss: President of the kindergarten*

*S.P.*

*Pancho Mata cruz age 11*

*where does he study Educative C. 50002 Huancalle*

*Year 2001*

*Before you I present myself and request.*

*That having finished my mechanical*

*electrical career, needs to work*

*in the vacant position there is in the*

*that you direct,*

*for that reason I attach a résumé life.*

*I beg you attend me*

*for it is fair.*

*Huancalle, August 22th 2001*

*Signature of the child*<sup>89</sup>

**Written product 2:**

*I solicit: donation of*

*prize*

*Misses: President of International Plan*

*S.P.*

*Sihuar Huaman Quispe year 12*

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<sup>88</sup> Emphasis represents what was written in red ink. The translation was made by myself, trying to show how children had written in Spanish.

<sup>89</sup> See Appendix 5 for the original written solicitations.

*years old residency in the community  
of Huatta I study in the community  
of Huancalle. I present myself before you  
with all respect and request.*

*I need donation of prize  
of kite contest 28 of  
August from fifth grade that I will  
fly in erapata. And we want  
to know who wins.*

*I beg attention for my petition  
be just.*

Huancalle August 22nd 2001

*Signature*

*Name of the child*

The written products I collected from the session speak for themselves. All of them showed the attention paid to the structure of the text on the part of the students. Some of them, like *written product 2*, showed an understanding of the purpose of the text but almost no creative participation in writing the text and the decision on what to communicate. It showed only one sentence created by a student of the group: “And we want to know who wins.” *Written product 1* powerfully shows the devastating results of schooled literacy on children. In their attempt to fulfill the complex requirements of the activity, they copied the model as it was, changing only some information. The result was a text that did not make sense at all.

As is evident, the ownership of the text was not really in the children, but in the teacher. The literacy event was mainly dominated by her and students were treated as passive learners. Students officially<sup>90</sup> had only the roles of “learners” and “listeners,” because even when they were doing group activities, the teacher had the last word about what the children wrote and how they did it. As seen in this literacy event, literacy activities did not involve much discussion by the students. The teacher tried to connect the activity with a relevant experience for the children, however, the work about the personal lives of the students just was touched on in a superficial way, giving priority to

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<sup>90</sup> Children took diverse roles when they were working in groups and spontaneously negotiated the roles during the literacy events; however, this distribution of roles was not planned by the teacher.

formal aspects of literacy and having the teacher retain all the responsibility as the decision-maker in the literacy event.

Even if teachers tried to look for ways in which the children had some part in the decision-making in what they would write, at the end they were the ones who told students which kinds of texts they would write, the audience to whom they would write and how they would complete the assignment. I observed few opportunities where teachers' comments or questions motivated reflection or decision-making on the part of the children.

The passive role assigned to students in their learning process sharply contrasted with the way learning was defined and acted upon in the community. Children learned by watching the examples of adults and older children, but they also learned by doing. Errors were, then, considered part of the learning process and were not stigmatized as they were at the school. Parents taught their children by setting an example, then letting the children try on their own while the parents oversaw the task. I also found the belief that learning in children has its own timeline. When they are small, parents did not demand their children to do certain tasks because they were just not able to do so. Children became responsible in time, they could not be hurried. Learning was seen as something that was progressive.

Active participation in their own learning and a vision of errors as part of the process characterized informal learning at home and in the community, as well as the use of their own communicative resources, such as riddles, jokes, conversations with animals and objects, oral narratives, personal narratives, the narratives about other people, planning and evaluation of the activities of the day, etc. (de la Piedra, et al., 2001). These all were pedagogical tools to socialize children into the way of life in the community. Children actively participated within these dialogical relationships, practices that were not observed at school.

I have illustrated how rigid rules, as opposed to spaces for negotiation, characterized these classrooms. This rigidity also had the consequence of providing children with few challenging activities. Literacy practices have been imposed by teachers and adopted by children in such a way that it is very difficult to change them.

However, children in some ways resisted these practices. I will focus now on the children's responses to schooled literacy practices.

### **What did children do with literacy?**

Beliefs, values, behaviors about literacy were explicit or concealed, but always powerful, as was seen before. Children, who brought their own beliefs and values about literacy, had to respond to them. They had to adapt to, learn or resist these beliefs, values, and behaviors. I will explain next how children participated in the production, reproduction or resistance towards schooled literacy practices.

#### *Children learned literacy practices*

Literacy practices, as described above, consisted mainly of frequent interactions between students and teachers that had consequences for children acquiring the kinds of knowledge, values and beliefs needed to interact with print (the written word) in the school. Children got used to this dynamic very quickly and usually asked the teachers questions such as: "with red or blue?," "with markers?," "how many lines [should I leave]?," "is this with upper or lower case?" Children learned during the first grades that these features of literacy were valued and they learned to follow them. For example, when third graders saw a picture in their textbook and a line under the picture, they automatically completed the line with the name of the picture, without paying attention to the instructions of the activity. They had learned this literacy practice from the first grade.

Students rapidly learned to follow models and creativity was very limited. Second graders had learned to copy from the board exactly as the text was written. When the teacher wrote a list in two columns because she ran out of space, the children's notebooks also contained two columns in one page. Another class of second graders had to create sentences about what they had read. They read a short story made up of sentences like: "Mamá cocina sopa" (Mom cooks soup) and "Mi mamá tiene una olla" (My mom has a pot). After that, children constructed sentences repeating the sentence structure that they learned reading the story: "El pájaro come sopa," (The bird eats soup) "Mi papá come sopa," (My dad eats soup) "El perro come sopa," (The dog eats soup) "El perro come pan," (The dog eats bread).

I observed children's participation during the construction of the literacy events in the moment-to-moment interactions. Linguistic anthropology has used the concept of participation to refer to the face-to-face interactions (e.g. ceremonies, joke telling, story telling) (Duranti, 1997). Considering Dell Hymes' approach, Phillips (1983) developed the concept of "participation structures" which describes the different communicative practices in the classroom. She found in her study among Indian children from Warm Springs four participation structures in the classroom: 1) Whole-class instruction, 2) small group work, 3) teacher-student structure, and 4) individual work.

What I find interesting about this concept is that when participation structures are identified, it is possible to recognize the consequences of these forms of interaction in the classroom. Since the participation structures greatly differed from the ones usually used in the community of Warm Springs, children confronted communicative patterns unknown to them. This situation had negative consequences for the schooling experience of the Warm Springs children. The participation structures I found in the school of Huancalle tended to place students as passive learners of the school knowledge. The teachers held the power and children had few opportunities to make the learning process their own.

Participation tends to have a structure. However, as suggested by Goffman (1981), the structure is not fixed. From the perspective of the theory of participation (Goffman, 1981) or participant framework (Goodwin, 1990), linguistic interactions are negotiated due to the fact that speakers create the communicative context through their "performances." Participants assume diverse roles during linguistic interactions in the joint construction of the speech event. They use language according to the context of interaction. There is always the possibility of negotiation of the roles and possible ways to resist the social relationships constructed in the classroom. As Duranti (1997) states "the organization of talk as defined by the particular type of participant framework established in interaction is thus shown to be a powerful instrument in the construction of social units, relationships and identities" (p. 311).

The organization of participation in the literacy activities observed at school clearly has consequences in the construction of teacher-student relationships. It sets the teacher as the authority, the judge, the knowledgeable, the one who holds the truth. The linguistic data presented here shows how the everyday use of speech during literacy events created the roles of teachers and students. The use of language around literacy reproduced asymmetrical relationships between teachers and students according to the ways both were allowed to participate. The everyday uses of speech around print were connected to the roles taken by teachers and students in the institutional context of the school.<sup>91</sup> This micro-level context of the classroom was also related to the asymmetrical relationships between *mestizo* urban people and Quechua-speaking peasants in the broader social context. In addition, the ideological positions about language, literacy and culture of their students held by teachers shaped the participant framework.

The social organization of literacy instruction explains why children tended to adopt literacy practices of the school, although it was obvious to me, an outsider and observer, that they did not enjoy, understand or find a sense of reading and writing other than to please the teacher.

#### *Resisting schooled literacy practices*

Children from Huancalle sometimes tried to resist the usual role-taking during the decision-making process. Sometimes with success, other times without it. In the example of the literacy event “the solicitude,” one child tried to decide to which institution to write. He said “to the kindergarten,” (line 19) but the teacher did not let the child decide (line 20). When students did not understand what to do, they sometimes helped each other to build understanding. In the case of “the solicitude” they co-constructed their understanding by connecting the activity to their own experience and using their mother tongue (lines 34-43).

Students also tried to resist the participation framework characterized by schooled literacy. For many years students became used to working by themselves. The majority of

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<sup>91</sup> Asymmetrical relationships pervade the relationships of teachers themselves with authorities from the bureaucracy of the education system. Relationships found in the classrooms in Huancalle also resemble the relationships established in teacher-training institutions.

the teachers did not do much group work, except for one teacher who frequently used this participation structure. Most teachers preferred individual work and reprimanded children who “copied.” When they were given the opportunity to work in groups, some students took roles of “teachers,” a role that was never taken by children during other participant structures. I interpreted signs of resistance when I observed two or three children taking the roles of “teachers” and, thus, sharing with the teacher the role of decision-makers. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that Sihuar adopted the schooled literacy practices --he read and dictated from the board, he paid attention to punctuation marks, spelling and handwriting-- when he adopted the role of the teacher, he constructed a space for negotiation. I observed this kind of negotiation often when children worked cooperatively, which is not surprising. Research on linguistic-minority children education in other contexts has stressed the importance of cooperative learning activities for literacy acquisition (Au, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

The role taken by Sihuar was also interesting to me because it represented a role that mostly young adult male *comuneros* took during literacy events in the community. As will be seen in the next chapter, because many adult *comuneros* did not read or write, some of them took the role of *mediators of literacy*.<sup>92</sup> They acted as readers, interpreters, and writers during literacy events. Sihuar was also incorporating values and ways of relating with print from his experience in the community when he mediated literacy events in which other children who did not have the knowledge of the code and mode participated. Thus, schooled literacy was reinterpreted by children in ways not directed or expected by teachers.

Girls, more than boys, sometimes liked to do their written activities in pairs. At times, they wanted to go to the board and write together, holding hands. Other times when they were called on to read in front of the class, they wanted to read together. This participant structure was not part of the way reading or writing were performed at school. Usually children read from the board, individually, wrote in their notebooks individually,

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<sup>92</sup> The concept “literacy mediators” used by Baynham (1993) accounts for the person who, because of having the code and mode knowledge (oral and written knowledge of the language), aids the participation of someone who ignores the code and mode. I will develop this concept later.

read individually in front of the whole class, or read individually sharing one book because of scarce resources. Some teachers accepted these behaviors, others did not.

The girls brought their ways of conducting their bodies to the classroom and to literacy events. In the community, girls developed a close, caring relationship among themselves. They usually shared chores. For example, they went together to pick up grass for their animals. During this activity, they usually talked among other girls and played diverse games. Holding hands and doing things together was very common. Adult women were also used to sharing chores, for example, when they cooked to provide food for the comuneros working the *chakra*, doing communal work or when they cooked for any community event. I frequently found small groups of women (two or three) sitting side by side on the grass in front of one woman's home, doing domestic chores together (e.g. peeling potatoes, knitting, washing, braiding their daughters' hair) and talking. Girls' wanting to read together was, in my opinion, a way of reinterpreting schooled literacy from their own values and framework for behavior.

As shown above, in spite of the fact that adaptation to schooled literacy was much more frequent, I also observed actions that showed resistance towards the definition of schooled literacy and the participation structures that schooled literacy favored. Even more interesting to me were the situations where children --as a way of resistance-- just turned to each other, stopped listening to the teacher, and became involved in their own spontaneous literacy practices, as will be presented next.

*Lost opportunities: spontaneous literacy practices among children.*

As has been presented before, literacy practices of first and second graders were mostly copying from the board, making simple sentences with no relationship with their experiences or interests. They made extended *planas* (copies) of letters, syllables, words and sentences, all of which the teacher was the decision-maker as to what to write, when and how to do it. However, children were able to have their own opportunities to interact with print spontaneously. These opportunities were not planned by the teacher at all, but I would say they were "conquered" by children. Teachers were not really aware of what was going on during these moments. If they were, maybe they could have reflected on the



knowledge their children brought with them to the literacy events and could have taken advantage of these interests and spontaneous moments that were real teaching opportunities.

One time, five second graders were not paying attention to the class in session. They were supposed to copy from the board. They preferred to pay attention to a torn book (Coquito<sup>93</sup>) they found in the classroom and comment about the pictures. They looked at the pictures and started to “read” the words under the pictures. This was a learned schooled literacy practice. However, they interpreted the pictures from their sociocultural world. Since many pictures and words from this book were extraneous to their life experiences, they constructed meanings of the pictures on their own. Simón said *máquina* (machine) when he saw a piano. The next picture was a *knife* (*navaja* in print) and Eustaquio said *cuchillo* (knife), while Tomás said *corta uñas* (nail clipper). When the children saw a picture of a crane (*grúa* in print) Marcos said *tanque* (tank), and when Tomás saw a picture that was named man on the book, he said *papá*.

When they saw the picture of a train, it motivated a boy to tell a story about his trip to Lima and his opportunity to ride on a “beautiful” train. Talking about Lima triggered the interest of another child who changed the topic of conversation to the recent presidential elections. They commented on their parents’ preferred candidate, Alan García. They thought he was a good candidate. They informed each other that the results of the elections had two winners and that Alejandro Toledo and Alan García will have to go to a run-off.

This example shows how children decided to pay attention to something of interest to them rather than to the assigned work. They used a schooled literacy practice known to them: relating pictures with words. However, their choices of the words were not limited to what the book said. Instead, they drew from their linguistic and cultural knowledge in order to give meaning to the pictures. Furthermore, they started to relate a picture of the book to their personal experiences in the capital city and their knowledge

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<sup>93</sup> A book traditionally and frequently used to “alfabetizar” (teach literacy to) children.

about the elections. Moreover, they also expressed their opinions about one of the candidates for the run-off election.

This was not a common literacy practice at school. As I have shown, relating the children's lives to texts was not a frequent way of interacting with print. Children were interested and happy to share these stories, opinions and information about print with their classmates. In my opinion, these are moments that teachers could have made the most of if they had been aware of them. Teachers underestimated their children and had them doing drills and unchallenging activities, while the children were bringing to the classroom topics, stories and ways of relating with print which might have been used as relevant material to do meaningful literacy activities.

In my opinion, while students may need guidance to use literacy, they also need chances to make the texts work for them, to have a sense according to their own purpose. They need to have occasions where they should not only be imitating the form of texts, as stated by Gray (1987), but "concentrating on and making choices in order to construct meaning" (p. 17). Children need to make personal choices about what they read and write. They also need to have an environment where they can take risks and experiment in order to express themselves with print (Goodman & Wilde, 1992).

The activities I observed were seldom engaging, due to the lack of opportunities they provided for students to be authors, to use their imagination, experiences, feelings and creativity, or to use their work to construct texts that made sense to them. Literacy instruction in Huancalle is a case of literacy acquisition in a second-language, although teachers did not really use a methodology of second-language instruction. In the case of second-language instruction, it has been demonstrated that the context needs to be highly interactive due to the fact that peer interaction supports second language acquisition (Faltis, 1997; Wong Fillmore, 1991).

I see the need to place children as "experts" in the classroom and have certain flexibility in the curriculum. This has been illustrated by Dyson (1993) in her study of the "social worlds" of African American children who are learning how to write. Dyson identified that a "permeable curriculum" allowed children to bring different linguistic

genres to the classroom to be used by students to make sense of their own texts. It gave students the opportunity to construct their own places at school, with the mediation of literacy. She elaborated on the example of one teacher, Louise, who used a “permeable curriculum” and always invited children to negotiate the “valued texts” within the classroom. This openness to children’s linguistic experiences was also accompanied by a flexible interactional structure that provided children with the opportunity to not only play roles of listeners or learners, but also of teachers, creators, and performers. Dyson accurately argued that

permeability will depend, in part, on classroom social structures that make sensible diverse kinds of social action and text sense. But to achieve such an understanding teachers must actively work against contrary assumptions that pervade the discussion of childhood literacy (p. 217).

Students should be able to use what they learn in purposeful ways, as well as being able to learn during active, rather than passive activities. In addition, I believe that an interactive student-centered context which takes into account the students’ language and culture is fundamental for *minorized*<sup>94</sup> students’ success at school (García, 1994).

Until now I have presented the characteristics of schooled literacy and the ways children acted towards literacy practices at school. These were mainly Spanish literacy practices. In the following sections of this chapter, I will present how Quechua literacy and Quechua speech genres were perceived and incorporated in the school.

### **Quechua literacy**

Spanish literacy was the hegemonic literacy in the school. Shannon has defined linguistic hegemony when a language is seen as “superior, desirable, and necessary” while the other languages are seen as “inferior, undesirable, and extraneous” (1995, p. 176). Quechua literacy was indeed considered by teachers at this primary school as inferior, irrelevant, or undesirable. Thus, as seen in the previous chapter, at school what was authorized and promoted was usually a reflection of the differential status of the languages of the community. There was a high societal pressure for Quechua-speaking

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<sup>94</sup> I prefer to use this term to refer to indigenous people in Peru due to the fact that they are not a minority in term of population. They have been “minorized” by society (López, 1996, p. 27).

children of Huancalle to learn Spanish literacy. Even when teachers decided to use Quechua literacy in the classroom, it was always subordinate to Spanish literacy, both in terms of time allocated to literacy activities in both languages, as well as the immediate transference of the “schooled literacy” practices in Spanish to Quechua literacy practices.

*Reasons for teaching Quechua literacy at school*

Some teachers told me that Quechua literacy should not be fostered until children had acquired Spanish literacy. For a teacher who has not participated in the IBE program, Quechua literacy was “important” but on a secondary school level, once the students had already mastered “the basics” (orthography and grammar in Spanish). There was still, in the minds of teachers (including one teacher who participated in the IBE program), that the development of written L1 will interfere with the development of written L2.<sup>95</sup>

Most teachers reported (at a discourse level) that fostering Quechua literacy “should be” important because Quechua language was part of the culture and identity of the students. In spite of the fact that teachers differed regarding when was the right moment to teach Quechua literacy, they agreed that being an emblematic language of Peru, it should be written. Again, the higher status of the written over the oral language is clear. It is perceived that if a language is not written, it is not complete. All teachers’ visions of Quechua language was that it was something from the past; a cultural legacy of the Inkas we must preserve because it was used by this great empire, which is a model of progress and advancement that Peruvians --and especially the indigenous people-- are not presently able to achieve.

This view of Quechua and indigenous populations is widely held in Peru. It is very common to find a nostalgic position towards the Quechua culture, as if it had already been lost. In my opinion, this is an unambiguous form of racism. Teachers valued and longed for the language and culture of the antecessors of their students, the Inkas, which from their own perspective were gone. By doing that, inevitably they were

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<sup>95</sup> On the contrary, research has demonstrated that the development of L1 supports the development of L2 and there is a relationship of interdependence between both of them. “L1 literacy development is considered a crucial base for L2 literacy development. Many research studies have found that a wide variety of skills and learning strategies that are developed in L1 reading and writing can have positive transfer to L2 reading and writing” (Ovando & Collier, 1998, p. 94).

negating the linguistic and cultural resources of rural Quechua-speaking children who live in the present. Within this framework, in which the invisibility of the children and their community is obvious, teachers said Quechua literacy was important “to value especially what they [the children] live, have lived. It has been an important language, let’s say, in its time.”

Teachers have appropriated a discourse about Quechua literacy, related to the alleged benefits that children will receive regarding self-esteem and the strengthening of their identities, if they were taught Quechua literacy. One teacher also told me that by fostering Quechua literacy, *comuneros* would be able to get to know their own culture. I found in teachers’ discourses the position of westerners who come to civilize the Indians by teaching them about the greatness of the culture and language of the Inkas. Thus, I found an autonomous view of literacy, this time of the vernacular, which held that written Quechua has inherent and natural benefits. I should reiterate here that literacy is not good or bad in and of itself. On the contrary, the way Quechua literacy was defined and used in the context of the school shows that the school reinforced the discrimination against Quechua language by downplaying its importance and subordinating it to Spanish literacy. Furthermore, local communicative practices were also downplayed, as will be seen later.

Teachers did not see pedagogical benefits in the use of Quechua other than as a bridge to better spelling and speaking in Spanish. They also did not see any benefits of developing oral Quechua language. This is why in their practice they seldom promoted either written or oral Quechua language. The bottom line here is that Spanish literacy was perceived as a tool that developed cognitive abilities, while Quechua literacy was just seen as 1) a “right” of the students to strengthen their cultural identity (based on their past), and 2) a way to improve children’s Spanish literacy.

*“I have always used it as a bridge.” Uses of Quechua literacy and Quechua speech genres at school*

The analysis of interactional segments in the classrooms, as well as the conversations held with teachers, showed that Quechua literacy-instruction practices (when they were done) produced a devaluated image of written Quechua at school. Quechua literacy was clearly subordinated to Spanish literacy. First, the time allocated to Quechua literacy was minimal in comparison to the time allocated for Spanish literacy. Second, Quechua literacy was only used as a bridge towards reaching Spanish literacy. Third, some Quechua speech genres, which were used at school, were used as a tool to aid Spanish literacy. These genres were marginalized, decontextualized and deprived of their original goals and sense. Finally, Quechua literacy was defined by criteria of schooled literacy, which was mainly Spanish literacy.

Assignments which involved Quechua literacy were always subordinated to Spanish literacy. Teachers who participated in the IBE program, dedicated at the most half-an-hour a day to work in Quechua (oral or written).<sup>96</sup> For example, during one reading session in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, when individual children had to read in front of the whole class, only the first reading was done in Quechua, while the next four readings were done in Spanish. Teachers, who participated in the IBE program, had not made the decision to implement IBE. I concluded, after talking to them, that they did not really believe in its benefits. They appropriated some strategies that proved to be useful in their classroom in an isolated way. They also appreciated the printed material they were given because of the scarcity of materials in their school.<sup>97</sup>

The limited use of Quechua literacy at school was also confirmed by students who reported that they did not read or write at all in Quechua in the classroom or they seldom did:

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<sup>96</sup> The program proposed the teachers work mostly in Quechua, except when they taught Spanish as L2. However, the pedagogical practice did not resemble the training in IBE.

<sup>97</sup> Here is not the place to discuss the factors that influenced these two teachers to not implement the program. However, it is worth mentioning that, in addition to the already mentioned late work in mother-tongue literacy instruction by the IBE program, these were the only two teachers implementing IBE in the Huancalle school, where the principal did not approve of the implementation of this educational model. In general, IBE was opposed by diverse sectors of the national society.

I know how to read and write in Quechua, but in my notebook I do not write in Quechua, only in Spanish. During vacation I read and also write [in Quechua], when I go to school I do not I write in my notebook only in Spanish, not in Quechua.

Quechua literacy was used only as a bridge towards Spanish literacy by trained teachers in IBE. The goal was to help children to improve their spelling in Spanish by using Quechua literacy. Quechua literacy was not really taught. It was used in order to do dictations, so the children would be able to compare the spelling of the Spanish language with the spelling of the Quechua language. From one teacher's perspective, this strategy has helped her students to start differentiating the pronunciation of the vowels (e-i; o-u) when they read, which in turn has helped them improve their spelling when they write in Spanish:

I have always dictated in Quechua. I never left that aside. That helped me to correct writing in Spanish ... Then, in Spanish we do normal dictation, and in Quechua they have to avoid the "e" and the "i." Then I correct the writings, [and I say] the "o" does not exist, the "e" does not exist [in the Quechua alphabet]. Then, they themselves start putting it in their little heads and say: The "o" does not exist; the "e" does not exist [in the Quechua alphabet]. But in Spanish, it does. Then we make this comparison, every day we have dictation... Now this year it is a little easier to be able to fight the errors in writing.

Later, this same teacher said that when she corrected the dictation she was able to assess the child's Spanish literacy improvement by looking at the written Quechua: "If [the child] wrote correctly in Spanish, it is because he avoided [when he wrote] in Quechua the 'e' and the 'o.'" She said that by writing in Quechua, children improved their spelling in Spanish and by reading in Quechua, their pronunciation in Spanish. The following is one of the frequent dictations the teacher did with the children. She randomly selected a passage from a textbook in Spanish that had been read by one of the children during a "reading in pairs"<sup>98</sup> activity and, based on it, created a short text in Quechua, which she also dictated. The following is the text in Spanish:

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<sup>98</sup> Reading in pairs was just a name for the activity because each child individually read the selected text. The pair shared the book because they did not have enough reading material for each child.

Flowers are produced by plants, varieties exist in all the world. They are beautiful in a bunch, in painted pictures. There are many insects who feed from the flowers' pollen.

Later she just translated the text into Quechua:

*They say there are all the flowers in this world. They just look beautiful in the bunches, in the painted pictures. Many people watch the pretty flowers longing for them. I will grow trees in my house too.*<sup>99</sup>

The teacher translated her Spanish text by looking at one of the students' written text, making spontaneous decisions of how to make the translation. She removed the academic information from the text in Spanish and added a couple of sentences, which were clearly authored by an urban person. Flowers in the community grow wildly. They are not cultivated in peoples' homes nor viewed in flower arrangements or paintings of flowers. In addition, there are grammatical mistakes in the text. Since the teacher did not master the language sufficiently, she looked for support in her students. This support consisted in the students' translation of the words asked by the teacher, thus she guided the translation process in order to produce the text she wanted. As a consequence, the cooperative translation that occurred did not preclude the Quechua text from being forced into the Spanish language grammar, in addition to ignoring the stylistics and poetics of the Quechua language, as well as the cultural experience of the Quechua speakers.<sup>100</sup>

When they read in Quechua –like in Spanish-- teachers generally looked for what-type questions. In other words, they wanted children to manage the information given inside the text. However, they did not involve students in discussions about the reasons of the facts presented in the reading or about students' opinions and feelings about the text. Quechua literacy use was immersed within these literacy practices. When children from the upper grades read a story in Quechua,<sup>101</sup> teachers usually asked one child to read to

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<sup>99</sup> T'ikakunas kan llipin kay pachapi. Sumaqllaña rikhukun ramukunapin, cuadrokunapin. Askha runakuna qhawanku munayukuspa munay t'ikakunata, wasiypipas wiñaychisaq sach'akunata.

<sup>100</sup> According to a native Quechua speaker and specialist in the Quechua language (Gina Maldonado, personal conversation), the text is “cold,” “fabricated” and does not resemble a text that a Quechua-speaker would produce.

<sup>101</sup> Teachers trained by the IBE program had gotten books containing Quechua narratives gathered by contests among the trained teachers. These books and the “proyectos de investigación escolar” were the only printed materials available to them in Quechua.



the whole class followed by a period of teacher interrogation. The questions asked by the teachers were what-type questions and generally aimed to reconstruct the story in the same order as the facts were presented (see Appendix 6). Thus, narratives had a very different structure and objective from the ones they had in the communal context (Zavala, 2002).

Teachers used oral Quechua and genres from the Quechua linguistic repertoire as a bridge to Spanish literacy also. One teacher (who did not participate in the IBE program) worked the following activity with his students. Students had to ask about *cuentos* (stories) in the community. These stories were narrated in Quechua by elder comuneros. The instructions consisted of looking for stories with characters and geographical places known to the children. After that, they had to translate and write them in Spanish. This teacher said that telling *cuentos* or hearing them was like writing or reading them because “it is a skill that makes [the teller] follow a sequence [of events] mentally.”

Thus, oral narrative, a linguistic practice very commonly used in the community, was only used as a tool to develop Spanish literacy, devaluating, again, both oral and written Quechua. Furthermore, the value of schooled (and Spanish) literacy was transferred to the conception of the oral narrative practice: it, like schooled writing, should present a sequence of facts, chronologically ordered. As has been found by Zavala (2002), the structure of the oral Andean narrative differs a great deal from the ideal of the schooled narrative, which consists of a chronological and logical recounting of events. Furthermore, the use of Quechua oral narratives at school did not take into account the feelings and opinions of the children, in spite of the fact that they were being socialized into becoming members of the community by these oral narratives, among other speech genres.

The use of oral narratives within the community was very common. It occurred within everyday conversations and, often as a way to offer an explanation during conversation. I will not develop the theme of oral narrative extensively here. However, it

is important to explain the differences between the use of oral narrative in the community and at school.

For example, one day doña Marta explained that an everyday practice in her life was to welcome people into her home. In order to explain her position, she narrated a story, well known in different parts of the Andes.<sup>102</sup> She said that, as God's child and a human being, she had to invite people to her home and feed them, without paying attention to who these people were and how they looked. In the context of this conversation doña Marta told the story: One day God, transformed into an old drunk man, arrived at a wedding celebration and asked for food. The newly-wed couple threw him out of the celebration. God left crying. An old little woman gave him potato soup and God thanked the little old woman and told her to leave the place without turning her head back. But she turned back her head and the newly-wed couple were bewitched and transformed into stone. They still are on the side of a mountain known to the members of the community. She explained this was the reason she always fed people, at least with a soup.

The conversation centered on the beliefs of doña Marta about the need, as a good Christian, to welcome and serve anybody who needed it at her home.<sup>103</sup> Within this conversation, doña Marta used oral narrative to give strength to her comments and opinions, as if she wanted to demonstrate by telling this story that her behavior was the right way to act. The theme of the myth is the consequence of social transgression, a theme clearly related to the previous theme which arose during everyday conversation (Mannheim, 1999; Mannheim & Van Vleet, 1998).

First, it is clear, that the structure of the oral narratives used at school for purposes of literacy instruction did not resemble the structure of the oral narratives that were used as linguistic and pedagogical resources of the community. Usually, narratives were dialogical in diverse senses (Mannheim & Van Vleet, 1998): 1) They arose within a conversation, which was not considered when children had to write an oral narrative

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<sup>102</sup> The myth that she told has different versions in diverse parts of Peru (Morote Best, 1953).

<sup>103</sup> This attitude reflects one of the main principles that guided the behavior of *comuneros*, reciprocity. I was able to corroborate during fieldwork that she constantly had visitors at her home.

gathered in the community. Let us remember that writing was decontextualized and was seen as an object within itself which did not have to be related to the situational context. 2) Oral narratives in the community included direct or indirect discourse, which usually was not included in a schooled way of writing a composition or an essay. 3) They were characterized by *intertextual dialogue*—in which the narrative is in dialogue with another one,<sup>104</sup> while schooled literacy valued the writing of a single, coherent text, where the units of meaning should be all within the text (explicitness). Finally, 4) narratives were also texts in which meaning was negotiated, jointly created at the moment of performance by the participants, while in the context of the school, meaning was not negotiated.

In order to understand how the goals of oral narratives used at school are different than the ones used in the context of everyday interactions in the community, it is important to understand that narratives “are constructed within a sociocultural framework that places more value on the consistence with the situational context rather than the consistence within or between discourse” (Mannheim, 1999, p.62, my translation). These are different criteria from the ones that were valued by schooled literacy: consistency of the written text overshadowed consistency with the situational context. Coherence within the text and explicitness were required, while the relationship of the content of the text within the everyday lives of children was not really valued.

These characteristics of oral narratives were very different from what was expected from texts in schooled literacy. Literacy practices at school were guided by the following beliefs that are contradictory to the oral narratives purposes and structures: 1) there was always one “correct” answer to any question, 2) the written word had the authority over the situational context, and 3) negotiation of meaning was not a part of interacting with the written word: texts should not be contested.

In addition, southern Quechua narratives have specific criteria of validity that differ from the validity and truthfulness criteria of schooled literacy. “According to the Andean people, the narratives which include a description of the sight are ‘true’ (*chiqaq*)”

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<sup>104</sup> “Intertextual references may be implicit or unspoken, building a network of interlocking units of meaning, keyed to everyday activities and habitual understandings (Mannheim & Van Vleet, 1998, p. 328).

(Mannheim, 1999, p.72, my translation).<sup>105</sup> According to Mannheim (1999), other validity criteria consist of including personal experiences, as well as experiences of people known to both the storyteller and the audience. Then the validity of what is told is evaluated “according to the way it is adequate to the situational context (principally to the context of the discourse) and the world” (Mannheim, 1999, p.51, my translation).

Furthermore, oral narratives have their own goals that differed from the goals of schooled literacy. At school, the use of an oral narrative could not be reconciled with the objectives of the narratives in the community, because of their decontextualization, as Zavala (2002) argued. Oral Quechua narratives were used at school to develop mainly Spanish literacy skills. In the communal context oral narratives clearly had a pedagogical goal. They usually had a message, “an implicit threat: if instructions are not followed, dark consequences will ensue” (Urban, 1984, p. 325, cited in Mannheim & Van Vleet, 1998, p. 332). This pedagogical content was normally lost in the use of narratives at school.

Riddles, *adivinanzas* or *watuchis* were another commonly used genre from the oral linguistic repertoire of the community. These were also used at school, but with very different goals than those of the community (Zavala, 2002). At school they were used as *actividades permanentes* (permanent/ routine activities). During *formación* (line-up), children stood in lines by grade “en silencio y calladitos” (in silence). A teacher was in charge of conducting these activities, which consisted of praying and singing the national hymn. These activities were conducted in Spanish. Then the teacher called for one volunteer per grade, who each had to say an *adivinanza*, formulate an academic question or make their schoolmates sing. Most *adivinanzas* and questions were in Spanish, started with the formula “adivina, adivinador” and clearly were learned at school. Of the chosen activities only the songs were mostly in Quechua.

The riddles were treated exactly as if they were academic questions. Both were expected to be answered by only one “correct” answer, and the teacher was the one who,

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<sup>105</sup> Doña Marta, for example, named a place of the community, which is known to all *comuneros*: “chay matrimonio” (that married couple). She referred to a salient rock on a mountain of the community, which is the married couple that was turned into stone.

by repeating the correct answer, implicitly evaluated and declared the answer as correct. Children recited the riddles from memory, and generally –since they already knew the answer—immediately responded from memory. While the children did the “*actividades permanentes*,” the teachers walked around the lines of children --like they normally did when the class was in session—as a way of controlling school work.

As has been found by Zavala (2001, 2002), the *adivinanzas* used at school lost their sense and objective. Generally, riddles are a linguistic genre used by all adults and children in Huancalle, in spite of the fact that adult members of the community reported that the use of it as presently less frequent than when they were children. As stated by Zavala (2002), riddles are a verbal game that:

shows peoples’ local conceptions about the semantic relationships of their world. The material and non-material cultural elements are classified as “the same,” “similar” or “different,” and categories of objects somehow interrelated are constructed. As a consequence, the act of riddle construction is connected to the description of an object in terms of comparing it to something else. The comparisons often have a double meaning (p. 69, my translation).

Thus, most riddles contained metaphors<sup>106</sup> and the description of an object, which implied that people who participated in the interaction needed to know the sociocultural context in order to be able to take part in the game (Zavala, 2002). In the community the use of the riddles always implied dialogue, play, challenge, and spontaneity (Zavala, 2002). None of these characteristics was shared by the use of riddles at school. They were used within a formal, serious, highly-structured and quiet environment. Furthermore, riddles were evaluated by the teachers as any other academic task and the double meaning that characterized many of them was just ignored. These are examples of riddles used during formation:

Child 1: Folks, I will tell a riddle. Guess, guesser.  
All children: WE GUESS!  
Child 1: My mother has a sheet and cannot bend it. What is it?  
All children: The cloud!  
Teacher: What? The cloud? Very good! Clap your hands! Loudly! ((children clap))  
Child 2: Guess, guesser.

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<sup>106</sup> The use of metaphors in everyday conversation was also very common and indicates a speech practice that is widely ignored by school (de la Piedra, et al. 2001).

All children: WE GUESS!  
 Child 2: Which plant has the five vowels?  
 All students: Eucalyptus!  
 Teacher: Why is it Eucalyptus? Let's see.  
 Students: It has the five vowels.  
 Teacher: Sure, because it has the five vowels, right?  
 Child 3: ¿How much is half of one/oneself?  
 Child 4: zero  
 Child 3: the belly button ((feeling the need to give the answer to his own question because of a long silence and the teachers' inquisitive look.))  
 Teacher: Very good, clap your hands. Half of one/oneself is the belly button, right?<sup>107</sup>

These riddles and questions were decontextualized and did not resemble the spontaneous and creative use of language in the community. For example, the last one, a question that resembled the *adivanzas*, had a double meaning: “What is half of one?” could mean either, “What is half of the number one?” or “What is half of oneself?” However, the answer “the belly button” was taken immediately as the “correct” answer with no comment about its double meaning. After all, the use of riddles –as in the case of narratives-- became one more activity in which the values about Spanish schooled literacy dominated and were transferred to these Quechua linguistic practices. After finishing the activities during formation, the teacher said to the children “Ahora a nuestras aulas, cumpliendo con nuestros deberes” (Now to our classrooms, responding to our duties), letting children know that these activities are not equally valued as the “duties” and real work that they do in the classroom (Zavala, 2002).

Thus, unofficial speech genres such as riddles and oral narratives entered the school in a marginalized condition and were not included as real academic activities, but just as activities to socialize children into the rules and life at school (Zavala, 2002). They sometimes were –as in the case of the riddles during formation—used as a way of socializing children to become “citizens.” Luykx (1999) and Cuba (2000) have argued that there are militarization strategies at school. The formation activity at the school in Huancalle resembled very much the formation of soldiers because of the silence, solemnity, formality and the commanding way in which teachers talked to children. It

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<sup>107</sup> See Appendix 3 for the original transcriptions.

was also a way of socializing the child into the world of the school, which would facilitate the peasant child's becoming a citizen. As we saw in the previous chapter, children's bodies were controlled as a way of civilizing them. The activities during formation were part of that function of the school. Thus, as was also found by Zavala (2002), these linguistic genres were used to satisfy goals such as socialization of the children or to "open the pedagogical act but they do not constitute the pedagogical act in itself" (p. 71).

Quechua literacy, as well as some Quechua linguistic genres commonly used within the community (the ones with which teachers were familiar), were incorporated to the schooled activities from the framework of schooled literacy which was predominantly Spanish literacy. The definitions of Spanish literacy analyzed earlier were transferred to the definitions of Quechua literacy, as well as to the literacy behaviors. The emphasis placed on the formal aspects of literacy was also observed during the work of Quechua literacy.

I found, as demonstrated above, that teachers taught Quechua literacy—in a reduced way— by applying the same criteria they used when teaching Spanish literacy. Thus, the norms of the western and alphabetic literacy were just transferred to Quechua literacy instruction, without paying attention to other norms found within Andean communicative practices. These norms, as I have presented here, transformed the notion of the knowledgeable person according to the notion of being *literate*.

Literacy instruction in Quechua took a similar form when it was done in the early grades. For example, the second grade teacher (trained in IBE) copied a text from a textbook in Quechua on the board. She placed a picture related to the text under it, for the children to see. Children had to copy the text in their notebooks. Quechua literacy in this classroom was not developed as much as Spanish literacy because the teacher wanted to "afianzar el castellano" (reinforce the Spanish language) before working Quechua literacy. The objective of this activity—from the teacher's perspective-- was to "train the children to pay attention" and not really to develop Quechua literacy. Children could not read the text and they copied it letter by letter. Again, here children were copying only

letters with no meaning. I could not help but wonder if we really want children to write in their mother tongue in this meaningless way.

While children were copying, the teacher corrected the children's writing individually. She usually told children to write their words maintaining a straight line, erased the words that children had not correctly written (spelled) and wrote some model words in the notebooks as an example for children to follow. Finally, the teacher read the text from the board out loud, word by word. Children in groups followed the reading aloud. At first, some children tried to read ahead of the teacher, reading phrases. Children clearly tried to look for meaning when they read in their mother tongue. Nevertheless, after two groups read, children mimicked the way the teacher read: word by word, and ceased reading phrases. They limited themselves to repeat the words read by the teacher. Most of them did not even look at the board. Again, this is an example of the perception of literacy as a decoding process rather than a meaning-making process.

The teacher was in the process of learning Quechua and had major difficulties in conducting the class in Quechua. After failing attempts to give instructions in the students' mother tongue, she quickly changed back into Spanish. I noticed that the teachers' work conducted in this way was exhausting. It was not interesting for the children, and as time went by, students became restless and noisy, which complicated the teachers' job. This situation bothered the teacher, who increasingly lost her patience and reprimanded the children: "Juan does not know how to talk. You have been distracted!"

The examples of interactions during Quechua literacy instruction show that there is a transference or a translation of Spanish-schooled literacy practices to the literacy practices in Quechua, with no consideration of the Quechua language use characteristics, neither the communicative goals, structures nor participant structures of the linguistic genres found in the community. The dictation of the "in the moment" translation of the text about the flowers was the most obvious example. The translation of a text in Spanish is a clear example of the production and reproduction of the devaluation of the written Quechua language. Again, racism drove these practices. The idea that a language, like a



race, is superior, more developed and more useful than other language is present in these examples.

In addition, the example of the second graders copying from the board illustrated a situation of contact of different literacies, in which the criteria to use schooled Spanish literacy was transferred to the use of Quechua literacy. Finally, the examples of how narratives, as well as riddles, were used tells us that not only was the Quechua language subordinated in the school context, but also speech genres, which were directly related with important pedagogical tools of the community. I believe that in order to construct pedagogical environments more relevant to Quechua children, we need to take into account the local ways of teaching and learning as valid. These speech genres, and the songs, jokes, talk with the animals and objects, personal and third person narratives, and the use of metaphorical language in everyday interactions are ways of teaching and learning in the community (de la Piedra et al., 2001). However, at school they were devalued and used only as meaningless activities (in terms of cognitive and academic development) or as ways to consolidate Spanish literacy.

#### *Children's ideas about Quechua literacy instruction*

I found that the children held three positions regarding Quechua literacy, sometimes even held by the same child. First, children thought Quechua literacy was presently not useful, because Quechua language will not be used anymore in the future. While Spanish literacy was seen as a needed tool to enter the university, become professionals and get out of the community. Spanish literacy was also seen as a tool to help their families by providing economical resources, becoming “literacy mediators” for them, or teaching them Spanish literacy.

Literacy is not important in Quechua, more [important] in Spanish because now... as children grow up in the community ... they do not speak Quechua, just Spanish. They should know more Spanish, not Quechua anymore.

Second, students thought Quechua literacy was useful for them, but always in terms of their individual benefits: to become professionals and be able to read and write in their mother tongue when those professions required it. Manuel thought that writing in

Quechua was necessary to become a policeman. In order to become a teacher, Rosa thought learning Quechua literacy was important:

I want to know how to read and write in Quechua. (Why? What for?) What for? In order to be able to read in Quechua. (What for, why do you want to read and write in Quechua?) When I become a teacher, I can teach knowing how to write in Quechua.

Children started to see possibilities of using Quechua literacy at school. This position became legitimized by the introduction of some Quechua literacy at school. I found among children, as well as among parents, the idea that Quechua literacy should be “good” and “necessary” because teachers were teaching it at school. For example Manuel, who wanted to be a policeman, told me: “Some policemen do their job in Quechua. That is why I think, I believe that I can be a policeman in order to write in Quechua. That is why teachers teach us in Quechua.”

Third, they saw that they benefited from being able to read and write as students: they needed Quechua literacy in order to help their teachers who did not know how to speak nor read and write in Quechua:

When I go to school, my teacher asks us “what does it say?” and some [students] do not answer. I want to [read and write in Quechua] in order to answer [the teachers’ questions], to go in front of the class and write. Some teachers do not know Quechua.

I think fostering Quechua literacy was valued in some way by children. They saw the potential of becoming more active participants in the classroom, counting on their knowledge of Quechua. Their comments demonstrate that children wanted to be able to play a central role in the classroom through their language. However, this opportunity was not given yet because Quechua was not conceptualized as a valuable tool in terms of academic development, and therefore was not practiced much. Thus, children thought that reading and writing in Quechua was difficult:

It is difficult, I cannot [read it], it has different words, it is difficult to speak. Spanish is easy, Quechua is difficult. It is difficult, I want to read and write quickly. I also practice in Quechua, but I do not know how to read quickly. I want to know how to write, to speak, and to read, too. I cannot read in Quechua correctly. I cannot quickly, just slowly.

In spite of the fact that children saw some benefits in learning Quechua literacy, these benefits were only associated with school and education.

### **About schooled literacies**

Teachers' experiences when learning how to read and write were similar to the experiences that related to the feelings of children. All teachers had negative experiences when they learned how to read and write. They told me things like:

That was traumatic ... I think I learned how to read out of fear.

My God! It was something difficult for me.

It was just out of beatings ... I think I learned much more because of fear than anything else.

Teachers tended to repeat their life experiences when learning how to read and write when they taught their students. They had their life experiences as a frame of reference in order to work with children. They all remembered that the first step in order to learn to read and write was to get to "know the letters" and the alphabet. For example, one teacher who had had difficulties with his handwriting lamented that he never could write "well," with a "good" handwriting style. Therefore, he placed great emphasis on handwriting skills with his children. Thus, not only hegemonic ideas about literacy and literacy instruction played a part in literacy practices of teachers, but also their own life experiences when learning how to read and write played a role in their practices.

These experiences and the way teachers talked about them made me think that in spite of the fact that teachers considered they had different origins than their students, they both lived and shared in some ways the constructed image of literacy as an "object" outside of themselves. These ideas were reflected in the widely held image of literacy as something "difficult" to acquire by students. After all, they also were schooled and were "transmitted" ideas about literacy as well as ways of behaving during literacy instruction when they were students in school as well as when they were trained to become teachers.

Here it is important to reiterate that teachers are not just individuals acting as they please regarding literacy. They are part of a social institution, which has had a particular

definition of what kinds of reading and writing are practiced and how these skills should be taught. Following Tovar (1997), “teachers are required to be open, to try out, to experiment; and at the same time they are required comply with goals. Then they prefer to comply with the goal in any manner, but doing that they cannot innovate” (p. 150, my translation).

The importance given to written language at school had the consequence of teachers being “desperate” to teach children how to read and write rapidly and “correctly.” To compound the situation, teachers sometimes had to face difficult conditions. In the case of a first grade teacher, she told me that she taught mainly by making children identify words and drawings in an effort to teach students to read and write before the year ends. This teacher had been transferred to the school in August (classes started at the end of March), and got children who had not been really taught by any teacher because they had been assigned to the second grade’s class where the teacher paid much more attention to her students than to the first graders.<sup>108</sup> She told me during an interview:

When I started in the middle of the year, I was desperate because I would be finishing [the school year] soon: August, September, October, and November, there are only four months [left], and they [the authorities from the Ministry of Education] gave me this [short amount of] time and the children did not know how to read. Then I bought myself stamps and I have worked with a lot of ‘stamps’, picture-word, exercises, and repetitions of words. I did not do extensive *planas*, but I did five lines for each word.

Teachers felt pressured to get “good” results, which needed to be visible in children’s notebooks and grades. Considering that literacy was believed to be one of the most important things children learned at school, as well as the basis for working other content areas at school, and ultimately, the most needed skill in order for peasant children to go on to secondary school and become “professionals” (and to get out of their ignorance), it is not surprising that teachers placed such stress on the formal aspects of

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<sup>108</sup> The system of assignation of teachers of the Ministry of Education of Peru had a devastating result for the school. The children of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, for example, in the year 2001 did not have a teacher until July. It was only in July when students of these grades could really start classes, when normally the classes begin in April.

literacy. After all, their life experiences, as well as the years of training to become teachers, told them that the fastest and most appropriate way to teach students to read and write was by using drills and repetition.

The few sessions a year organized by the IBE program (an average of four or five dedicated to literacy instruction in mother tongue and an average of three on-site supervision visits or *acompañamiento*) were far from being enough to convince these teachers to change their approach to literacy instruction. Teachers tried some strategies proposed by the IBE program. They also used the materials provided by it. However, they inserted these strategies and materials within a highly consolidated set of literacy goals, beliefs and values held by the social institution of the school. Thus, the rigid perspective about literacy was very hard for teachers to challenge.

Understanding literacy practices at school implies comprehending the social role of schools. Most of the time discourses about education propose that the school is a way to access social and economic opportunities for everyone. On the contrary, social (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) and cultural (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) reproduction theories have proposed that schools play a key role in the symbolic legitimation of the social hierarchy and dominant class privilege. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) schools promote the *cultural capital* of the dominant classes, which become advantages for the dominant sectors of society. Jointly, there is an internalization of the *dispositions* of social positions (*habitus*). Deterministic tendencies have been widely criticized (Apple, 1982; Giroux, 1992, Willis, 1977), focusing on how people participate in the production or resistance of social relationships. I agree. However, findings of this study confirm that schools, and the conceptions and uses of literacy, play a decisive role in the reproduction of inequalities. Literacy practices viewed as the “standard” undoubtedly were the *cultural capital* of dominant sectors of society, which was imposed to students.

In closing, the sociocultural contexts influences the way we learn literacy because it influences the way we define our purposes for literacy and the ways we interact with print. Cultural contexts mediate literacy learning also because there are participant structures that have certain rules of participation that we need to manage in order to

participate meaningfully through interaction with others. Because of power relationships related to language and literacy, there are certain participant structures that are more conducive to literacy learning than others. These should incorporate students' cultural knowledge, experiences, styles, genres, and themes of interest into the classroom. Linguistic and sociocultural experiences of the children in Huancalle were neither included nor legitimated by the learning process. Children were defined "by what they are not rather by what they are" (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993, p.4).

It has been shown that teachers, both those who participated and those who did not participate in the IBE program, were inclined to force schooled literacy on other communicative practices that were found within the community (songs, riddles, oral tradition). I agree with Moll and Díaz (1993) when they stated that "to succeed in school one does not need a special culture; we know now, thanks to ethnographic work, that success and failure is in the social organization of schooling, in the organization of experience itself" (p. 78). Thus, considering the social organization of literacy instruction in these classrooms, I think there is a long way to go in order to look for ways to make the most out of the resources children bring into the classroom. In order to implement an IBE program from an intercultural and culturally relevant perspective, local literacies and communicative patterns need to be taken into account in the learning process, and not only superficially and as a bridge into Spanish schooled literacy.

## CHAPTER 6: LITERACY PRACTICES IN THE COMMUNITY

One morning *comuneros* went to the stadium to collect booklets containing information about different livestock diseases. When I asked them if they read these booklets don Roberto and doña Martina told me that the community read generally “poco” (very little). They reported they had very little time to spend on reading because of their way of life. Working in the fields, taking care of their animals, preparing meals for their family took all their time. Doña Martina continued explaining why they did not have the time to read much in their community. One year earlier the *Plan Internacional*<sup>109</sup> gave affiliated children institutional calendars containing information about their program. The *comuneros* either hung them in their homes or put them away. After several months, staff from the institution came to the community and asked the *comuneros* about the content of the calendar. Laughing, doña Martina told me no one knew how to respond to their questions because no one had read it.

I begin this chapter with this story because it exemplifies the feelings of most *Huancallinos*. They did not spend much time reading or writing, in spite of the fact that literacy was highly valued in the community. Reading and writing were not often a priority. They were only used for specific purposes and within particular activities. For example, it was not customary to look for solutions to agricultural problems through reading the booklets given by the institutions. The situation, however, was not homogenous. This study points to variables of gender and age that caused differences in literacy practices. Women and men used literacy to varying degrees and contexts. Adults and children used literacy differently, according to their social roles. The literacy demands within the community were mostly –but not exclusively-- related to social institutions: 1) the school, 2) the community as a political and social organization related

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<sup>109</sup> An agency that gets sponsors for children. Children and their families got gifts from their sponsors, as well as money in order to buy beds and latrines.

to the state and its agencies, and 3) the Protestant Churches. This is not surprising since many *comuneros* learned to read and write within these institutional contexts.<sup>110</sup>

I found that both at home and at the communal level, institutional literacies (schooled literacy, bureaucratic literacy, and religious literacy) were used. Sometimes these literacies were formally and carefully practiced, trying to respect the literacy norms established by these institutions. However, there were also literacy practices that responded to *Huancallinos'* everyday needs, local activities and cultural values. In fact, I found some “vernacular” uses of literacy both in the communal and individual household’s contexts. Therefore, local literacy practices were impregnated --on one hand- - by the official literacies of the school, the state and private institutions, and the church. On the other hand, they were shaped by local cultural practices, including the use of Quechua language in local communicative practices, socialization strategies, ideas pertaining to gender, activities based on reciprocal relationships, and so on. Additionally, literacy was practiced in a particular way in Huancalle. Different domains had different literacy practices; however, these practices shared some qualities that crossed institutional boundaries and domains. *Comuneros* participated in literacy events even though they were not *literate*. Thus, literacy in Huancalle was performed usually collectively and surrounded by Quechua orality.

In communal and domestic contexts orality played a much more significant role than literacy for every day communicative purposes. The goal of this chapter, however, is to represent the occasions in which written language was a resource for social action. In the following sections, I will discuss the uses of Spanish literacies in Huancalle.

### **Spanish bureaucratic literacy in the community: the world of men**

As seen in chapter three, the significance of Spanish bureaucratic literacy was tied to the local representation of the history of the community and their struggle for land. When the circumstances made it possible during the Agrarian Reform, the *comuneros*

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<sup>110</sup> *Comuneros* learned to read and write, either as children attending a few years of schooling, or during their adult life within the context of these institutions. Some *comuneros* told me that even if they had attended some years of schooling they “forgot” what they had learned there. Among these, they learned or improved their reading and writing when occupying a position in the communal government (mostly men), or by reading the Bible (men and women).



were able to legally acquire the territory that the community presently has. When the danger of losing their land in some way disappeared,<sup>111</sup> other purposes of literacy have come into sight. Spanish bureaucratic literacy was used at the communal level for political and organizational purposes. In other words, they used literacy in the relationship between the community and the outside world, as well as, in order to keep records of communal affairs.

Gender played an important role in the bureaucratic literacy practices in the community. Men tended to take public roles in local government and the organization of everyday life in the community, while women tended to take roles in agricultural production and home maintenance. As men have traditionally had more possibilities to be schooled and have more interaction (work, political or commercial) with the Spanish-speaking *mestizo* population, more men than women are bilingual and *literate*.<sup>112</sup> Consequently, most authorities are men.<sup>113</sup> Women were seen as the ones who preserve the Quechua language and culture, as opposed to men who were mediators between the community and the outside world. Women were said to be responsible for their children learning to speak Quechua at home. They also were perceived as the ones who were most likely to tell local stories and jokes, along with elders. This situation influenced literacy practices in the community among most adults: Men were almost exclusively in charge of literacy activities regarding the communal government and organization, while women seldom used literacy, except young and children. Women who did, usually used it in other domains (home and church) and had a more private use of it especially in the case of adolescents and young adults, as will be seen later.

In the words of the president of Huancalle, “the community is organized in committees and the head of all committees is the *junta directiva*.” The *junta directiva* was formed by 1) President, 2) Vice-President, 3) Secretary, 4) Treasurer, 5) Fiscal, and 6)

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<sup>111</sup> Conflicts among neighboring communities are always latent and are reflected in confrontations during the *linderaje*, during which fights among *comuneros* from different communities over their territory’s limits occurred.

<sup>112</sup> Decades ago, girls rarely attended school. However, in recent years differences in educational opportunities among girls and boys are decreasing.

<sup>113</sup> There were very few women as authorities. They assumed the direction of the *club de madres* (mothers’ club) and were placed in a position within the APAFA.

Vocal. In addition, there were *comités especializados* (specialized committees), which -- according to the president of the community-- “represent the community with various organizations.”<sup>114</sup> According to the president of the community the junta directiva made “100% of the documentation and 70% to 80% of the financial administration.” Within it operated a variety of functions depending on the *literate* abilities of the *comuneros*. *Huancallinos* made sure that at least some members of the *junta directiva* were *literate* or *secundaria completas* (people who had finished secondary school): The community noticed “who writes well, who reads well, then they are elected authorities.” Some members of the *directiva*, who were non-literate, contributed by “giving ideas,” or “demanding” the younger *Huancallinos* to do their job “right.”<sup>115</sup> However, it is extremely important to notice that the community as a whole was mainly the voice represented by the *literate* authorities of the community during literacy events.

*Written communication and relationships with the outside world*

After the Agrarian Reform, the community started to participate in the legal and formal administrative procedures of Peruvian national society. Peasants were required to follow norms and regulations of the *comunidades campesinas*. These regulations brought with them a communal government structure,<sup>116</sup> as well as Spanish bureaucratic and legal literacy.<sup>117</sup> Official and bureaucratic literacies were imposed<sup>118</sup> on the peasant

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<sup>114</sup> The *comités* are the following: “club de madres” (the club of the mothers), “comité de vivienda” (the housing committee), “comisión de regantes” (commission for the administration of the water), “Comité del Plan Internacional” (committee in charge of the relationship with this NGO), “comité de agua potable” (potable water committee), “comité de recursos naturales” (natural resources committee), “Comisión de gestión de la micro-cuenca” (commission of the micro-basin), “APAFA” (Parent Association), “comité de salud” (health committee), “Club Unión Huancalle” (The soccer club of the community). In addition, the community has an “agente,” (who is in charge of any damages caused to animals and *comuneros*) and the “almacenero,” who is in charge of the diverse possessions of the community: tools and construction materials. Finally, Huancalle has a “political authority,” a “teniente gobernador” who is in charge of any domestic and land problems among the *comuneros*. This authority, in contrast with communal authorities is elected by the authorities of the district seat, Taray. All *comuneros* are in the obligation to be authorities because by doing the “cargos” the *comuneros* “serve their community.” When elected they are not usually able to decline their obligations.

<sup>115</sup> These members were elected because of their “good character” (capacity to make people follow the rules of the community), capacity of convincingly present arguments and their capacity to speak Spanish and be articulate in Quechua.

<sup>116</sup> The system of “varayuq” was replaced with a system of communal government imposed by the state.

<sup>117</sup> Bureaucratic literacy was only in Spanish.

communities in order to legally exist. The General Law of Peasant Communities states that in order to be legally recognized by the state, peasant communities needed to be registered in The Book of Peasant and Native Communities of the Register of Juridical Persons. Additionally, they had to present a file containing written documents of the community. In order to register the title of property of the territory of the community documentation was also needed to be presented in the Special Project of Titulation of Lands. Authorities of the community, the *directivas comunales*, have to be registered when elected, in the public registers. Historically, written documents were seen as legal instruments in order to preserve the rights to Huancalle's territory. Presently, written documents are required in order to legally exist. In addition, diverse public and private institutions required Huancalle to write official documents in order to communicate with these agencies. These documents were *oficios* (official documents), *memoriales*, *solicitudes*, or letters. I found three types of official written communication.

- 1) Communications between the community and readers from outside the community: a district, provincial, department, regional or national authority or a private institution.
- 2) Communications between communities.
- 3) Communications between a *comunero* and the community.

The documents written by authorities of the community presented a voice that predominantly embodied the collectivity. This voice was directed to people who were perceived by *comuneros* as having the power to solve problems by providing support to the community. The documents were written when there were circumstances that presented a problem and demanded the support from people and institutions from outside the community with the goal of establishing a commitment with an outside person. For example, the community of Huancalle --represented by its authorities-- sent a *memorial* to the President of Peru, Alejandro Toledo, in which the *directivos* as representatives of the community asked for professionals in order to execute an irrigation project which

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<sup>118</sup> Ivanic and Moss (1991) differentiate between "imposed" and the "self-generated" literacies. Institutions impose both the purposes and the style of the written products. In contrast, self generated literacy practices respond to own purposes and needs and have indigenous styles.

would benefit two communities. This *memorial* was accompanied by the signature of the President of the community, the *teniente gobernador*, the secretary and the treasurer. In the next pages the signatures of all the members of the community and their ID numbers were presented.

These texts have an established structure, which *comuneros* are very worried about following “correctly,” especially when the communication is between the collective and the official authorities. The documents had the form of “official” documents: they were typed on community’s printed paper. The paper had the symbol of Huancalle --the eagle-- and the name of the community, and right under said: “Reconocido oficialmente 08 de Julio 1927.” (Officially recognized July 08<sup>th</sup>, 1927). Official documents contained formulaic beginnings and ends, similar to the solicitude taught by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher presented in the previous chapter. These formal documents were also signed and stamped by communal authorities. Sometimes all *comuneros* signed. Thus, bureaucratic literacy was used trying to fulfill its formal requirements. According to communal authorities, writing a “correct” document –respecting the structure and the orthography-- was extremely important because it represented the community and it was directed to authorities and agencies that would provide them with the support they needed.

Official and imposed literacy were needed for local authorities to negotiate their interests as a community. However, it was only one of the strategies utilized in order to persuade foreign authorities and institutions to support the community in various ways. Bureaucratic literacy was used within a set of cultural practices that were traditionally done. These practices were oriented to establish relationships with people considered “superior” to themselves. Therefore, within these asymmetrical social relationships, *Huancallinos* were in a subordinate position. Historically, *comuneros* looked for ways to establish relationships of *compadrazgo* (relationship between the parents and the godparents of a child) with the *vecinos*. Presently, *comuneros* looked for ways to establish reciprocal relationships with outsiders. Authorities were always invited to public celebrations organized by the community (i.e. the inauguration of the school sports

court, the anniversary of the community, the celebration of carnivals). The community gave them food and beverages and during the ceremony authorities conveyed their needs to the guests.

In contrast to asymmetrical relationships with *vecinos* or *hacendados*, the relationships with authorities and institutions were presently considered as relationships that provided opportunities for negotiation so as to get something in return. For example, within the context of the flood of the year 2002 the community invited --using written documents-- a number of authorities of the public and private sector to celebrate “carnivals” with them. They organized different activities in order to obtain their petition for professional advice in writing a project to avoid future flooding in the area. Among the activities they organized were a special meal served to the public and private agencies’ authorities, which included beer and a roasted deer hunted by a *comunero* for this special occasion. Some *comuneros* danced for their guests. Communal authorities also made arrangements for me to videotape this celebration in order to have a filmed account of the meeting. Finally, the secretary of the community made the guests sign in a notebook to archive their presence. All these activities --including the written invitation and the signature of the guests-- had the purpose of gaining these authorities’ support, having a written and even filmed account. I was informed that the community had gotten the professional support it needed in order to write the project.

*Huancallinos* felt they were getting the support they needed by using these strategies. For example, they had gotten financial support to build two new classrooms and the sports court for the school, latrines and potable water for each home by asking for support to public and private institutions. The last *trámite* (paperwork) that was “successfully” done --in the words of the president-- was the promise of authorities in Lima for a vehicle and used clothes for the community.

Although *comuneros* felt literacy gave them better possibilities for relating to outsiders, the fact is that power relationships between the community and authorities were characterized by inequalities. Certain issues, such as government aid in the context of a disaster, should be the right of the community. However, still *comuneros* had to

depend on developing relationships with authorities in order to try to get the support they needed. As was found by Rockhill (1993) in her study of gender, language and politics of literacy among working-class Spanish-speaking adults in Los Angeles, Spanish bureaucratic literacy in Huancalle was “caught up” in the oppression of *comuneros*, but also “it embodies their hope for escape” (p. 171). Bureaucratic literacy used in the community showed the tensions between the possibilities of literacy. In the case of Quechua-speaking peasants, the structures of domination still shaped the relationships of *Huancallinos* with the outside world. Literacy was used within these asymmetrical relationships.

#### *Organization of life in the community*

The consequence of these imposed literacy practices is that written documents were highly valued and considered essential to do *gestiones* and *trámites* (paperwork) both with outsiders and within the community. Written documents were said to guarantee that the information would last a long time. Many times I heard that oral language in contrast with written documents “dies with the person.” The importance of written documents within the context of the political and organizational life of the community was clear during a Parents’ Association assembly, where two authorities asked the community to accept their petition to renounce to their positions. The authority who presented the petition in writing got it accepted, while the one who did not present a document was not heard. Thus, the idea that a written document was essential in order to do any kind of *trámite* was also translated to the functioning of the community. Bureaucratic literacy was used in order to organize certain activities of the political domain of communal life.

The organization of Huancalle in diverse committees, as well as the support and constant work of the elected authorities was needed “in order to do the necessary activities for the life in Huancalle” (president of the community). During the last decades, the organization of the community expanded and included new functions and literacy uses. For example, the housing committee was in charge of the distribution of the lots for *comuneros* who wished to build homes. The members of the committee needed to

measure the lots to be equally distributed. During my fieldwork, the community decided they would use some of the communal land to distribute among *padronados nuevos* (new *comuneros*). In the words of the president of the community, the solicitants:

have to ask the community with a *solicitud* (a written request). And the community qualifies the solicitant, according to how is his behavior in the community? Is he following the obligations or not? If he follows the [community's] obligations, his *solicitud* would be accepted. Only then we give him the lot.

Thus, the community incorporated bureaucratic literacy practices and demanded their members write documents in order to follow organizational procedures. The decision regarding the petition of the lot was mediated, in part, by a written and official document: the *solicitud*. Additionally, the decision was also mediated by the opinion of the *junta directiva* about the behavior of the solicitant of the lot as a “good *comunero*,” who follows his obligations (i.e. attending to communal work, participating in communal assemblies, respecting his turn for water to irrigate the crops, etc.). The *junta directiva*, as well as the committees, needed to do some written documentation, such as agendas -- before conducting the assemblies--, acts, balances, and records of expenses. There were documents that kept records of *comuneros*, their lots, their animals, and their turns of water. These records have the forms of lists containing the name of the *comunero* and relevant data such as the indebted amount, the number of animals the household has, the number of children and age of the *comuneros*, and so on. In addition, frequently the lists contained the date and the signature of the *comunero*. The *treasurer* kept the records of the funds of the community and its balances. The *almacenero* (keeper) kept the record of the tools and other goods of the community and was in charge of keeping a list with the borrowers. The *agente* wrote in the *acta* any damages in the property of *comuneros*.

The secretary was in charge of writing the *acta* (act) in the *libro de actas* (book of acts), where all communal meetings, agreements or important issues were recorded. Usually he accounted extensively and meticulously for the assemblies by writing the opinions of different *comuneros*, their disagreements and the agreements which were reached by voting. He recorded the number of votes for each position discussed. The

topics discussed during the assembly and written by the secretary in the *libro de actas* were varied.<sup>119</sup> The secretary also usually –although sometimes other members of the *junta directiva* take this role-- was in charge of calling for the obligatory assistance of the *comuneros* to assemblies, communal work (faenas), and courses organized by different institutions. He was in charge of keeping all the written documentation of the community and had the power over the documents.<sup>120</sup> Written documentation of the community usually was kept at the secretary's home as was the typewriter. The secretary therefore was the one who was in charge of writing for the *comuneros* when they needed official documents of diverse kinds.

The different committees also used Spanish literacy to varying degrees. Some authorities of the committees needed to read or write more than others. There were some committees that did not have any written record, like the health committee, which is in charge of the cleanliness of the homes and public streets. The committees that received monetary funds needed to keep balances of the financial resources that came to their hands. For example, the drinking-water committee was in charge of receiving the payment from each household for this service. They needed to keep record of who paid and give a receipt to each of their consumers.

Some *cargos* (positions of the communal government) demanded more literacy skills than others, however, literacy needs were covered collectively within the *junta directiva* and the committees. Literacy tasks were collective in terms of 1) their performance in the moment of interaction, as well as 2) the voice represented in the written documents. The authorities supported each other in order to accomplish literacy tasks. Authorities who were called *quinto secundaria* or *secundaria completa* (who have

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<sup>119</sup> Diverse matters treated during the assembly were recorded: decisions of the *masa* (the collectivity) about accepting a new “padronado” (member of the community), decisions about what to do with resources of the community (money, woods, pasture, land), decisions about new norms of the community (i.e. prohibition of the pasture in a sector of the community), elections of their authorities and members of the committees, complaints against *comuneros* who did not fulfill their obligations, news about the functioning of the committees or about issues related to the community, “cuenta rendición” (balance presentation) of diverse committees, agreements with neighboring communities, donations received by the community, agreements with agencies that worked with the community, etc.

<sup>120</sup> When I wanted to go through the written documents of the community the President told me he could not decide if I could read them. It was the Secretary who should give me permission.



finished the secondary school) were *literate* people, familiar with bureaucratic matters. Accordingly, they provided support to the members of the *junta directiva* who did not know how to read or write. *Comuneros* perceived that even though it was the job of the secretary or the treasurer to write documents or budgets, respectively, it was the responsibility of the whole *junta directiva* to guarantee that the documents were well written and the budgets were well done. The vice-president told me:

As an authority, sometimes I have to support my secretary, call on the list and make agendas, everything ... Sometimes when we reach agreements we write everything, checking with our agendas. In other words, which topics we have to talk about, how much do we have left [balance]. That we write. Yes, we help the treasurer to write, how much is there. Does he have his balance, do you have your money, or don't you? We write, multiply, add.

The contents of a document frequently took into consideration decisions that had been made collectively, either in *asamblea* (assembly) --with the participation of most *Huancallinos*-- or in a meeting of the *junta directiva*. The president orally gave the secretary some essential data to write the document (name of the addressee, main points of the document). The secretary typed the document. Later, other authorities revised the text and made corrections before signing it. Finally, it was a collective responsibility to write the documents "correctly."

Although bureaucratic literacy was imposed, it took a particular shape in the community. It was always collectively performed and socially shared. Bureaucratic literacy was inserted in the regular activities at the communal level. I will present an example of the *asambleas* in order to illustrate how literacy was incorporated into this regular practice and its conventions. Reading and writing were resources used during assemblies, however, they were always immersed in oral language used and mediated by *literacy mediators* (Baynham, 1993).

#### *The Asambleas: Oral and written language in action*

As Hall (1994) stated for the case of literacy practices in the 17th century, one quality of literacy is that "its nature lies in how it was used or (to borrow a term from cultural anthropology) how it was performed" (p. 183). With the example of the *asamblea*, I will illustrate how literacy was performed in the communal context, during a

regular activity in which the majority of *comuneros* participated. *Asambleas* (assemblies) were organized by the authorities and usually took place the last day of the month.<sup>121</sup> The intention of the assemblies was to inform the *comuneros* of news related to written documents that arrived in the community, present information and opinions about the situation of the functioning of the committees or the *junta directiva*, and to discuss any important issue so that a collective decision could be made. At the beginning of the meetings, the *masa* (the people, the collectivity) elected a *director de debates* (director of debates) in order to conduct the meeting. He was in charge of following the agenda that had been previously prepared by the *junta directiva*. The director of debates needed to be a *literate* person because he acted as a *literacy mediator* during the event. The secretary of the community is the one in charge of writing all the important events and decisions that the *masa* (the people, the collectivity) takes. Then, he also acted as a *literacy mediator*. Mediators of literacy are both interpreters and *literate* individuals who can read and write for others.<sup>122</sup>

The *director de debates* usually had an agenda in his hands. He often read his agenda to follow the points to discuss. Starting the assembly, written documents sent by foreign institutions, neighboring communities or *comuneros* from Huancalle were read. The *director de debates* was the one who read the documents aloud in Spanish. Then he code-switched to Quechua in order to translate and explain to the community the contents of the text. After the translation the director of debates asked for the opinion of the *comuneros* about the response the community should take regarding the contents of the document.

Frequently the *director de debates* not only translated the contents but also interpreted them. His interpretation included both his opinion regarding the issue in

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<sup>121</sup> These were called *asambleas ordinarias* (regular assemblies). There were also the *asambleas extra-ordinarias* (extra-ordinary assemblies), which took place when needed.

<sup>122</sup> This practice in the Andes comes from the colonial times, when “the Indians that spoke Spanish also took the roles of secretaries (*esribanos*) and ‘the ones who remembered’ (*memoriones*). They were in charge of the official domains in the recently constituted People’s Councils. They sometimes kept their previous name ‘*kipus*’ keeper’ (*quipucamayoc*). Bilingual Indians were preferred as leaders and interpreters, and were given official employment from 1552 and on in the audiences in the New World” (Arnold & Yapita, 2000, p. 86, my translation).

discussion, as well as some information he thought the *comuneros* needed in order to make a good decision. This information was given using frames of reference known to *comuneros*. In this way the *director de debates* in his capacity as mediator between the local and the outside world, facilitated the understanding of the text to the members of the community. The interpretation and information given was needed for purposes of communicating the contents of the written texts, not only because it was in Spanish --a language not all managed fluently-- but because it was written in a formal style of Spanish. The *director de debates* had to make switches with the intention of informing *comuneros*. He made mode-switches (from written to oral modes) and code-switches (from Spanish to Quechua). He also translated from a formal style of Spanish of the written documents into an everyday Quechua language. Later, *comuneros* --mostly only men--gave their opinions about the issue, presented their arguments and voted on a decision. Women shared their opinions among themselves in small groups with almost no public participation. Then, alphabetic Spanish literacy in the community was immersed and incorporated into the oral communicative practices of the *comuneros* in Quechua.<sup>123</sup>

This literacy event was collectively constructed and enabled non-literate and Quechua monolinguals of the community to become informed of documents addressed to the collective written in Spanish. In addition, they could become participants in the decision-making process regarding these issues. Thus, written documents were not only read aloud and then decided upon. They were discussed, analyzed, interpreted and orally recreated in oral Quechua. They were read always with the mediation of a *literate* member of the community--*the director of debates*--who was not only *literate* but had experience in urban areas and knowledge about dealing with institutions of the state.

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<sup>123</sup> For example, the *director de debates* read in Spanish a document sent by the “commission of the micro-basin” inviting two representatives of each participant community to a meeting to discuss a project they wanted to execute. The *director de debates* code-switched and mode-switched from written Spanish to oral Quechua. He translated the contents of the official document and also advocated for the commission and its intentions stating that the project would benefit not only one community, but three. He finished with a recommendation that the community should participate in the meeting and the project: “hay que ser partícipe” (we should participate). Then, the participants of the assembly discussed the issue and decided if they would participate or not.

During the reading and discussion of the document, the secretary wrote in Spanish about the interventions of *comuneros*. After official documents were read, the *director de debates* reading his agenda introduced the *informes* (reports) to be given. The members of the different committees gave the reports on their work orally in Quechua. Then, the secretary of the community translated and then “narrated” or “copied” in Spanish the reports in the *libro de actas* (book of acts).

Thus, *reading* and *writing* documents in Huancalle took a particular shape. It is far from meaning only the decoding and encoding of the written text. The communal affairs were discussed many times taking as a starting point the written text. The written text in itself was not as important as the translation and interpretation made by the mediator, the comments and additional information provided by this mediator, as well as the discussion that took place around the written text. The oral interaction in Quechua around the written text was part of the act of *reading* the document.

The use of both oral Quechua and written Spanish language was constitutive of the literacy events in Huancalle. Code- and mode-switching aided the construction of the event and contributed to the process of meaning-making of the Spanish written documents. Mode-switching involved --in words of Baynham (1993)-- “text and talk about text, the joint construction of meaning and the collaborative construction of texts” (p. 294). As Baynham found in a Moroccan community settled in London, literacy practices in Huancalle involved both code-switching and mode-switching because almost all texts were in Spanish and most of the oral language occurred in Quechua although including code-switching and borrowings from Spanish. The *comuneros* put to use their communicative resources (oral and literate) in order to participate in literacy events and accomplish their goals with written texts.

In addition, the secretary’s written accounts of the actions and comments during the assembly shows the interaction between oral and written language in the bureaucratic literacy practices in Huancalle. I found numerous examples in the *actas* that showed that the secretary narrated the events instead of making notes about the most salient points of the discussion. Oral narrative, a common practice in the Andean world, was transported

into the writings of *comuneros* when they wrote their documents. An obvious example is the way the secretary wrote the accounts about the elections –a very frequent practice during assemblies. Usually *comuneros* voted to elect their authorities or make a decision. Thus, all *comuneros* attending the meeting voted and the secretary recorded the number of votes and the winner of the election. Instead of writing a list of the names of the candidates and right next to them their votes, which would be a faster way to register the votes, the secretary narrates the election in the following excerpt. This is only a piece of a whole page that narrates the election of the President, secretary and treasurer of the *comité de agua potable* (committee of drinking water):

And in This way the president of the community declares the assembly Opened In the presence of 55 attendants of the majority and in That way they do the Election for President. The compañero Tomás Ruiz elects the compañero Alberto Sisaya and the compañera María rodriguez Elects the compañero José Martinez and in That way they all go into voting For Alberto sisaya 40 votes and for José Martinez 10 votes. The winner for President is the compañero Alberto Sisaya.<sup>124</sup>

The narrations I found in written documents included characteristics of the oral communicative practices in Quechua. In everyday conversations oral narratives emerged. As has been explained, these oral narratives were dialogic in different senses. They were performed in dialogue. Additionally, texts and contexts were brought within the narrative. Oral narrative in Huancalle included oral literature as well as personal narratives --about the speaker or a third person (de la Piedra, et al. 2001). Reported speech was frequently used by adults and children with the intention of bringing the words of a third person into the narrative. Similarly in the *acta*, the secretary often directly quoted the speaker translating the oral intervention into Spanish:

... and in this way the President also makes the report mentioning that These Persons are already known they do This kind of Problems he Also continues that he has notified That Woman For a particular Day, and the second Also makes a manifestation doña Martina Kusi mentioning I Also Have a Problem with this

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<sup>124</sup> Y de Esa manera el presidente de la comunidad da Abierta la asamblea En prescencia de 55 asistenti de lo mayoría y de Esa manera acen el Eleccion Para Presidente. Elige el compañero Tomás Ruiz al compañero Alberto Sisaya y el Compañera María rodriguez Elige al compañero José Martinez y de Esa manera Entran En botación Para Alberto sisaya 40 votos y para José Martinez 10 votos. Como Ganador para Presidente Es el Compañero Alberto Sisaya.

Person and with my husband according to what I have heard I went to her house to fix things and That is Why I Had Problems.<sup>125</sup>

Thus, a mix of literacies were used when writing the *actas*. On the one hand, there was a tendency to use a formal style of written Spanish. On the other hand, oral Quechua linguistic resources were also used when Spanish bureaucratic literacy was practiced. Interestingly, *comuneros* had the conception that they gave diverse reports “from their head.” Storytelling also was taken “from their heads.” I was told many times that people who did not read or write had the knowledge in their heads, “in their books.” Hence, during the assembly *comuneros* orally recited their reports “from their heads.” This information was copied by the secretary. In a similar manner, reported speech was used during everyday conversations. In addition, the value of explicitness was not reflected in these written texts. This example shows that written language was context-dependent and implicit, both alleged characteristics of oral language.

On the surface, these documents have the shape of an official document whose formal structure *Huancallinos* were eager to respect. However, they used these written texts in order to express their needs. In addition, the language they used and the narrative-like characteristics of the written texts show that these texts were appropriated in some ways by the *comuneros*. Moreover, the fact that literacy meant much more than only decoding and encoding and was defined by the interaction of the participants around a written text shows that literacy was defined according to the beliefs and values of the context. The “masa” (the *comuneros* as a collective level) were always the ones who decided on important matters of the community. The oral contextualization of the text always was part of the literacy event as was the negotiation around it.

In conclusion, *Huancallinos* had to adopt bureaucratic literacy imposed on them by the state and its institutions. The particular use of bureaucratic Spanish literacy in the relationship with outsiders was perceived by *comuneros* as a way to obtain benefits for

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<sup>125</sup> ... de igual Forma Tambien hace el informe el Presidente mencionando que Estas Personas ya son conocidas que hace Esto tipo de Problemas Tambien segan que ha notificado a Esa Señora Para Dia fijado a correspondido y la segunda Tambien hace el manifestación la doña Martina Kusi mencionando yo Tambien Tengo Problema con esta Persona Tanto con mi esposo según lo que me enterado de Eso yo ido a su casa para arreglar y de Eso Emos Tenido Problemas.

the community. However, this literacy use was submerged within relationships of domination and subordination. In my opinion, the use of official literacy was similar to the ways the written word was used during colonialism. Lienhard (1992) found that indigenous people --or Spaniards who wrote for them—adopted alphabetic literacy according to the expectations of the European readers and in order to satisfy a political need. Adopting Western alphabetic literacy practices “promised better benefits in the framework of vindicating actions” (Lienhard, 1992, p. 57, my translation). In the case of Huancalle, the main purpose for using bureaucratic literacy was to manage the community’s relationships with outside agencies and authorities for their own sake. However, asymmetrical relationships were not really contested. On the contrary, they were reproduced in the context of interaction.

However, the situation is not as simple as saying that literacy was imposed and extraneous to the life in the community. The use of bureaucratic literacy was inserted in the cultural values of reciprocity of the communal way of life, as well as within the social organization of the community. The fact that the responsibility of writing or reading communal documents resided on the *junta directiva* and not on one person who has the *cargo* (position of the communal government), and furthermore, the fact that the actual writing and reading of the documents was performed collectively is evidence of the shared quality of literacy practices. Bureaucratic literacy was also influenced by oral Quechua communicative resources. Thus, it was performed in a particular culturally-inscribed way. In its performance it differed from the bureaucratic literacy used in public and private institutions.

### **Literacy at home**

Adults and children regularly participated in the everyday activities of maintenance of the household. While reading and writing seldom were part of these regular activities, I found domains in which adults and children read materials in Spanish and a few in Quechua. In the communal context bureaucratic literacy saturated local literacy practices, as found by Zavala (2002). Similarly, schooled and religious literacies

saturated home literacy practices. The written materials found in the homes introduced us to the literacy practices in this context.

### *Reading at home*

School textbooks (mostly in Spanish), the Bible (in Spanish and Quechua), the *himinarios* (song books in Quechua) and newspapers were the most frequently read materials at home. Printed materials related to school were current school textbooks published by the Ministry of Education (in Spanish), old textbooks kept by the parents, dictionaries and booklets of the School Research Projects from the IBE program (in Quechua and Spanish). Although, most parents reported enjoying reading their old school textbooks, they rarely “had time” to browse them. Most households were affiliated to the Plan Internacional. These households sometime received letters from the children’s *padrinos* (sponsors-godparents) and the affiliated children had to write back. Small children got the help of older siblings who dictated their letters.

A few homes had Spanish reading materials related to the state and produced by NGO’s: brochures about the elections and how to vote, booklets about the legislation about peasant communities, booklets about production and animal raising. This kind of information was mostly passed mouth to mouth than reading these booklets. Some of the houses also had a few books which were offered in the streets of Cusco and in the “carros” (buses) on a variety of topics: manuals to learn English quickly, “festivities” in Cusco, famous people (war heroes, saints), “famous phrases,” “obras” (romance novels) or love letters and poems. This kind of recreational reading was mostly used by adolescents and young adults and was not frequently used by adults. These books are sold for one sol (thirty cents of a dollar) and illegally produced.

Reading the newspaper was a frequent activity. While generally *Huancallinos* became informed by listening to the radio, watching T.V. and by having a conversation, most men and a few women reported sometimes reading in order to become “informed.” However, in Huancalle newspapers were read in a particular way. First, they were not acquired by all members in the community. They were bought whenever someone went to the city and had the money to buy them. Sometimes, men also asked a friend or



relative to buy a newspaper for them. Thus, newspapers were shared by groups of people. Male *comuneros* usually read the sports section, and after that, sometimes, the headlines called “importantes” (news about what is occurring in Cusco, other parts of the country and the world). Groups of men generally gathered around one newspaper while waiting for a collective activity regularly done in the community to start (an assembly or a *faena*). Occasionally, they also gathered outside one of the stores of the community to share the sports information.

One of them read out loud the Spanish text while others listened and commented and asked questions, actively participating in the literacy event. Their questions and commentaries were made in both languages, although mostly in Quechua. During my fieldwork, the Cusco team—Cienciano—had performed well during this season, obtained the national championship, and qualified for the Copa Libertadores. For the *comuneros*, this victory was taken in great pride that a Cusqueño team was performing so well and maintaining such a high position. Some even went to the Stadium to watch the game of their team. During the days following this event, news about the games were read in groups frequently. Soccer is a sport that adults and children of Huancalle habitually practice. They have their own team, thus, they were very interested in the information they could find in the sports section of the newspaper.

Other written materials found in the homes were electric and water bills. Homes were also “decorated” --as Zavala (2002) found-- with calendars of industrial products and posters with religious motives and messages. On the walls it is common to see school diplomas and sometimes certificates of participation in a particular church (Protestant). As in the case of the calendars donated by the Plan Internacional described at the beginning of this chapter, these written materials were mostly not meant to be read. They served, as argued by Zavala (2002) as “a symbol of belonging to the literate world” (p. 145). However, this was not always the case. One day while having lunch with a family – members of the Church of Christ-- spontaneously doña Martina read a short verse on one of the religious posters on the walls and commented to her family about the message. This literacy event started a conversation about the father’s experience with the church.

The written materials found at home varied from household to household. Older community members had fewer written materials, while some younger *comuneros* bought for their children expensive books –for example a English-Spanish Dictionary. Almost every household had notebooks, which were used by the children at school, and later used by their parents. Literacy at home was related to literacy practices that children brought from school, adaptations of schooled literacy organized by parents for children to do, and religious literacy practices. In addition, I found some *vernacular* uses of literacy at home related to commercial activities and personal interests and tastes.

### *Schooled literacy and its adaptations*

Usually children did their homework at night. Homework consisted mainly of the simple tasks of copying their *planas*. Older children asked their fathers for help when they did not know how to do an assignment. Mothers “exigían” (demanded) their children did their homework quickly and well. Parents helped their children in their own words “hasta dónde puedo” (up until I am able to). *Comuneros* reported that mothers usually helped children in early primary grades, while fathers –who had more schooling—helped their older children. Older parents who did not have many years of schooling monitored them. Older siblings were in charge of assisting their younger siblings when parents were not able or did not feel as competent as their children. Conversely, children in secondary school and older supported their parents with their literacy needs. Parents usually aided their children to “read” by reading out loud and letting their children repeat the words. They helped their children to “write” by holding the children’s hand and drawing the letter with them,<sup>126</sup> dictating or having them copy texts from books. Some parents also gave their children “tarea” (homework) during the time of vacation. This “tarea” consisted generally of copying a paragraph or a page of the school textbook and re-doing math exercises of the previous year.

Schooled literacy at home --as literacy practices in other contexts-- was characterized by the use of oral Quechua and written Spanish. Contrary to dominant discourses about literacy and orality, I found that Spanish literacy was always surrounded

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<sup>126</sup> This particular way of “teaching” writing was liked by children and some wished their teachers would do the same more often.

by Quechua orality assisting Quechua speakers to make meaning of texts written in Spanish. In addition, notions of schooled literacy frequently shaped literacy uses at home. One day Calixto (9) was doing his “tarea” given by his father during vacations, while selling at their little grocery store. He copied a page of his school textbook. While Calixto was trying to copy from the text in Spanish he made comments in Quechua about what he was writing and how was he doing it. Over and over Calixto code- and mode-switched in order to find the next word he had to copy and to provide information to me so I could understand what was he doing. Also, it is important to gather his recurrent comments about how he was writing “wrongly.”

While writing and repeating the words he was copying, continuously he said things in Quechua like “I could not do it right,” “another one I would have to do. I will tear this one that I am doing. This one I will do again, I did not do it right. This one too, what am I doing? Like this, I will tear this. It is done.” When I asked Calixto why was he tearing his pages he told me it was because he had to do it with a correct handwriting. He said “My letter [handwriting] isn’t coming out nicely.” This example shows the interaction between Spanish literacy and oral Quechua in order to construct the literacy event. In addition, it shows how notions of literacy learned at school were brought by children and parents to literacy events at home. This definition limited tremendously children’s’ writing. This time, Calixto spent around two hours copying a paragraph because he continuously ripped pages out or erased what he had written.

Schooled literacy influenced not only school-age children, but also their parents and younger siblings. Sometimes, older siblings spontaneously “taught” young children who were not of school age yet, introducing them into the literate world from school at home. This is not surprising given the fact that older children assumed child care roles of their younger siblings. Also young children sometimes spontaneously interacted with the printed materials they found lying around –mostly school textbooks that belonged to older children. One night Calixto was doing his homework and his three year-old cousin was sitting right beside him. While cutting some squares for his assignment, he told his

cousin he should cut “así” (like this) and should stick the squares “así” (like this), showing how it should be done.

Later, the three-year-old child --dragged into the literacy activity-- took a book that belonged to Calixto’s father. This book had been published by an NGO that worked in the area. The three-year-old child manipulated the book and got interested in the front page, which had a picture of a river basin. He followed with his finger the river on the picture. When I asked him what he saw he said “water.” This interaction shows us that little children are been introduced to print by their older siblings or the presence of written materials of the parents before entering school.

I also observed sometimes little children who did not attend school interacted with older siblings’ textbooks. These interactions were characterized by the ways little children had learned about how to interact with print: they usually signaled a picture and said the name of the object. Other times they elaborated a little about the object’s qualities or used their imagination in order to tell something they would do with that object (i.e. “small little dog!” “Would my father buy it for me?”). For example, Alberto and Rómulo, two three year old boys found Rómulo’s ten year old brother’s schoolbook at home. They were at Rómulo’s kitchen and Alberto saw the book and started to point at the pictures commenting to Rómulo about them. The interaction was dominated by comments in Spanish and Quechua such as “Look, a hand!” “One notebook!,” “Look, nice! Look a policeman, let’s see it!” They also asked questions such as: “Where is it?” and challenged each other with dares such as: “I bet I can beat you!”

Children also spontaneously “read” their schooled textbooks, dictionaries and little booklets their parents bought for them. I found children gathering around a book and sharing the reading of it. The next example is interesting because it shows how children use schooled literacy practices learned at school in order to “read” a book according to their own interests. Children in Huancalle were very eager to learn English. One of the things they liked to do was to tell me the names of things so I translated them in English. They told me they also wanted to learn Portuguese and Italian. These languages are related to their experience with tourism. *Comuneros* said their artisan work

was sold in Italy, Brazil, and Bolivia. The children of don José had emigrated to Brazil and established an artisan shop there. In addition, secondary school age children took a mandatory English course at public school.

Some parents bought their children little English booklets sold in Cusco or on buses. These were little manuals that had some grammar information and vocabulary. One morning during vacation time I found Nelson and Carlos in Nelson's home. They were reading Carlos' English book. The boys read the name of the object in English and by watching the picture they knew the meaning of the word. During the literacy event both boys helped each other to make meaning of the English text, using oral Spanish and Quechua. The text was in a language they did not know; however, they used the literacy practices learned at school, in order to understand the text they wanted to read.

As in the case of the school, at home when doing "homework" children followed the notions and rigid norms of schooled literacy. However, they also used literacy with spontaneity, as an instrument to fulfill their goals in regard to their own interests. Wanting to learn English certainly was a result of their lives characterized by frequent contact with the city and tourism. Wanting to learn English responded to their parents' desire to assist them in educational and working options outside of the community. Children had also formed similar opinions: they wanted to work outside of their community and learning English was a plus in order to get a job. Schooled literacy was used by children outside of the institutional context of the school according to their purposes, in this case, as a strategy to learn a third language.

*The contact of literacies: The case of Alberto*

The home was a context in which literacies were in contact. I will present the case of Alberto to illustrate this point. The following literacy event illustrates how Luzmila, a twenty-year-old mother, interacts with her three-year-old son (Alberto) while cooking. Luzmila was born and raised in Huancalle. However, she migrated to Lima and lived there for two years working as a domestic worker. She spoke mainly in Spanish to Alberto and she believed she had to take an active role in "teaching" her son schooled knowledge, such as "the colors" and "the vowels." One afternoon, Luzmila, Luzmila's

mother, and her grandmother were cooking together in the kitchen. Alberto brought a notebook and started to draw a woman. While he drew, he verbalized in a loud voice what he was drawing. His mother repeated what he said and sometimes suggested what he could draw (see Appendix 3 for the original transcriptions):

- Alberto: Her little skirt, her little hand, her little foot, her little hair pin. Mommy, your little hair pin.  
Luzmila: My little hair pin, her head, her head?  
Alberto: Here it is!  
Luzmila: Her nose, her nose.

The mother also engaged the three-year-old by posing questions about the drawing:

- Luzmila: What is this?  
Alberto: Our home, little home.  
Luzmila: Our little home.

The mother later suggested he draw a picture of her and the child decided he would draw his mother chopping, representing the actual moment of the interaction:

- Luzmila: Ah, OK! A lot of flowers. Let's see, draw mom.  
Alberto: OK, OK, mommy, how? Chopping?  
Luzmila: Like that, chopping.  
Alberto: Like that, chopping with a knife.

Mother and child co-constructed the literacy event. The notions of literacy as “representation” of the real world were worked in this literacy event by the mother. The child quickly understood the mother’s intention. This event shows how the mother introduced the child to the literate environment of the school. Although this is not a generalized situation, it shows how some young parents --who also have migrated or have a fluent contact with urban areas-- used schooled literacy at home with young children. This goes hand in hand with a linguistic home policy I found in most homes in Huancalle. Parents tended to speak Spanish with their infants (de la Piedra, et al. 2001).

However, Alberto’s socialization was also surrounded by Quechua orality. Alberto’s non-literate grandmother spoke to him in both languages. She also liked to sing to him in Quechua and frequently told oral narratives in their mother tongue. Other

people participated in the everyday conversations: the grandparents and a friend of the family who joined them everyday. Additionally, Alberto had a best friend who mainly spoke Quechua with him. Thus, conversations, oral narratives --oral tradition and personal narratives-- and jokes were performed everyday at Alberto's home. The family listened to the radio for information and entertainment. Alberto's grandmother talked with her guinea pigs, her cow, while she fed or cured them. She talked to her pots and the salt, while she cooked. Metaphorical language was used within everyday conversation. Therefore, Alberto has been socialized bilingually and also in the use of different communicative traditions and resources.

My intention is not to valorize one communicative tradition over the other one, but to find out the meanings each one had in the community. The case of Luzmila and Alberto is an example of an intimate literacy event between mother and child that contradicts some teachers' remarks that uneducated Quechua-speaking parents do not assist their children with literacy at home. From their perspective, maybe this example is not enough to be considered "reading" or "writing." However, from the perspective of Luzmila, she used strategies, such as the one presented, to teach her child the knowledge of the school. In addition, the oral Quechua language development of Alberto by participating in this household gave him the opportunity of increasing his repertoire of communicative resources.

In sum, when children attend school, Spanish literacy played a greater role at home. Children brought schooled literacy at home, playing an active role and becoming agents of literacy used at home. They were mediators of literacy of their younger siblings, cousins and parents. Parents also brought their own experiences with schooling and their own definitions of schooled literacy practices. Schooled literacy penetrated the home, sometimes conserving the meaning attached to it by the institution of the school, but other times changing the meaning of literacy practices and adapting schooled literacy in the context of the home.

Homes were also places of work, where families gathered to produce crafts for the market and where some families have opened little stores. The members worked in the

*chakra*, took their animals graze, worked and studied in the cities. Thus, the use of literacy at home was not only related to the school work, but also to the diverse social roles *comuneros* took, their economic activities, their communicative needs, and needs of affection. I will present next the uses of *vernacular* literacies I found, both in the context of the community and at home.

### **Vernacular literacies**

In contrast with the official literacy practices found in the community and at home, I found some uses of the Spanish alphabetic literacy that were self-generated (Ivanic & Moss, 1991). These were clearly vernacular uses of Spanish literacy. According to Bakhtin,

The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own (cited in Wertsch, 1998, p. 54).

Similarly, the written word learned by *comuneros* in the contexts of social institutions such as schools, NGO's, churches, or the state, was appropriated by *Huancallinos* "populating" it with their own intentions, purposes and needs. Vernacular literacies, as briefly explained in the first chapter, are local and alternative literacy practices that use the dominant language and writing system. Camitta (1993), for example, found that students attending a high school in Philadelphia did not write much for their school work. However, they used writing extensively for their own purposes: writing rap song, notes, poems. *Vernacular literacies* are, according to Camitta, "closely associated with culture which is neither elite nor institutional, which is traditional and indigenous to the diverse cultural processes of communities as distinguished from the uniform, inflexible standards of institutions" (pp. 228-229).

In this section, I will present the cases of *vernacular literacies* I found. Although most people did not extensively write in Huancalle and oral communicative practices



were more frequently used as means of communication and social interaction, I think uses of vernacular literacies are worth presenting in order to understand how some *comuneros* used literacy according to their indigenous culture, which depending on the experiences of the *comuneros* included *contact zones* (Pratt, 1991).

*Don Apolinario's notebook*

In order to understand the vernacular uses of literacy I will present the case of one comunero, don Apolinario, a 47-year-old man born in Huancalle. Don Apolinario was a believer in Andean Catholicism who recently fulfilled his *cargo* in the celebration of *Cruz Velakuy*. He went to school in a nearby community until the 5th grade. Taking into account his age, he was one of the few *Huancallinos* who had access to such a high level of schooling, in the times when the community's school did extend beyond the third grade. He lived with his wife and four of his six children. Two of them lived in Lima and Puerto Maldonado. Don Apolinario occasionally wrote letters to them. The other two children who were at the secondary school level have dropped out of school. According to their parents, the reason for dropping out was that "they do not like school." His two youngest sons attended the community's school. His wife did not read or write, and spoke very little Spanish. This household is was one of the few in Huancalle that did not have a T.V., but they did have a radio.

Don Apolinario had a little notebook where he wrote his expenses when he went outside of the community. He held a written account of his everyday earnings and expenses when he had work in Cusco (as a construction worker) or in Písaq (picking up sand). He did this in order to show his wife where he was spending his money. Sometimes, don Apolinario bought, while he was in Cusco, groceries for home which he wrote down in his little notebook. He also kept a record of the monthly electric bill. He reported that sometimes institutions that worked in the area wanted to know these data and he wanted to be ready to give that information accurately. Don Apolinario also had a written *list of Ayni* in his notebook. The *list of Ayni* consisted of the names of all the members of his *masa* or *grupo*, the group of people with whom he makes *ayni* (a system of reciprocal help to work the fields). He held a written account of the work that each one

of them had done. When I asked him what was the utility of having a *list of ayni*, he answered:

It is like a memory. If someone says to me: today you owe me one day, [I could say]: what does my list say? There it is. I could confront him: That day we have worked in your *chakra*, and why would you claim a debt? I would say. That is what it is for, in order to remember. That is why I always write it down.

In the same vein, don Apolinario used his notebook to have an account of the agreements that were taken during the communal assemblies. In regard to this practice, he said it was good to write about the important issues dealt with during assemblies and meetings because it allowed him to remember what was said. Furthermore, these writings were an instrument in order to assist his *compañeros* of the *junta directiva* to avoid forgetting important matters they had left aside during the assemblies.

He also wrote jokes that he had heard on the radio or that he was told by his children. He reported that in this second case, his children are the ones who asked his father to write them down so they would not forget the jokes that they learned at school. He also wrote information from the news he listened to on the radio, such as the name of the president of the USA and the name of the wife of Peruvian President Toledo, “Elian Karp.” Additionally, don Apolinario liked to copy verses of prayers in Spanish and Quechua from his book of catechism. He informed me he usually prayed everyday before going to work in the field. He liked to write these prayers in order to practice writing.

The presented case shows that even though *Huancallinos* as individuals do not read and write much, there were some uses of literacy that were intrinsically related to their interests, purposes and needs. In the case of don Apolinario, he kept some records in order to avoid conflicts with his wife, his relatives or the communal authorities. But he also wrote jokes and names he thought he should not forget, and as for prayers, he just had the satisfaction of writing because he already had them memorized. In spite of the fact that don Apolinario’s writing was not extensive and it included a limited number of words, it clearly responded to his purposes and was not related to any institution.

In general, I found *vernacular literacies* were used within local activities in order to 1) keep diverse records (loan notes, personal or family expenses, making notes of

addresses and telephone numbers, making lists), 2) personal communication (letters and cards), and 3) love letters, poems, notes and journal writing.

### *Keeping records*

I have already presented the use of literacy in record keeping in the organizational context of the community. In addition, some *Huancallinos* kept record of expenses they had when they went to the city: notes about groceries they bought and how much had cost them. Men who worked in the city also kept records of their salaries. People who owned stores in Huancalle (4 households) had notebooks where they recorded the loans of people. They wrote the products they had taken and the amount they owed. Sometimes, these stores also functioned as banks, lending money to *comuneros*. Usually the women and the children were in charge of taking notes about the loans. During the afternoons and vacation periods children had the responsibility to sell and keep records of the sales. Women later checked with their children about what was sold, to whom and how much was the amount owed. Women practiced literacy in their stores.

The case of doña Jacinta, who is non-literate and went to school for a few months as a child, is interesting. She did not record the sales nor wrote the names of the people who owed or the amount of the debt. Her five children were in charge of writing in the notebook. However, she had the needed skills in order to buy groceries for her store in Cusco. Even though she did not read, she was able to add and check the bills the vendors gave her. In addition, when she lent her products she remembered the product, how much it cost and the person she lent it to. When her children arrived from school she dictated to them the information of the debts. In her words, she did not let herself be fooled. Is it fair to say that this woman is *illiterate*? She, her children, members of the community, and overall, society in general considered her *illiterate*. Nevertheless, by using her knowledge about math and some literacy skills developed in her store –recognizing the brand of the products—she was able to accomplish her literacy needs.

Families that worked doing crafts for the tourist markets also kept a notebook: *cuaderno de cuentas* (accounts notebook) where most of the time the father or the older children kept record of what they sold. Families who had a commercial relationship with

nearby urban areas, also sometimes wrote little notes containing addresses, telephone numbers or names of people with whom to talk.

*Vernacular literacies* were not used only at the individual level, but also at the communal level. *Comuneros* used literacy in the context of larger activities in which oral language, dance and ritual were more important than was the use of literacy. However, the former was a part of these events. For example, two days before of the festivity of *Todos los Santos* (All Saints'), *comuneros* in Huancalle made bread and prepared favorite food that would be offered to their deceased love ones. The spirits of the dead came to visit and met with their alive relatives, ate and drunk from the offerings. Many families met in the communal oven in order to make the dough and bake their bread. They made different shapes of bread during two consecutive days (babies and horses). The families wrote their names in the order they arrived, so as to keep their turns to place their breads in the oven.

During the celebration of a marriage of a young couple, along with dancing, drinking and eating the traditional food for a marriage, presents were given to the couple. The *padrinos* stated in the microphone of the electronic sound equipment the amount of money they gave to the newly-wed couple. Later, each guest placed their monetary present on a decorated plate. Meanwhile, people who were part of the social network of the couple, brought their contributions to the celebration. In a notebook, the groom wrote a *lista de ayni*, and wrote the name of the contributors and what they were bringing (“2 cases of beer”, “5 kilos of noodles”, etc.). This is a way the couple would be sure of who contributed and what they provided.

*Personal communication (letters and invitation cards)*

All *comuneros* from Huancalle had relatives outside the community, in cities like Lima, Puerto Maldonado, Arequipa, and foreign countries like Brazil. Sometimes they wrote letters; however, they did not frequently write to communicate with their relatives. In Huancalle there was one telephone. Then letters were displaced by the phone as an oral way to communicate with relatives (Zavala, 2002). When they did, *comuneros* wrote letters letting their relatives know they and their family were fine. The letters generally

were sent either to the post office in Cusco or to a relative who resides in Cusco. Then this relative sent the letter with any *comunero* from Huancalle or from a nearby community. Letter writing was also done collectively. People who were not able to write by themselves went to their daughters, sons, relatives or friends in order to get help to write a letter to a love one. Sometimes *comuneros* also asked teachers with whom they have *confianza* (a relationship of trust). Another strategy is to go to the *puesto* (shop) in the city of Cusco, where they were charged for the letter typing.

Usually *mediators of literacy* intervened in letter writing. Usually code-switches and mode-switches occurred: oral Quechua to written Spanish, back to oral Quechua. Usually the person who wanted to write the letter dictated or just “told” in Quechua the *mediator of literacy* the contents of the letter. The mediator of literacy switched to written Spanish and *copied* what was said. Later, the *mediator of literacy* read the letter in Spanish –if the addressor understood Spanish—or he translated the letter into Quechua – if the addressor was Quechua monolingual. Thus, letters were written in a *joint construction* (Baynham, 1993) of the literacy event. It required a joint effort of more than one person.

In addition, printed invitation cards were sent by one *carguyuyq* (person in charge) for the celebration of the *Cruz Velakuy* (May 3<sup>rd</sup>). These invitations were for people who had been *jurcados* (asked for their contribution to the celebration). It is important to say that I have not seen more situations in which written invitations were given, except the official invitations written by the community to foreign authorities, institutions, and urban people to invite them for communal events.

#### *Young Huancallinas' writing*

I found a vernacular literacy practice among young women in Huancalle: writing love letters, poems about love, notes, copying love songs, and writing journals. The practices of writing love letters should not be considered as writing any regular letter to communicate with people living outside the community. These writings were usually secretly kept and not always shared with the addressee. This was a girls' vernacular literacy practice. It was all written in Spanish but orally shared in Spanish or Quechua,

depending on the people the written text was shared with. It was influenced by schooled literacies because it started when girls were in high school and got to know “little booklets” about the topic or got love letters and notes made by their classmates or were motivated by a teacher to keep a personal journal. However, it was appropriated by adolescents and young adults for their own private lives and it was practiced outside the institutional context of the school. Moreover, I think this practice competed with the academic writing promoted by the school.

Girls and single young adult women liked to write in their notebooks love letters and poems. A few even had journals where they kept their “secrets” and wrote “everything that happen in the day” (Berta). They also received notes from classmates that expressed their friendship or love, which they mostly destroyed or secretly kept inside their journals or notebooks. This local vernacular practice was both stigmatized and valued in Huancalle. It was identified by some adults, adolescents and children as a characteristic of girls who would marry young, who were not good students and were not interested in getting out of the community. It was –from the perspective of a sector of the *comuneros* and children-- clearly not valued and seen as divergent to studying. For example, talking about school and how she wanted to become a professional, leaving behind her life as a peasant, Rosa (thirteen-year-old girl) told me:

My girl classmates studied by just writing letters. Now they have husbands and children, they live with their children here [in the community].

Clara --a twenty-year-old who shared with me her letters and poems-- valued her writings because she felt good writing her feelings and thoughts on paper and then shared them with friends. However, she also talked about this practice as opposed to studying. She finished high school and does not study now. She works at home doing crafts and helping in the family’s store in the community, while her sister is a student of accounting in Cusco. When she explained why her sister did not like to do this kind of writing she told me it was due to the fact that she did not have the time to do it because she was a student. However, in Clara’s case, she valued this practice and frequently engaged in it by herself or sharing with her friends.

On the one hand, following the dominant discourses that opposed the *literate, schooled, Spanish-speaking, urban, men* to the *illiterate, not schooled, Quechua-speaking, peasant women*, writing love letters, poems and songs was conceived as a practice totally opposed to academic writing. Academic writing would give young women the opportunity to become professionals and get out of the community, while love letter writing would bring the consequences of getting married early in life, having children, becoming an adult peasant and staying in the community. On the other hand, it was a practice that resisted the dominant discourses and representations of the written words' forms and uses. Women usually did not use the written word in order to communicate. However, this vernacular practice allowed young women to communicate their feelings by writing them, and then orally shared them with their friends or relatives. Adolescents or young adults in Huancalle are the group which represents most clearly the "contact zone" (Pratt, 1991) Quechua peasants experience with the urban world. After all they are the ones who experience everyday a process of reinstating their culture within their experience of going back and forth from their community to the city.

Because it was such a private and hidden practice among girls I was only able to see the writings of three girls who were willing to share with me their poems, letters, songs and journals. I was told by Clara that most of her friends borrowed her books of love letters and poetry: "La mayoría de los jóvenes leemos poemitas, cartas, así" (the majority of young people read little poems, letters, things like that). Clara buys little booklets of love letters and poems on the bus in order to learn how to write these texts. The book she recently bought –which is really a small booklet filled with love poems-- had the title "Poems. Tribute to love. For that great feeling that unites human beings."<sup>127</sup> She told me that she started her writings just copying from the book. Later, she was able to write the letters and poems without having to look at the book. In her words, "leo de mi cabeza. Algunos me acuerdo del libro y otros de mi pensamiento" (I read from my head. Some I remember from the book, others from my thought). The following is an example of a love letter a girl shared with me:

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<sup>127</sup> "Poemas. Tributo al amor. Para ese gran sentimiento que une a los seres humanos."

*I know I try to forget you but it becomes impossible The love I feel for you grows stronger everyday as I think more and more about you, how could I forget you, how could I take you out of my heart, thinking about you I go through night and day I miss you I dream thinking about you.*

As opposed to academic writing, girls did not pay attention to the formal aspects of literacy, such as spelling, punctuation marks or the structure of the text. They always felt free to write these texts without worrying about them being “correct” or not. They also liked to “copy” the lyrics of popular songs from the radio or their tapes. Certainly, Clara’s writings resembled the romantic tone of popular *baladas* (ballads, romantic Spanish songs) that young *Huancallinos* liked to listen to on the radio. She wrote entirely in Spanish because she considered Quechua literacy too difficult and not worthy of use. Clara told me she wrote these poems, songs and letters only for herself. She was in love but has never shown the letters and poems to the boy with whom she was in love. After she completed a notebook with these love writings she burned her notebooks so her father could not read them. She did not have that fear regarding her mother because she was not able to read. However, Clara shared with me her notebook with the condition that I did not tell her mother about her writings. Along with love notes, Clara also used her notebook to write addresses, telephone numbers and keep records of debts at the family store.

Berta, a sixteen year old, also has a notebook that she calls her *diario* (journal). She wrote “everything” in it. Like Clara, she liked to “copy” song lyrics of popular romantic songs and write poems. However, she dedicated most of her writing time “anotando” (writing) what happened during the day. She wrote as if she was “talking with another person.” Then, she wrote the journal as if she was telling all the important events in her life to a friend. She wrote about the pleasant things she had lived but also about the events that caused her pain. She told me she cried while she wrote these events and cried when she read them over and over. Berta liked to share her writings with her mother, with whom she had a very close relationship of trust. Since her mother did not know how to read, Berta read part of her journal to her mother who attentively listened to the reading. Then, she commented on the events Berta read, using them as examples of



what should or should not be done by a girl in life. Sometimes, when the narrated events caused Berta pain, her mother cried for her daughter and expressed surprise that she had lived through such difficult times. Having a journal and sharing it with the mother was also an activity Patricia (17 years-old) liked to do very much.

The way Berta explained how she wrote the journal exemplified the interactional nature of this literacy practice: as if she was telling somebody. As opposed to academic writing which was decontextualized, this local girl's practice was always situated within events of the girls' lives, was written as if it was orally produced and was also shared within an oral interaction in which affection was part of the literacy event.

Juana corroborated the fact that most girls in Huancalle wrote romantic letters. She had written two love letters. She also had secretly read her sister's letters. While the communal space was where a predominantly adult and male use of literacy occurred, this private space was mainly a feminine and young use of literacy. Letters were mostly always burned in the kitchen's fire in order to avoid people reading private issues and feelings. Clara kept her notebook hidden and as soon as she finished it she burned it. Berta kept her journal in a locked case. Patricia also burned her notebooks. Sharing love letters with very close girl friends was common and practiced in secret, mostly in the bedroom. Juana told me sometimes girls got rid of their letters just throwing them on the road or next to it. When someone found a love letter, she took it home to share with the whole family. Juana told me they enjoyed reading the letter and commenting about the girl who had written it.

Writing about falling in love was clearly a practice done mostly among young people (approximately 15 to 22) in Huancalle.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, the fact that Clara acquired her books in the bus when she went to Cusco was not an unrelated incident to these literacy practices. Adolescents shared in some ways the cultural practices of their parents. However, they also shared practices of semi-urban and urban areas. Adolescents and young adults, nevertheless, were not a homogenous group. Some of them had more frequent contacts with the urban areas than others. Some girls had their families earlier in

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<sup>128</sup> I was told that adult extra-marital lovers also wrote letters to each other but due to their private quality I had no access to them.

their lives and others did not. Some boys found jobs in the cities while others worked the *chakra* in the community. Although not all adolescents shared the same characteristics in Huancalle, all of them have had the experience of everyday contact with the city where they attended high school. Adolescents go to these locations everyday and study with classmates who live in the city. A group of them went to a discotheque in Písaq. They also have adopted the jargon of the urban adolescents and use it among themselves. They are bilinguals and use both languages. Their clothes also reflect their relationships with the city. When they are not working in the *chakra* they tend to use blue jeans, shirts, shoes –with the exception of some young women who are already married. During the celebrations they bring dances and music they have adopted from the city, heard on the radio or the T.V. (i.e. saylla, rap, technocumbia, “baladas”--romantic songs--, and radio hits).

Thus, some more than others have adopted certain cultural practices and tastes from their friends from urban areas and from the mass-media. I think writing about love was a result of *Huancallinos'* experiences with “contact zones.” It became a part of young girls' spare time. They made this practice their own. Having feelings put into writing was seen as problematic because people who should not be sharing these private feelings could have access to them. It is not surprising, then, that this practice was surreptitious. Writing about love was not a common practice among adults. However, love was a very common topic orally treated. Singing about love was very common among *comuneros*, who liked to listen to *huaynos* (Andean type of music) on the radio or their own tapes. Love and sex were also recurrent topics of oral narratives and jokes. The use of metaphors in the everyday lives of adult *comuneros* that talk about love and sex were also very common.

Autobiographical writing of Berta's journal caused me to pay attention to a speech genre I found was often used in everyday conversation: personal narrative (de la Piedra, et al., 2001). Although oral literature is still widely used, I noticed that children and adolescents told me they knew fewer *cuentos* than their parents did. This was also confirmed by adults and elders in the community. Don Juan explained to me that certain

contexts in which storytelling frequently took place (i.e. gatherings drinking *aqha*) were being replaced by other contexts (i.e. listening to the radio or watching T.V.). However, personal narratives were always shared by adults and children. These were stories about the speaker or a third person. Besides the goal of communicating a moral teaching or giving advice, personal narratives had the purpose of sharing and renovating bonds. On the same lines, love letters and journals were in some ways personal narratives. They also were written to be shared, certainly to a reduced group of people: mostly friends. I think the goal of sharing these writings was to reinforce friendship and mother-daughter bonds, and not only communicate information.

This literacy practice is a clear result of the contact of different communicative practices: practices learned at school (in an urban area) and personal oral narrative in everyday conversations in the community. Thus, this literacy practice illustrates the contact of literacies and how institutional literacies are put to use and transformed according to the purposes of its users.

### **Literacy uses in the city**

It is important to distinguish the literacy practices in the community to those outside the community. It was the context of the city that gave meaning to the literacy practices of the *comuneros* when they were out of their community. Because of the close relationship between the *comuneros* and the nearby cities, *comuneros* have encountered in the cities new kinds of problems they needed to solve using their resources, one of which was literacy. *Comuneros* used literacy as a tool to find their way around the city. The city was enormous compared to their community. The distribution of the space was also different. The space in the community was distributed in sectors and each sector was named by its characteristics or the characteristics of an animal that frequented the place or a plant that grew there. In the city of Cusco, *comuneros* had to find their way among long streets and a lot of times unknown places.

All *comuneros* said they relied on reading the street signs in order to get around the city. They also said they read the signs inside the offices so they were able to know where they should go in order to accomplish the “trámite” (paperwork) for which they

went to the city. Along with the commercialization of their products and attending school --in the case of children-- finding a job was one of the most important purposes in going to the city. Men emphasized the importance of being *literate* in order to be able to read the signs offering jobs. When *comuneros* went to the city, generally to work or do *trámites* and *gestiones*, they stood right next to the newspaper stand and “read” the newspapers. They looked at the main titles.

One day I visited Juana, a twenty-year-old tourism student. Her father, mother and Juana’s sister were in the outside area of the house, having a conversation about their need to buy new paint to finish a group of artisan work they had pending. The father told Juana’s sister to go to Písaq and buy the needed paint. The father took out from his pants’ pocket a little card and drew a little map on the reverse side of the card. The map explained how to get from the bus stop to the paint store. He drew lines indicating the path she needed to follow and wrote the name of two places: *paradero* (bus stop) and *calle Paucartambo* (Paucartambo Street), the final destination. This girl kept telling her father she knew how to get there, but her father insisted she take the map with her in order to find her way. In addition, Juana, the oldest sister studies English in the city of Cusco. She asked me to help her with her homework. After doing a little bit of her homework she started asking me about phrases in English she needed in order to communicate with the tourists and sell their crafts. She wrote the phrases in her little notebook and used them during commercial transactions in the tourist markets of C’orao and Chinchero.

The city is a literate environment, in contrast to their community. Their community –according to some *Huancallinos*-- was full of signs that they can “read” to make meaning out of them.<sup>129</sup> However, these signs were not meant to be read by using the alphabetic Spanish literacy. Quite the opposite, according to *comuneros* the city is full

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<sup>129</sup> When I was starting my fieldwork, don Juan told me that writing was just like making furrows in the field. He used a metaphor by which he compared the men with the teacher, the bulls with the students, and the hoe with the pencil. After that, I started to ask *comuneros* if they could read or write anything in the real world instead of on a paper. They told me the clouds could be read to know if it would rain, archeological sites were places to “read” about their ancestors, the “linderaje” was a way of writing again the limits of the community, the communal meetings were ways of “reading” because people “remembered” what they had done for their community and they were able to make decisions.

of signs that in order to be read *comuneros* and their children needed to know how to decipher alphabetic literacy. In addition, because the distribution of space was so different in the city than in the community, *comuneros* sometimes relied on writing addresses or making little maps in order to communicate to other people on locations in the city, a strategy they would never use within the geography of their own community.<sup>130</sup> The relationship of *comuneros* with the city shaped some of their literacy uses. In the city, *comuneros* found some uses of literacy that did not have any sense in the community (i.e. reading of signs, making maps, writing phrases in a third language).

### **About Spanish literacies in the community**

According to Barton and Hamilton, “people appropriate texts for their own ends. Just as a text does not have autonomous meanings which are independent of its social context of use, a text also does not have a set of functions independent of the social meanings with which it is imbued” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 12). The same pattern of appropriation of the literacy introduced by outsiders has also been observed in other contexts where there existed colonial relationships among different sectors of society or the introduction of literacies by institutions such as schooling (Bloch, 1993, for the case of a Zafimaniry village, Reder & Reed, 1993, for the case of the introduction of the American school in Alaska) and church (Bledsoe & Robey, 1993, for the case of the Mende of Sierra Leone; Besnier, 1993, in the case of the Nukulaelae islanders; Kulick & Stroud, 1993, for the case of a village in Papua New Guinea; Probst, 1993, for the case of western Nigeria; Reder & Reed, 1993, for the case of the Russian orthodox church in Alaska). Sociolinguistic and anthropological research on immigrants in multilingual contexts have also accounted for the diverse ways in which immigrants “appropriate” the host community’s literacies (Baynham, 1993; Farr & Guerra, 1995; Rockhill, 1993; Weinstein-Shr, 1993). Literature on “vernacular literacies” of children (Dyson, 1993) and adolescents (Camitta, 1993; Shuman, 1993) also account for the use of schooled literacy for adolescents’ and children’s own purposes.

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<sup>130</sup> In the community locations are given by using references such as the school, the building of the Evangelical church, the road, the river or the home of any *comunero*.

This abundant literature shows that the appropriation of the dominant literacy by indigenous people, immigrants or students does not mean that they take the dominant literacy as it is. All these studies show that the use of literacies brought by foreign institutions (church, school, government agencies) do not mean the abandonment of indigenous principles, students' cultures, immigrants' languages and literacies, religious practices and beliefs, local ideas about discourse practices, their knowledge, or power and gender relationships. On the contrary, all these studies demonstrate that indigenous people, immigrants and students reinterpret the dominant literacies, modify their meaning and use them for their own purposes, according to their local ideas and practices. Literacies are mainly incorporated into "their world."

In Huancalle, the vernacular use of Spanish alphabetic literacy was not universally nor extensively practiced. However, specific literacy practices were used when they were needed. The use of Spanish literacy was imposed and the uses of vernacular literacies were very limited. However, is it accurate to say that literacy was not used by *comuneros*? I think that social needs shaped the way *Huancallinos* used literacy. Is this an inferior way of using literacy? No. It is just a way of using literacy according to their needs. If *Huancallinos* still use their oral traditions, personal narratives and extended conversations in order to share information, teach values to their children and give meaning to their lives, it is due to the fact that this is the better way to do it. If they use the written texts --even if they were initially imposed by dominant sectors of society-- from their own perspectives, using their communicative oral tools around them, using mechanisms of role distributions and social networks to make them effective, and giving meaning to these texts from their own beliefs and values, it is because they find some ways in which certain written texts are functional to their purposes and effective to keeping information, sharing feelings, asking for favors or assuring communication.

Up until now I have discussed the ways Spanish literacy was used in the community. However, the most widely used language in the community was Quechua. How was Quechua literacy introduced, conceptualized and used by *Huancallinos* will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN:  
QUECHUA LITERACIES IN THE COMMUNITY

All *comuneros* who were able to read thought they did it much better and more often in Spanish. There was little use of Quechua literacy: “casi no leemos en Quechua” (we almost do not read in Quechua). In the case of writing, the preference for Spanish was even more prevalent. Understanding and “reading” –decoding—were understood as two different processes. Along the same lines, during her qualitative study in Huánuco (Peruvian central area of the Andes), Weber (1994) found that “reading” was defined as “sounding out words, not comprehension of text” (p.104). Zavala (2002) also found that reading and decoding were not perceived as part of the same process. From this perspective about “reading” as decoding, it is explicable that although most *comuneros* agreed that understanding was better accomplished when they read in Quechua as opposed to when they read in Spanish, they also thought it was difficult to “read” Quechua and almost impossible to “write” in that language. Their difficulties referred to the decoding and encoding process. *Comuneros* told me things like:

It is difficult to translate [pronounce], it is not like we talk.

Reading in Quechua is not talking. You do not read correctly, for there is a little difficulty in reading.

Regarding writing, things are different [from Spanish].

These quotes illustrated most *comuneros*' opinions. Reading, and moreover writing, in Quechua was difficult because: 1) the words were pronounced and written differently than in Spanish, and 2) reading and writing in Quechua was a very recent practice for the *comuneros* in Huancalle. Thus, Quechua literacy was considered difficult because the Spanish alphabet was the standard against which Quechua alphabet was compared. As stated by Zavala (2002), the Spanish alphabet was perceived as the “correct” and valid one as opposed to the Quechua alphabet. Quechua has not had the status or the use of a written language until recently. After all, “learning Spanish and becoming literate go hand in hand. (...) Reading and writing are seen as closely related to Spanish and to power, but [they are] disassociated from the Quechua culture” (Chirinos,

1997, pp. 257-258). In addition, accounting for the emphasis placed at school on decoding, instead of understanding, it is not surprising that *comuneros* transferred these beliefs to their goals for reading and writing in Quechua.

Generally, adults and children thought Spanish literacy was more necessary than Quechua literacy. Parents thought it was important for their children to learn how to read and write in Quechua only after they learned Spanish literacy. After all, they told me, all written materials were in Spanish and the people who would read what they wrote were Spanish-speaking people. Furthermore, they said Quechua language was not spoken anymore in the cities and written Quechua was not used anywhere. Even their children, to whom they wrote letters, read in Spanish and not in Quechua.

The reasons they gave to support Quechua literacies were all related to the possibilities it could give their children for their lives in the “outside world.” Their opinions in favor of Quechua literacy development were related with a recent and progressive interest in the Quechua language by institutions, like schools, universities and foreign countries. A few *comuneros* shared the same idea that teachers had: Quechua literacy should be fostered in order to preserve the Quechua language in its “pure” form because it was the language of Cusco and the Inka. The arguments in favor were never about the possibilities of Quechua literacies for their own lives. Only two *comuneros* said they should be able to write their *actas* and their *cuentos* (oral tradition) in Quechua.

For most, having the school teaching Quechua literacy to their children was seen as another way to maintain the exclusion of indigenous people from access to the national society. After centuries of oppression, stigmatization of the indigenous and the internalization of these hegemonic feelings, indigenous people have come to react against the use of written and oral Quechua at school. This is why all of them preferred to have children *literate* in Spanish and did not give as much importance to Quechua literacy. As was argued by Speiser,

What they seemed to defend [by opposing bilingual education] was a right to schooling, the same right that *mestizos* had, a school that did not exclude their children to have access to this society where Spanish and not Quechua is spoken and where values and culture of indigenous people do not seem to matter at all (Speiser, 1996, p. 107, my translation).



With hegemonic discourses against Quechua literacy, still a group of *Huancallinos* valued the use of it in specific contexts, as will be seen in the following section.

### **Literacy practices in the religious domain**

Previously, it has been demonstrated that the school did not constitute a context in which Quechua literacy was practiced or promoted. In contrast, the religious domain was a context in which Quechua literacies were practiced, as has been argued earlier in the case of the Andean world (Chirinos, 1997; Coronel-Molina, 1999; Hornberger, 1994, 1997; Weber, 1994; Zavala, 2002). Historically, the Spaniards used the Quechua language in order to convert the indigenous peoples into Catholicism during colonial times (Mannheim, 1991). Quechua was used during Catholic sermons in Huancalle as was also found by Howard-Malverde (1998). Andean traditional religious rituals were also performed in Quechua. Thus, oral Quechua has been historically used in the religious domain.

Regarding Quechua literacy, Weber (1994), in her account of her experience with literacy instruction with peasant Quechua-speaking women, argues that “with few exceptions, the only people who want to learn to read the vernacular do so out of a spiritual motivation. Since Quechua is the language of the ‘heart’ the church is a natural setting for its use” (p.100). Zavala (2002) also found that Quechua literacy was mainly used in the religious domain to read and write. Similarly, the *comuneros* from Huancalle who were able to read in Quechua referred to reading the Bible, catechism books or “himinarios” (songbooks). These were the only reading materials in Quechua in the community besides a few texts provided by the IBE program to the two participant teachers. Both Quechua and Spanish literacies were used in the religious domain in Huancalle.

#### *Religion in Huancalle*

Presently, *comuneros* divide themselves between *católicos* (Catholics) and *hermanos* (brothers and sisters). The latter are members of two Protestant churches: The Peruvian Evangelical Church and the Church of Christ. Traditionally, the religion in

Huancalle was Catholic.<sup>131</sup> Catholics in Huancalle celebrate catholic festivities –like Cruz Velakuy-- and also they celebrate rituals of Andean origin, like *pago a la Pachamama* (tribute to Mother Earth). In Huancalle, I observed a process of secularization (Ansión, 1993), in which young people reject the connection between the practices and their meanings. Thus, as was proposed by Ansión (1993), some traditional rituals are abandoned by youth who have been schooled or experienced the migration process. In addition to this process of secularization, during the last decades, evangelical religious groups have become stronger in the rural areas of Peru. Massive conversions occurred in many areas of the Andes during the 1970's and afterwards.<sup>132</sup> However, religious pre-evangelical practices and the indigenous people's knowledge of traditional rituals coexist with evangelical practices (Gamarra, 1998; Marzal, 1991).

The Protestant churches came to Huancalle during the 1980's. The Peruvian Evangelical Church was brought by a *comunero*, don Margarito, in 1980. Don Margarito was born in Huancalle but migrated to “the valley”<sup>133</sup> when he was sixteen. His boss in the valley was an evangelic and introduced him to the Church. Later he moved to a semi-rural area in Cusco, where he joined the Peruvian Evangelical Church. After years of living outside the community, he returned. A few months after, he started the congregation with twenty-five families. In 1983 an outsider and *hermano* from the Church of Christ in Cusco brought this Protestant group to the community. He presented some points of disagreement with the Evangelical Church.<sup>134</sup> Soon he got the support of

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<sup>131</sup> The Spaniards imposed Catholicism to the indigenous people from Peru since the conquest. As a result, indigenous populations developed a syncretic religion, which incorporated certain elements of the Catholicism into the Andean religious system of beliefs and practices. It is one religion, but with two orientations: “The Andean population ends up accepting the Catholic religious system, but making a series of reinterpretations of the Christian elements from the indigenous cultural matrix and also incorporating in the new religious system many indigenous elements” (Marzal, 1983, p.61, my translation).

<sup>132</sup> This social phenomenon is a response towards changes in the country and the political violence of the 1980s Peruvians lived through more than a decade of political violence (Gamarra, 1998). The Shining Path and the army fought from the 80's until mid 90's with indigenous people the main victims of these two forces.

<sup>133</sup> The valley still is a very frequent point of migration of *Huancallinos*. There they were “peones” (peons) and worked in the harvest of coffee and coca.

<sup>134</sup> They do not use instruments or dance during the religious service. They are able to be baptized any time and do not have to “study” and be prepared to pass a test in order to be baptized. The Evangelical Church is generally considered stricter.

don Margarito and all *comuneros* who had previously been members of the Peruvian Evangelical Church. After some months, a small group of five families separated themselves and formed the Peruvian Evangelical Church once more.

The conversion into evangelical religious groups has varied across communities in the Andes, and has decreased its influence with the decrease of the political violence in Peru (Gamarra, 1998). In Huancalle, the influence of the two Protestant groups was more intense in the 80's and 90's than nowadays. Presently, most families are Catholic and the members of the Protestant churches have decreased noticeably in the last years.<sup>135</sup> The Peruvian Evangelical Church in Huancalle has only five regular families as members and in the case of the Church of Christ, ten regular participant families. I met many families who, at the beginning of my fieldwork, participated in the Protestant churches but at the end of it they had returned to being *católicos*. The reason given by both people who left the churches and Protestants was that they could not get used to leaving behind the practices that characterized the *católicos*: doing *cargos*<sup>136</sup> and drinking.

*Católicos* and *hermanos* have had and still have conflicts with each other. Since the introduction of the Peruvian Evangelical Church, *católicos* rejected the adherents of the Protestant groups and, according to the *hermanos*, they were seen as the “diablos” (devils) who would bring disasters to the community as God’s punishment. Thus, according to the *hermanos*, the *católicos* tried to burn the home where they had their services. Presently, conflicts have decreased their intensity; however, both parts still have feelings against each other because of their beliefs and practices.

*Católicos* say *hermanos* are people who are *musuq runa* (new people), who are selfish and only pay attention to their individual and family needs. *Hermanos* are *millay* (bad), who preach about God and being kind to others; however, they are neither humanitarian nor generous in practice. For elder *católicos*, the *hermanos* also are

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<sup>135</sup> Occasionally, the churches received visits of *comuneros* --especially young people-- who do not want to become members (or who are in the process of deciding to become members) but do like to participate in the ceremonies.

<sup>136</sup> The *cargo* of a festivity has to incur to great expense in order to organize the celebration and invite all the community. Some acquire debts or leave the community to do temporary work in order to get the needed money for the *cargo*. The expense is part of the meaning of the festivity. The money expense was not valued at all by the Protestants.

*ñawiyuq* (literate), have money and buy and sell things. According to doña Ernestina, they buy *adefecios* (things that do not matter). For example, metaphorically, she told me *hermanos* stepped on the *católicos* with their “shoes.” Here, doña Ernestina refers to the fact that usually *comuneros* do not wear shoes but they wear “ojotas.” Elder *católicos* believe *hermanos* are *educated* at school and *wapu* (rude and disrespectful). They do not agree with the new customs of the *hermanos*, who reject participating in the Andean Catholic religious traditions (*pago a la Pachamama*, *do cargos*). They valued sharing food, *trago* (alcohol), and *aqha* (ceremonial beverage made out of corn) with others when they do their *cargos*, following the principle of reciprocity that governs their lives. They believe in the *Apus* (mountains) and the *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) and continuously make rituals to thank them and ask them for favors. From doña Augusta’s perspective, *hermanos* who do not participate in the celebrations are like *allqukuna* (dogs) that are limited to watching what others are enjoying.

The *hermanos* also have a negative view of the *católicos*. Being *católico* is synonymous for being drunk<sup>137</sup> and lazy. They think *católicos* do not take care of their children properly and are more worried about their parties, drinking and dancing than about the education and well being of the family: spending all of their money drinking. They say *católicos* fight with their friends and relatives and hit their wives and children. The main reason for this behavior, from the *hermanos*’ point of view, is that the Catholic priests are too flexible and do not reprimand their followers when they drink. The *católicos*’ behavior was seen by the *hermanos* as an easy way of life, exemplified in the Bible by the metaphor of the *wide door*. The *true believers*, whose life was like a *narrow door*, were the ones who followed “rigorously the word of God.”

Among *hermanos*, there was the idea that the Protestant churches have brought modernization, morality, education, health, and better agricultural production to their members’ lives and to the community. From some of the *hermanos*’ perspectives, Andean traditions and Quechua language are synonymous to *backwardness*. Andean

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<sup>137</sup> The prohibition of drinking is very strongly followed. When *hermanos* work in their *chakra* doing *ayni*, they usually need to buy *trago* and *aqha* for their catholic work partners. Then, they share *trago* with the *católicos*. However, they drink *chicha blanca*, a non-alcoholic sweet beverage made out of corn flour.

religious practices are seen by most of them as a kind of image adoration, which is strongly opposed by Protestants. These practices, as well as drinking, are related to the *llaqtataytas* (the fathers of the town), the elderly in Huancalle, who have not tried the new religions and would not quit drinking. *Hermanos* and *católicos* say Protestants were the ones who initiated the creation of the *Musuq LLaqta* (New Town) in the higher part of the community when the lower part was in danger of being destroyed by the floods of the Huarcamayu River. *Hermanos* say they have changed their mentality and their priorities because of their religion. They are worried about earning and saving money: “I never lacked money since I started to pray.” Now they spend their money building “better houses” (larger, two-story, painted houses) and to “better educate” their children. They try to send their children to school outside the community. They feel obligated to prepare at least some of their children to have a “job” (outside the community). *Hermanos* told me: “nos vestimos bien” (we dress well), “vivimos bien” (we live well). They needed to live their lives *well* in order to be saved. Being saved during the *juicio final* (final judgment) was their main concern, as this following anecdote shows.

One day, Roberto (a young man) brought a newspaper to the Peruvian Evangelical Church. The news of that day produced fear among the *evangélicos*. The newspaper said there was the possibility that an asteroid would impact the Earth on February of the year 2019. Roberto had read the newspaper at home and shared the news with the members of the Church. This literacy event of reading the newspaper and sharing the information and his fears occurred in the context of the *evangélicos*' own beliefs about the world and life. The young comunero understood that the end of the world was coming soon, that “death will come from the sky.” Those who heard the news from Roberto were worried and repeatedly said: “I’m desperate!” He said he knew that what the newspaper said was, in fact, true because the same thing was written in the Bible, in Apocalypses 666. After discussing if it were true or not the group of *evangélicos* arrived to the conclusion that it should be true because it corresponded with what the Bible said.

The *hermanos* believed that the end of the world was coming soon. The President of the Peruvian Evangelical church told followers during service: “it could be tomorrow,

the day after tomorrow.” *Hermanos* waited for the return of Christ during the *juicio final*.<sup>138</sup> In order to be saved they needed to follow the Bible literally in their own lives, for the Bible contained the word of God. The founder of the Church of Christ said they did not believe in the laws made by men. Rather, they follow the laws of God by following the Bible “al pie de la letra” (literally). Furthermore, the identity as *hermanos* was mainly defined by their knowledge of the Bible. The stories of conversion emphasized the significance of reading the Bible in order to get to know Christ, to become convinced, and to make the decision to belong to the church. Knowing the Bible directly was a matter of great pride. According to the *hermanos*, the *católicos* “did not know the Bible,” because the only person who had direct access to the Bible was the priest.

The precept of making one’s own the knowledge that the Bible contains and behaving accordingly in one’s own life influenced literacy practices in the religious domain. This conception of the written word is very different from the conception of the written word in the institution of the school. For example, the encounter in Cajamarca between the Inka and the priest Valverde (in a previous chapter), reflected the symbolic rejection of the Bible by the *Inka*. In addition, this encounter reflected the symbolic violence of the written word as an instrument of colonization exercised against Quechua people’s orality. For peasants, the Bible still was an unknown book. They did not have access to it before the arrival of Protestant groups. The Bible is now known by the *hermanos*. It is because of the Bible, the reading and recitation of it, and the application of the words of God in everyday life that *hermanos* can identify themselves as members of the church.

Among the *hermanos* there is the perception that the written word of God is infallible, while “humans fail.” For the *hermanos* being told about the Bible and reading it for themselves are very different. No interpretation of the Bible is valid. It is the literal reading of it that gives them the teachings necessary for their lives and salvation. The Bible is “a mirror” where they can see and evaluate their own behavior. By reading or

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<sup>138</sup> I agree with Zavala (2002), who found a connection between the Andean myth of *Inkarri*—the belief in the return of the *Inka* to govern—and the beliefs of the *hermanos*, who wait for the savior.

listening to the Bible, people correct their behavior and follow God's designs. They should follow the Bible's teachings literally: men are the heads of the family, just as Christ is the head of the church. Women owe obedience to their husbands. They should educate their children like the Bible says; they should not mistreat them, kick them or hit them. The Bible says parents should punish their children with a belt. For the Protestants, by reading the Bible they learn how to act in their life. Don Marcos, for example, told me at school he had learned only the theory. By contrast, reading the Bible himself and in his congregation he had learned useful things for his life.

The interpretation of the Bible --"changing one word of God"-- is seen as a deceiving act.<sup>139</sup> For, in the Bible, it was written that each believer should read the Bible and understand it. They should "see with their own eyes." Thus, within the churches there is the need to have at least some *literate* people who read and write, who could transmit literally the words of God to the members of the church. As the founder of the Peruvian Evangelical Church in Huancalle told me, "religion makes you read and write." There is a double discourse about the importance of being *literate* in order to be an *hermano*. On the one hand, being *literate* is desired by most of the members of the churches and it is valued because it gives them direct access to the Bible. On the other hand, it is believed by the *hermanos* that the Bible says it is better to be *illiterate* because in the Bible, it says "Bienaventurados los que no pueden leer porque de ellos será el reino de los cielos" (Blessed are those who cannot read because the kingdom of heaven shall be theirs).<sup>140</sup> The idea is that people who cannot "see" (read) are able to "listen," thus, they could be saved if they listened to the preacher reading "the word of God." After all, people who can listen do have memory. Memory is what will be used during the *juicio final*. Memory is the only thing people will have with them when Christ comes back.

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<sup>139</sup> An *hermano* told me Catholic priests hide some things stated by the Bible and add others. Thus, they deceive their followers.

<sup>140</sup> *Hermanos* referred to the passage in the Bible that says "Blessed are those who cannot see because the kingdom of heaven shall be theirs." In Quechua *ñawsa* is used for *blind* and for *illiterate*. *Hermanos* interpreted that *illiterate* people were better welcomed to heaven.

And if the Bible is literally the word of God, the Bible also contains the *correct* way of writing Quechua. Reading the Bible is for don Marcos the only way to learn to read and write in Quechua because it is the “correct” Quechua:

The Bible teaches you correctly because there are other books in Quechua, but they are not well written. Yes, they are not well written. There are many mistakes.

The hegemonic discourses about orality and literacy have been questioned from a local conception about them. The *hermanos* project their identity as the ones who brought progress and education to the community (including literacy), while exalting the *illiterate* possibilities of being saved because of their abilities to listen and memorize (orality). The local conception of the *hermanos* as a religious community with their own beliefs, values and practices defined orality as needed for salvation, thus, from a very positive view. Literacy practices of the religious domain were related with the above-mentioned beliefs and values. These gave meaning and explained the literacy practices I found, as will be seen next. Having presented the beliefs of the *hermanos* I will discuss the uses of literacy in the religious domain. The *hermanos'* beliefs, fears, worries, aspirations and values influenced the literacy practices in church and at home.

#### *The Protestant churches: memorizing, reciting, and copying*

Literacy practices in the churches were both in Spanish and Quechua. Moreover, parents wanted their children to learn Spanish and most of the time they preferred their children to read the Bible in Spanish so as to practice their second language. In the case of children who learned to read Quechua by reading the Bible or the *himinarios* in the context of Protestant churches, it is interesting to note that the older children had learned to read in Quechua while the younger children read in Spanish only. Similar to the teachers' position, it was believed that children needed to acquire Spanish literacy first. Parents and children shared the teachers' views that Spanish literacy was superior and more useful than Quechua literacy. Regardless of this fact, Quechua literacy was used in the religious domain.

The *culto* or *servicio* (church services) in both churches were very similar. Church services took place on Thursdays and Sundays. Men, women, young people and children



participated. Most of the ceremony was done in Quechua. Sometimes the preachers prepared a program for the services and followed it. When the preacher had the program, he continuously referred to it. Giving voice to the written text, he stated the next programmed activity: “Brothers, we will go on with our program. Up until now we have sung. Now let’s rise.” This act is very similar to the way the director de debates follows the agenda during the assemblies, as well as other celebrations (i.e. the anniversary of the community).

During the church service, the congregation started by singing many songs in Quechua from an *himinario*, a little printed songbook written in Quechua, which was sold to different Protestant churches. The preacher said the number of the song and most people looked for the song in the *himinario*. Male adults, male and female adolescents and children tended to follow the song by reading, while adult women almost never looked at their *himinario*. *Himinarios* are generally shared by two people. Memorizing the songs was important also. The President of the Evangelical church told me that only when the songs were not “in the memory” the person looked at the *himinario*. Prayers followed the songs.

Usually, there was one reading in Quechua or Spanish. Before reading the passage from the Bible, the preacher cited the book of the Bible, the chapter and the verse. The members of the church liked to know the exact citation in order to look for it. Before reading from the Bible the preacher asked God “so as to this word prevails” in the memory of the members of the church. During one visit, he asked for permission to “look” at the “sweet written words” of God. Then he said that it would be better if the words that had been “seen” would be “learned and kept in their memories.” He asked for blessings for the men and women who “only listened” and for himself in his teaching. Then he introduced the reading by encouraging the participants to “learn the passage.” The words of the preacher --his discourse around the written text during the literacy event--are key in order to understand what *reading* means to *hermanos*. As explained earlier, listening and memorizing the contents of the Bible were essential actions to the

*hermanos*. Their memory was the only thing they would carry with them to the *juicio final*.

The preacher or another *hermano* did the actual reading of the text. While reading, some of the participants, especially men adults and adolescents (men or women), followed the reading in their Bibles (Spanish or Quechua). One time a preacher got stuck during the reading and started stuttering. A young male read for the preacher the phrase that was causing the difficulty and the preacher was able to continue reading. A few adult non-literate women liked to follow the reading in Quechua. They repeated in a quiet voice the words uttered by the preacher. Sometimes they could predict what followed because of their practice of memorizing the contents of the Bible. In this way, they started to learn how to recognize certain words in Quechua.

After reading the passage from the Bible in Quechua or in Spanish, the preacher explained the reading to the participants. The explanation included using parables and adapting Bible stories to the reality of Huancalle. Preachers made use of familiar images in order to relate the stories to the peasants' reality. For example, once the preacher was explaining the strength that weak or poor people could have if they believed in God. As a resource, he told the story of David and Goliath. He described David as a shepherd who used his *ch'uspa*<sup>141</sup> and his *warak'a*.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, he situated the story in a place like Huancalle, using some geographical characteristics known to *Huancallinos*.

After the preacher's explanation, different *comuneros* (mostly men) participated by giving their opinions, looking for passages in the Bible and complementing the idea. Members of the church participated either individually on these occasions, or collectively, singing together or saying "amen" when the preacher prayed or read a passage from the Bible. For example, don Pascual followed the passage the preacher read in Quechua and later quoted another verse reading from his Bible in Spanish --to give strength to his intervention.

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<sup>141</sup> Small bag made out of wool. Although it has been replaced by plastic bags and backpacks, it is still used to carry coca leaves and money.

<sup>142</sup> It was a weapon from the Inka times. It is a whip made out of wool and used to throw rocks. Children used it in their war games as weapons: making the sound of a pistol as they swung their *warak'as*.

In addition, I was told that the Evangelical Church had meetings among the women –La liga de mujeres (the women’s league). One woman, who had been a member for a long time, took the lead and looked for texts in the Bible so as to “share the Word of God” with the rest of the women of the church. Women preferred to read the Bible in Quechua, but most women did not read the Bible by themselves. The children also had “Sunday school” before the service. One *hermano* who was considered the teacher of the children, was in charge of making sure they were taught about the Bible, how to pray, and to sing. The teacher uses the Bible in Spanish and orally works Bible passages in order to teach children how to behave with their parents and in the family. Older children and adolescents had a Bible study group on Fridays. However, during my fieldwork these groups had been discontinued because they had few participants. In the end, members of the Protestant churches tended to congregate for service just on Thursdays and Sundays.

The President, secretary and treasurer of the churches also wrote *actas* of the congregation and letters to communicate with churches in other communities. Many men attended special courses in cities in the Cusco province, where they were taught how to read the Bible and how to teach to members of the congregation. The men in charge of doing service had many passages of the Bible (in Spanish and Quechua) underlined with different colors. They have “studied” the Bible so that it is easy for them to find texts. They have memorized the books, chapters and biblical verses so they could readily talk to people about their faith. When I had conversations with them they knew exactly where to look for the specific text to support their opinion. Within the conversation sometimes they just told me the contents of the passage, and others read it to me.

These institutional literacy practices went beyond the church and entered the context of the home. *Comuneros* read the Bible “a veces” (sometimes), sharing the act of reading. Since usually there were members of the family who could not read it, it was common that one member, the father or an older sibling, read the Bible (in Quechua or in Spanish) for the whole group. Later, participants made comments about the reading and how they should act in their lives. Children liked the *himinarios* (songbooks) the most. At home they used to copy their favorite songs in their notebooks -- usually a special

notebook reserved for copying songs and Bible passages. This way they could take their songs to other places and sing with their friends. For example, Berta liked to take the copied songs when she took her animals to pasture. This was an everyday group activity of children and women. When children were younger, pasture was a moment when they played games. For adolescents, pasture was a moment to talk with their friends and cultivate relationships with the opposite sex. Then, pasture was an activity surrounded by social interaction, which, along with the productive meaning, had a social meaning. Within this context, children members of the church enjoyed singing Quechua religious songs. They also took their *himinarios* out at night and sang in their bedrooms. One night, Marisol, a thirteen year-old-girl from the Church of Christ, after singing a couple of songs in Quechua from her *himinario*, explained to me that these songs talked about the Catholics. For Marisol, those songs' lyrics showed her how she did not want to live her life. In this case, reading the *himinario* and singing the song for me, an outsider, served the purpose for Marisol to affirm her identity as an *hermana*.

During everyday conversations, *hermanos* used phrases of the Bible to give emphasis and validity to their arguments. This literacy practice was related to the beliefs *hermanos* hold about the Bible and its uses in order to reach salvation. They needed to act exactly as the Bible said. Therefore they needed to memorize the contents of the Bible. Keeping words in the oral memory, Zavala (2002) argues, was "the best resource in order to store ideas with more efficiency" (p. 174, my translation). As mentioned earlier, *hermanos* in Huancalle thought their memory was the only thing that they would carry with them to the *juicio final*. Neither their money, their books, or their bodies would go with them. Thus, oral memory was the most efficient way to carry their knowledge about the Bible to the *juicio final*.

Furthermore, I found there was continuity between the ways *comuneros* used the oral tradition and the ways the preachers of the Protestant churches used the Bible stories and passages in order to explain something, sustain an argument or give a moral tale. The function of the phrases taken from the Bible was very similar to the oral tradition in the community. They wanted to communicate and socialize the members of the community

into a desired behavior. As a resource, preachers usually told moral tales that added strength to their argument. As was found by Scribner and Cole (1981) in their study among the Vai, different literacy practices developed different skills.<sup>143</sup>

Oral tradition in the Southern Andean region is characterized by *intertextuality* (Mannheim & Van Vleet, 1998). *Comuneros*, adults, and children were accustomed to using oral tradition in the middle of conversation, and citing texts within other texts. The same happened in the case of personal narratives. People kept their knowledge “in their heads” and brought it up when they needed to.<sup>144</sup> *Cuentos* were “like reading” from the perspective of some adults, because the words were “taken out of the head” of the storyteller. Oral literature and oral personal narratives were communicative resources people used in order to explain, teach, and make meaning of a situation. This very same practice was used when the *hermanos* cited the Bible and used the written text of the Bible, which had become internalized and memorized (“in the heads of people”), to explain or teach about every day life. Thus, literacy practices in the religious domain included memorization and recitation of passages of the Bible. Furthermore, it included developing the capacity of using them within conversation and argumentation.

I also found some similarities between the way the Bible was read in church and the way a written document was read in the *asamblea* (assembly). The preacher, like the *director de debates* did not only literally read the written text, he translated it. The translation always included an interpretation and comments about the text. In addition, these leaders provided needed supplemental information in order to understand the text as well as its recommendations. The structures of participation in the assemblies and in the church also were similar. In both situations the floor was opened for *comuneros*' participation. The Bible was always discussed and commented about. Thus, reading the Bible was always a collective act in which written and oral language made the literacy event possible and gave meaning to it.

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<sup>143</sup> They found that it could not be argued that *literate* had a higher development of their cognitive skills.

<sup>144</sup> Sometimes *comuneros* made relations between the books and the heads or minds of people. Don Roberto told me that *illiterate* people were knowledgeable because they kept information “in their books,” clearly referring to their heads.

In the communal assembly, *comuneros* bring use memory in order to present a report about the functioning of a certain committee; during the reading of the Bible *comuneros* relied on their memory in order to cite the Word of God. The churches have their *literate* experts in charge of reading the Bible or attending courses outside the community to communicate this information and knowledge to the members of the church. However, there were important differences between literacy mediation in these two contexts. In the case of the church, there was a higher level of participation of the members of the church mediated by literacy. *Literacy mediators* were in charge of reading the Bible to the members of the church and explaining it to them. However, members, including non-literates, were actively participating within the literacy practices of memorization and recitation.

In spite of the fact that some schooled literacy behaviors (i.e. copying paragraphs) and some conceptions about literacy and language (the higher status of the Spanish language over the Quechua language) were similar in the context of the church, I agree with Zavala (2002) who found that literacy use in the religious domain responded to the beliefs of its users and served their purposes, as opposed to literacy practices at school. Furthermore, these practices touched the lives of their users in Huancalle, more than other institutional literacies. Although not extensively, Spanish and Quechua literacies introduced by Protestant churches were appropriated, reinterpreted and put to use by the members of Quechua communities according to their own purposes, interests and needs.

### **Other uses of Quechua literacy**

Aside from institutional literacies from the Protestant Church and the school, in what ways did *Huancallinos* use Quechua literacy in their lives? Generally, Quechua literacy was not used outside of the religious domain, but there were children and adults who looked for ways of using Quechua literacy for their own needs and creatively. All cases but one<sup>145</sup> of self-generated Quechua literacy uses I found were a result of the writers' experiences in the religious domain. Thus, the Protestant churches were key in

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<sup>145</sup> Doña Octavia, a catholic woman, liked to copy the texts written in Quechua language with the purpose of learning how to write in Quechua. She used the only text she had available in Quechua: the workbook of the IBE program.

promoting the few uses of Quechua literacies in the creation of texts. Usually children and adolescents did not write in Quechua with the exception of copying passages and songs from the Bible and the himinarios. I found one exception: Rosa, a thirteen-year-old child who participated in the Church of Christ, liked to write the oral tradition she knew in her notebook. Although this was not a common practice, it is an illustration of what Quechua-speaking children might do with their written native language spontaneously.

Likewise, I found the initiative of two adult Evangelical members who used Quechua literacy with a different purpose than copying passages from the Bible or songs from the himinario. They decided to use the Quechua language instead of Spanish to create texts. Being a representative of the Evangelical Church of Huancalle, don Ramiro once wrote a letter to the Evangelical Church of a neighboring community in order to invite the community to attend a sports event organized to raise funds for the Church. The writing process was shared with another member of the church. If they did not know how to write a word or a letter, they used the Bible to “guide” them. However, I do not consider this a practice that was motivated by the church. Usually letters were written in Spanish. Thus, the fact that don Ramiro used the marked language in order to write a letter shows that it was a self-generated literacy practice.

Don Marcos’ case was an interesting case of self-generated use of Quechua literacy. A young man in his thirties, he wrote songs in Quechua. He said at first it was difficult to read and write in Quechua, however, his desire to write songs in Quechua motivated him to learn:

I could not, I could not read. It was difficult. Later, little by little I read, I read. Since we always read when we have meetings here [in church], I started to memorize. And now I have inspired [created] songs in Quechua. Yes, now I can inspire, I already can make them. That is why I have produced my first tape. I sing, also I play [an instrument], I am also a composer. I have been the director of the band too.

This *hermano* has preached for years trying to obtain new adherents for the Peruvian Evangelical Church. He learned numerous passages of the Bible in order to fulfill the role of *predicador* (preacher). Don Marcos transported the literacy practice of memorizing the passages of the Bible in order to write his songs. And he “dictates out of

his memory” the lyrics of the songs. In addition, by reading the Bible he learned to transcribe the lyrics of *huaynos* (Andean songs in Quechua and Spanish) from the radio or from his tapes. This practice allowed him to identify the process of composition. He realized he had to look into his life (both spiritual and mundane), his feelings, the natural world, and the teachings of God in order to compose the spiritual songs. Thus, he learned to compose songs in Quechua having the support of the words he learned in the Bible, as well as referring to his knowledge of life. He makes clear that at some point during the process of learning how to compose he used the memorized words of the Bible. However, later he was able to *inspirar* (inspire) and create his own songs.

Don Marcos filled three notebooks with his songs and produced a cassette with his band. The cassette is called *Voz Andina* (Andean Voice). Some friends borrowed one of his notebooks in order to copy and sing his songs. He creates songs for diverse occasions (weddings, burials, birthday parties, etc.). He usually makes presentations with his band with the intention of predicating the word of God. He has composed songs for the beginning of the presentation (*saludo*-greeting), the end of it (*despedida*-farewell), and songs to be played during the presentation, which served the purpose of predicating by reaching non-believers’ hearts and deep feelings. Don Marcos pays much importance on the musical notes he chooses, as well as the lyrics. He likes to sing about examples of people from the Bible, and compare them with people from today.

Through these kinds of songs, don Marcos brings the text of the Bible (a text) into the song (another text), a communicative practice that was widely used in the community. Thus, he used Quechua literacy creatively. Furthermore, don Marcos had a process that was explained by him as writing-revising-correcting-writing. This is a clear example of how religious Quechua literacy practices could, in the long run, influence the self-generated uses of Quechua literacy. However, his example also shows the unfavorable social conditions to develop the written Quechua language. He wanted to produce a second cassette. This time he also wanted to produce a CD and a video with his songs. However, he decided not to compose in Quechua anymore, because his first production was a “*fracaso*” (failure). It was extremely difficult to sell it in a reasonable price because



its market was only the evangelical congregation. By contrast, his plans included composing more commercial *huaynos* in Spanish (liked by young people) so as to better sell his cassettes.

Don Raúl and don Andrés, two men in their thirties who attend the Evangelical Church and the Church of Christ, respectively, used the Bible in Quechua with the intention of teaching their wives to read and write. The goal was that the wives would learn Spanish literacy. Thus, similar to the school context, Quechua literacy was used as a bridge towards Spanish literacy. The strategies used for literacy instruction by these men were similar to the strategies parents used to teach their children and help them with homework: reading the Bible, “making her understand the words,” and copying paragraphs from the Bible.

My data support Hornberger’s (1994, 1997) arguments against a ‘common sense’ conception of Quechua literacy: that there is no point in fostering indigenous literacies because there are few literacy practices in Quechua anyway. From her qualitative research, she concluded that the encouragement to use Quechua in literacy practices increases the probabilities of Quechua speakers to become *literate*. Contexts that required the use of written Quechua in service of a broader goal led to literacy learning. The context of the Protestant churches promoted the use of Quechua literacy in Huancalle much more than the school did. However, these contexts are still reduced to the religious Protestant domain and Quechua literacy was not used for their relationships with the national society. There were no possibilities of using Quechua literacies in order to communicate with authorities in the nearby urban areas, even though they spoke Quechua. I found examples of some of the possibilities of Quechua literacy. However, some of the uses of Quechua literacy I found were oriented towards the assimilation into Spanish language and literacy patterns. After all, Quechua literacies were also immersed in the broader discourses about *the educated* and *literate* I have presented throughout this work.

### **About literacies in the community**

I should emphasize now that literacy was one communicative resource used among others. People who did not use literacy in their lives (adult women and older men) valued other means of communication. Literacy was not as functional in the lives of older people as much as it was for children and young people. They became informed mostly by listening to the radio and watching television. Information flowed among the family during conversations early in the morning when they planned their day or at night when they shared important events of the day. Information also flowed within the context of informal conversations with friends and relatives and within more formal contexts (i.e. the assemblies).

Being *literate* is not a need in Huancalle. There were members who fulfilled the function of literacy mediators in different domains. Thus, non-literates felt *tranquilo* (relaxed). Especially women said that even though they could not use literacy for some situations in which they would like to (i.e. helping children with their homework and reading the Bible), they were able to use other resources for these purposes. They gave their children all the support they needed to become what they wanted to become in life. They “talked” to them and socialized them into the norms of the community. They worked hard for their children (i.e. knitting sweaters to sell in the markets) with the intention of buying school supplies. For example, doña María (50 years old) was not able to read or write. Nevertheless, she felt that she learned valuable knowledge in her life. She had a business selling jelly in Cusco door to door: “This is my profession.” She valued this commercial activity because with it she was able to buy things for herself (clothes) and for her grandchild (school supplies). Thus, *comuneros* who did not read or write could live their lives with no dependency on their own literacy skills.

Generally, literacy was not intensively used in the community. Some groups within the community used it more than others. Men mostly used it in the communal context and to become informed. Girls and young women used it to show and share their feelings. Protestant church members used it to make the *word of God* their own to use it for their everyday lives and be saved. However, in chapter six and seven I have shown

how literacies were shared resources in the contexts of the home, the community and the church.

The data presented in previous chapters and this one challenge the dominant belief that there is one *Literacy* and that it is autonomous and isolated from social context. There were diverse ways of using Spanish and Quechua literacies, all related to domains in which literacy was needed. There were institutional literacies that influenced certain uses of literacy, as well as some vernacular uses that had been developed as a result of the contact of literacies. Local literacies were far from an individual action of encoding and decoding. Literacy events were a “joint construction” (Baynham, 1993, p. 301). Relying on others in order to satisfy literacy needs was a typical strategy during literacy events among adults, young people and children. *Literate* members of the *junta directiva* and the leaders of the Protestant churches were clear examples of literacy mediators. These communal specialists had to manage both codes: Spanish and Quechua oral language. In addition, they needed to be *literate* in Spanish and/or Quechua, depending on the context of use. Furthermore, mediators of literacy not only managed both codes and modes, but also they generally knew the needed cultural information to explain and give meaning to texts.

In the context of the *asamblea*, mediators of literacy supplied the needed information to orient *comuneros* about the procedures in their relationship with agencies. In the context of the church, mediators of literacy adapted their oral explanation of the texts using cultural frameworks of reference known to the “people who listened” to give meaning to the text, make it understandable and make it accessible to the listeners’ memories. In the context of the home, doing homework or using texts spontaneously, mediators of literacy assisted younger children in their insertion in the literate world of school, and *literate* members in Quechua assisted others in reading the Bible. In addition, the writing of love letters, poems, notes and journals also show the presence of literacy mediators. The case of Berta, who shared her journal with her Quechua speaker and non-literate mother, is an example.

My research shows how communicative purposes can be achieved in situations where one or more participants lack the code knowledge needed to participate (Baynham, 1993). Literacy specialists in the community, the home, or the church allowed the participation of monolingual Quechua speakers and *illiterates* in important decisions about communal affairs, the church services, and certain interactions among family members that were mediated by written texts. As was argued by Baynham, these interactions around text are a result of living in a multilingual setting “where individuals and groups struggle to make texts speak and work for them, struggle to make and exchange meanings” (p. 313).

The use of oral language around written texts during literacy events seemed most of the time, more important than the written texts themselves. It was the discussion, explanations, interpretation or memorization of the text what was the goal of most literacy events. In contrast with literacy events at school, where the main goal was literacy itself, literacy events in the community had diverse goals depending on the context of use. However, generally, literacy was not a goal in itself. The purpose was the decisions, discussion or moral learning that people obtained from them. Furthermore, communicative resources influenced writing in the community. The writing of the “actas,” the uses of personal narrative when writing the journal, and the use of memorized passages of the Bible were examples of how oral communicative resources were used not only to make meaning of texts, but also to create the texts themselves. Heath (1982) argues the importance of taking into account both modes of language, and Street (1993) also highlights the “oral/literate mix.” My research supports this line of research that argues against the “great divide” perspective.

In sum, literacy practices in Huancalle are multiple. Some are imposed by institutions, which forced their values and norms about the ways to use written texts. Others were defined by the purposes of Quechua speakers. A commonly held belief is that the Andean world is an oral environment whereas urban areas are literate environments. However, this study shows that the situation is complex. People have to see that literacy serves their purposes in order to be interested in acquiring it. When they

see the relevance of a particular literacy practice, they use it. When *comuneros* established commercial relationships with urban areas and tourists, they used Spanish literacy. When they felt the need to communicate with outsiders in order to get benefits for the community, the community guaranteed having *literate* specialists in order to fulfill this function. When *hermanos* considered it essential for their identity and salvation they got involved in reading the Bible and memorizing passages of the Bible.

In addition, *Huancallinos* depended on a repertoire of oral communicative practices that they used every day, in order to guarantee the functioning of the family and the community. These oral communicative practices were effective in order to socialize the members of the community. Dividing between *oral* or *literate* cultures is not as useful as accounting for how these societies are differently valued by dominant discourses. As long as colonial relationships endure, local literacies and oral resources will not be valued and peasants will still be stigmatized as being *illiterate* and the cause of social problems.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

In Huancalle, the world is full of signs that people “read” to conduct their lives. The world (the natural world and the spirits) is always telling them things. People are always interpreting things in the world, and constructing forms of expression, like Quechua oral narratives, weaving, singing, dancing, playing, joking, and doing diverse rituals. These are part of the *local literacies*, in that they consist of the set of mediums of expression of the *comuneros*. However, the goal of this research was to understand the ways in which alphabetic literacies were used within a framework, which *Huancallinos*’ used to interpret and make meaning of the world.

Findings of this study reveal that literacy practices in this Quechua-speaking community were shaped by institutional literacy practices of the school, the state and the Protestant church. The hegemony of the Spanish language and literacy over the oral and written Quechua was noticeable in the contexts of the school, the community, and the home. The dominant ideology of literacy penetrated the discourses of different actors of the educative process in Huancalle: educational authorities, teachers, parents, children, and communal authorities. Being *literate* was part of the *cultural capital* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) promoted by the school and viewed by the Peruvian national society as an unquestioned requirement for all Peruvians. Furthermore, being *literate* was narrowly defined by social institutions from a hegemonic perspective. Ideologies about literacy supported the existing systems of class, ethnic and gender privilege.

I did not find a strong resistance against the hegemonic discourses about literacy. On the contrary, most participants of the study still trusted that Spanish literacy would assist them, their children or their students to get into national society with more opportunities. However, literacy practices were not a mere imitation of the institutional literacies. Local literacies were influenced by local cultural practices, communicative resources, and local ideas in a way that literacy practices were reinterpreted by the members of the community in order to satisfy their goals. In addition, the uses of literacy in Huancalle were not only related to the domain of the school, as is mainly assumed by

common sense. Literacy conceptions and uses differed according to the different domains of life in the community.

#### *Literacy practices in the school*

These literacy practices were imposed on children and lacked meaning in their lives. Literacy instruction was decontextualized, composed by unchallenging activities, and shaped by the teachers' and the school's ethnocentric views about the children, their parents, their culture, and language. Teachers assumed the role of civilizing children and negated the linguistic and cultural resources the students brought to the classroom. Literacy practices occurred within the normalizing everyday practices at school, in which Quechua literacy was used only as a bridge towards Spanish literacy.

This study demonstrates that there is a great gap between the improvement of the education policies, the curriculum, and the methodologies proposed by the IBE program, and the actual practice in the classroom. First, the subordinate position of the language and culture of the peasant Quechua-speaking students was produced and reproduced in the classroom during literacy activities. The Quechua language was rarely used for instruction, and Quechua-speaking children were conceptualized as *others*, who should become more like their teachers: civilized, urban, Spanish-speaking, clean, "morally-good" people. The stigmatization of the Quechua language and culture as the starting point did not allow any real change regarding literacy pedagogy. These teachers, even the teachers who participated in the IBE program, had not internalized the benefits of this model of education. They, some with the best of intentions, partially took some ideas and methodologies from the training with no understanding of the profoundly challenging situation they faced.

Second, literacy instruction at school had many significant problems, aside from being conducted in the second language of the children. The idea of literacy as a decontextualized phenomenon that needed to be *correct* made the children's relationship with the written word very problematic. This was, for most, the first time they manipulated this communicative mode. Among children, there was the perspective of literacy as a powerful and difficult thing to access that "comes from heaven" (in the

words of a Quechua-speaking peasant child).<sup>146</sup> The individual approach to literacy and the emphasis on errors did not resemble the ways in which literacy was performed in the community. However, there were some children's behaviors that resisted literacy practices at school or provided opportunities to imagine a different way of practicing literacy, which would privilege meaning-making, understanding, communication, and using literacy for social purposes.

In general, the situation at school in Huancalle was definitely damaging children's concepts regarding their language and culture. The "new educational perspective" and the IBE program have been designed and developed in order to provide Quechua-speaking children with a relevant and just education. However, educative practice in the classroom is far from being relevant or just. Discrimination and oppression still operated, but this time hidden behind a facade of *change* and *educational modernization*.

#### *Local literacies in the community and at home*

Even though the use of oral language constitutes a more significant medium of communication than the written word in Huancalle, generalizing the condition of *illiterates* to Quechua-speaking peasants would be a mistake. The notion of *illiterate* comes from a very narrow and partial definition of literacy that evaluates *literate*s according to an arbitrary standard. The community has undergone changes in terms of penetration of the literate world into the community as a consequence of the contact between the rural world and the city. The peasant community is not anymore singly the world of orality.

Although *comuneros* did not practice literacy intensively, the opportunities to read and write are increasing. In addition, I found important differences in the conceptions and uses of literacy according to age and gender within the community. The fact is that Spanish literacies penetrated *Huancallinos'* world. Literacy practices need to be understood by taking into account the transformations that rural communities have undergone in the last decades. Quechua populations have had access to school and have experienced processes of transformation because of their increasing relations with the

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<sup>146</sup> This child's comment was gathered by Ramiro Sarmiento and Cecilia Eguiluz, from the Intercultural Bilingual Education Program, personal communication.



commercial and job markets, processes of urbanization, migration, and the insertion of Protestant churches.

The symbolic representations of schooling and literacy in rural areas have also experienced changes: shifting from an attitude of fear towards school and the written word, to an image of school knowledge as a desired and reachable tool. *Comuneros* see literacy and schooling as a way to move out from their condition of subordination and their peasant way of life. Appropriation of the tools of the powerful mean negating some of their values and their practices, however, as Arnold and Yapita (2000, p. 275) have argued, the Andean interpretation of literacy is related to the tendency of Andean societies to reproduce themselves by “the appropriation of the strengths of the Other, and then, the revivification of the Other in the Own” (p. 275).

*Bureaucratic Spanish literacy* was imposed in the community. However, it was performed in a particular way. It was practiced as a collective activity and was surrounded by Quechua orality. Orality gave meaning to the texts and constructed the literacy events within activities of interpretation and negotiation. At home, the literacy practices of the school impregnated the children’s interactions with print, in addition to religious literacies. In the context of the home, schooled literacies were used by parents who supported or assigned their children’s homework. However, there were spontaneous uses of literacy by children, which were not forced by the school or the parents. There were some uses of *vernacular literacies*, which showed the use of alphabetic Spanish literacy for particular interests of the writers.

*Quechua literacy* was only used within the religious domain as the result of the insertion of Protestant churches in the community. Religious literacies were characterized by the memorizing of Bible passages and the copying of religious songs. They were also characterized by cooperation among members of the congregation and its collective performance. The use of oral Quechua also surrounded and gave meaning to the literacy practices in the religious realm. *Hermanos* responded to their own needs. The potential of Quechua literacy development for other domains exists, however, there were few examples of *comuneros* who developed their Quechua literacy skills for spontaneous use

of the written Quechua language. Strong social pressures to avoid using the Quechua language and literacy precluded the *comuneros*' uses of literacy in their mother tongue.

Language mediated *Huancallinos*' interactions with the written word at two levels. First, at the level of the actual interaction during the literacy event, oral Quechua language mediated the interactions of *comuneros* with written texts: The joint construction of the literacy event, the dialogues around texts, the incorporation of oral communicative practices along with written texts, the singing and oral narrative at homes and community, within which children's interactions with text occurred, sharing love letters, notes and journals with intimate friends and mothers, the introduction to little children of texts by older siblings and mothers, and the memorization of passages of the Bible and religious songs by the *hermanos*.

Second, language mediated *Huancallinos*' interactions at the level of discourses about literacy. Literacy in the social memory of *Huancallinos* was framed within asymmetrical inter-ethnic social relationships. It was remembered as a powerful instrument that should be appropriated from the outsiders to convert it into an insiders' instrument. The struggle for land against the *hacendados*, and, later, the struggle for having members of the community who had acquired the tools of the oppressors (formal education and literacy) was perceived from the social memory of the community as the way to end with discrimination, exclusion, and subordination. The struggle for schooling and literacy is, from the *comuneros*' perspectives, a way to fight against the economical and political inequality. Discourses about education, language, literacy and modernization influenced the uses of literacy and the feelings about the *illiterate* or the *literate*. Understanding literacy practices, I was able to identify how relationships of power between *comuneros* and outsiders were experienced by *Huancallinos*. I was able to associate the everyday experience in Huancalle with the macro context of institutions and social structures.

The domination of Spanish language Spanish literacy is irrefutable. However, it has been demonstrated by my findings that the process of contact between literacies does not simply have as a consequence the replacement of Quechua oral language and

Quechua culture (mediums of expression) by the written medium. This process in Huancalle did not have the consequence of having two irreconcilable sets of practices (literate vs. vernacular), as was found by Zavala in Umaca (2002, p.161). In contrast, I believe that the contact of literacies is a process of hybridization in which the appropriation of cultural elements of the West becomes an act of resistance to domination. Because of the introduction of the alphabetic literacy, the community has adapted this resource and has developed a local way to understand and interpret the alphabetic literacy.

I believe that for *Huancallinos* to be heard and understood by Spanish-speaking and *mestizo* society they are obligated to make efforts to acquire the linguistic and communicative resources of the dominant sectors (Howard-Malverde, 1997). The question is if *Huancallinos* were assimilated and if they lost the main elements of their culture. There is no one culture which is in its “pure” state, but there are processes of hybridization of cultures (Rosaldo, 1989) and “contact zones” (Pratt, 1991). Such processes account for the innovative forms of using literacy that I have found in the community, homes and churches.

The hybrid condition of local literacies can be seen in the coexistence of elements of the alphabetic literacies and the local cultural elements during literacy events (Howard-Malverde, 1997). I identified certain elements in which I could identify hybrid practices: 1) the structure and the formal aspects of documents, 2) the particular use of the communicative modes (written and oral), 3) what *Huancallinos* chose to write about, and 4) the particular “performance” of literacy events. Examples of these hybrid literacy practices are: 1) the use of some of the Quechua oral narrative conventions in the written official documents, which, in turn followed the conventions for writing such a document, 2) the fact that Spanish and Quechua alphabetic literacies were used within oral Quechua communicative forms, 3) the use of bureaucratic literacy in the writing of the *libro de actas* in order to write about problems (i.e. domestic problems) associated with indigenous social lives, the use of autobiographical literacy in order to write about young people’s experiences in the city, the use of Spanish literacy in order to write “ayni lists”

and 4) the fact that the use of literacy was a collective activity performed reciprocally, mediated by mediators of literacy, and mostly accompanied by interpretation, negotiation and decision-making processes. All these ways of using alphabetic literacy challenged the official view of literacy, by incorporating literacy –an element of power of the *mestizo* outsiders— to their cultural communicative mode, speech conventions, cultural basic values, local ideas about the body and learning, and the dynamic of the organization of life in the community.

From my point of view, accounting for their social reality, characterized by the going back and forth between two worlds, *Huancallinos* went through an hybridization process, of which literacies contact is a part. Findings of this research demonstrate that, even though the hegemonic discourses and cultural forms of the dominant sectors of society still press indigenous populations into assimilation, there are alternative possibilities that Huancallinos are trying out for the use of literacy.

In sum, my findings confirm the main assumptions of the New Literacy Studies. Literacy includes much more than just skills. It involves social and cultural processes beside the cognitive processes to acquire encoding and decoding processes. Literacy was influenced by hegemonic discourses, and locally defined and used according to the values and beliefs of the community. Literacy was practiced within the local values of reciprocity and was impregnated by local uses of language. Orality and literacy were not in a relationship of opposition. Rather there was an interplay of these two modes, in order to construct literacy events. In Huancalle, a community in which most of its members have struggled to learn to read and write and use it sporadically, the interplay of these two modes of communication was what characterized the literacy practices in the community. Reading and writing also depended on performance. Even if bureaucratic and schooled literacies were imposed, they were performed in a particular local way. Finally, literacy is not a powerful tool by itself. It is used by people (social agents) who either reproduce the dominant ideologies and literacy behaviors, or resist them.

## **Recommendations**

Adopting new mediational tools (Wersch, 1991) should go hand in hand with a process of strengthening language, communicative resources and cultural values of children from Huancalle. In that process, the school plays a fundamental role. This research responded to the need to question and propose answers to educational issues in the context of the efforts of the Bilingual Intercultural Education programs in Peru. The most serious problems at school were related to the normalizing practices of the school, which included literacy practices. We, as educators and researchers, need to reflect on these issues, look for critical solutions, and always question the practices that seem normal and natural.

First, of course, there is the need to really implement IBE in the community. The use of Quechua as a vehicle of instruction is the first suggestion I have to make. It is absurd to think that children of Huancalle could be schooled in their second language and be ready to compete in secondary school with Spanish-speaking students. Besides the benefits for the future, children should be schooled in their mother tongue for the sake of their self esteem and issues of identity development. I believe that students from Huancalle wanted to participate in the mestizo society. Because of the closeness of the community with the city of Cusco, it is inevitable. The issue is how we, as educators and researchers, contribute to the process of participation in the national society, preventing the regular process of negation and defeat of their cultural identities. Literacy in their mother tongue would give the students opportunities to become authors of their own texts because they would look for comprehension and meaning. The development of their oral native language is also a priority. I see a great need to give opportunities to Quechua-speaking children to bring their knowledge about communicative practices and continue the development of their L1 in the classrooms. They also need the real implementation of Spanish as a Second Language program, which could prepare them to later be schooled in Spanish (because in Peru there is no IBE programs in secondary school).

Even when teachers do literacy instruction in Spanish (for upper grades) they should rely on the students' first language as a way to promote understanding and making

meaning of the text in their own language. This kind of scaffolding has been proven to be a good strategy by Moll and Díaz (1987, 1993). Finally, children will easily transfer the abilities and knowledge of the literacy rules gained in their L1 to their L2, as has been repeatedly argued by numerous researchers. It is indisputable that literacy instruction in L1 plays a fundamental and supportive role for L2 literacy development (Au, 1993; Cummins, 1989; Ovando & Collier, 1998).

Research among immigrant students has demonstrated that children with an L1 different from the dominant language have been able to learn to read and write in the second language, if students are provided with instruction that considers their L1 and their teachers' knowledge about them and their families (Moll & Geenberg, 1990). There is a great need to construct dialogic and flexible environments for learning, which validate students' resources, allowing them to participate better in school. Teachers have the need to plan their activities ahead of time. However they could make changes according to the children's interests and needs, so as to give opportunities for a more active participation on the decision-making involved in literacy instruction. The participant framework should promote children and teachers taking diverse roles, moving away from the classic teacher (asker, evaluator)-learner (passive listener-evaluated) roles. Teachers could promote collaborative learning in a better way if they truly believed children (students) could become teachers.

Teachers need to interrogate the usefulness of literacy activities. Children should be given the opportunity of real, social and communicative uses of literacy. Literacy should always make sense to them, moving away from the focus on the formal aspects of literacy instruction. Watering-down the curriculum for indigenous children should not be an alternative for teachers, who are not well prepared to teach a bilingual rural population.

Because of their training, teachers assumed deficits in students. The only way to overcome this approach to their students is getting to know them and be aware of their strengths. Teachers need to research and use the different resources that children bring to the classroom (from the riddles and oral tradition to popular songs and texts their learn

listening to the radio and watching T.V.). Experiences that children have outside of the rigid limits of the official literacy of the school are valuable resources for topics, texts, forms of performing, and styles that could be used in connection with the official texts promoted by the school.

The few printed materials in Quechua mostly draw from oral tradition, which –as stated by *comuneros*—changes from place to place. Thus, I would emphasize the need for developing opportunities for personal storytelling --in oral and written language-- for students. This was a speech genre commonly practiced in the domestic and communal contexts, having the purpose of sharing feelings and socializing children into the norms of the community. This pedagogical tool has also been found to be a tool that aids people to make meaning of their world and their lives (Bruner, 1994). This genre could be an opportunity for children to express their feelings and bring discursive practices from home.

At school, the use of oral and written language was clearly divided. Oral Quechua was used to explain and communicate (sometimes), and Spanish was used as the written language. However, as has been demonstrated throughout this work, the use of oral and written language by children or adults is not clearly divided. Children should be able to use their resources with no emphasis on this separation. They have learned schooled literacy practices since the first grade (like filling-in the blanks); however, they are not encouraged to incorporate their language, the speech genres they learned at home and in the community, into their writings. In order to make texts work for children, the emphasis on formal aspects of literacy should be set aside, looking for meaning and comprehension. The use of the Spanish and Quechua languages in writing (the Quechuañol) should be allowed, if that is what children want to produce. After all, Huancalle is a bilingual community, and children have different degrees of bilingualism.

Present-day educational discourses emphasize respect for diversity and teaching from an intercultural position. As has been well stated by Zavala (2002), talking about intercultural education should include talking about local communicative resources and genres. There are teachers who are already trying out these practices. Louise, a teacher

described by Dyson (1993), allowed children to share with her the negotiation of what kinds of texts were valued and promoted in the classroom. In this way different genres and cultural traditions merged within the classroom, creating new possibilities for children to use the written word. Then, these new possibilities should incorporate the different oral genres and symbolic systems (oral tradition, personal storytelling, jokes, riddles, songs, music, dance), as well as the local literacies (writing an *acta*, a journal, a real letter, a list of *ayni*, or songs). In order to incorporate these written and speech genres, structure and formal aspects of official texts should not be the focus. Presently, local literacies are being forced into official texts, but this is not working nor can it be expected to work.

However, educators should be careful not to generalize their students' communicative resources. For example, there is a tendency to use children's stories (Dyson, 1993; Zavala, 2002), while students have a much broader array of knowledge of how to play with words and use language. Language and literacy use occurs in context, thus, educators should be careful to not take local speech genres out of context and disconnect them from their meanings. Then, local literacies and communicative resources should be understood from their own social context; in other words, as mediums that are used within particular participant frameworks, and that have particular social and cultural purposes (as pedagogical tools, for example). Folk models of learning and teaching should be taken into account in order to understand local literacies.

Children should not be forced to leave behind their language and their communicative resources, in benefit of the official literacy practices, which is the *cultural capital* of dominant sectors of society. I would suggest that teachers not finish every class session in writing and explore new ways to develop children's orality, which has not been developed at school. I believe that including members of the community as experts in literacy matters (taking into account the local literacies definition), oral tradition, communicative resources, as well as knowledge in general, should be an activity that teachers should not miss. I have met many *comuneros* who were teachers in their community (as communal leaders, religious leaders, mothers or grandparents). These



comuneros should be given opportunities to have roles of educators within the context of the school. They know how to use the oral tradition to teach children and they know how to reach them. They were very good teachers and the community valued them as such. Teachers could learn from their Andean pedagogical resources and their knowledge to incorporate them in the curriculum.

Teachers were unaware of their cultural assumptions and the hierarchical frameworks within which they functioned. They believed their assumptions were neutral. For example, anyone who wanted to be civilized should be “cleaned” and become a professional. Deeply, teachers believed that Quechua-speaking children should become assimilated to the Spanish-speaking *mestizo* urban world. It was obvious that Quechua students were compelled to attain a literacy standard, based only on the institutional values and beliefs. If the teachers and educational authorities continue having these ethnocentric and discriminative perspectives about students, we risk the possibility of indigenous children receiving an education that promotes equity.

In order to work from an IBE perspective there is an urgent need to critically reflect and take action on the perspectives and practices of literacy instruction held by the institution of the school. Teachers need to go through a deep process of reflection and reconstruction of their frames of reference, which have been built throughout their whole lives. Thus, teacher education needs to be defined from a different perspective than it has been traditionally (as technical expertise only). Teacher research with an ethnographic approach has been proven to be a useful strategy for teachers to learn and value their students’ linguistic and cultural resources (Gonzales et al., 1995; Inostroza de Celis, 1997). I believe that teacher-training programs should have this component. The process should be accompanied by teacher trainers who also should be clear and convinced about the powerful effects of the ethnocentric ideas of teachers about their students.

It has been demonstrated here that a climate of prejudice saturated the Huancalle school. A way to solve this situation is to change the approach to literacy: instead of trying to impose the official literacy on Quechua-speaking children, teachers could research community practices and incorporate them into the official literacy approach,

modifying the standards the institution of the school tries to attain. In this way, the “funds of knowledge” students have at home and in their community could be used in order to build new ways of communicating. In addition, teachers should be aware of the results of critical research that questions the assumptions of the institution of the school.

But, of course, this is not enough. Education is also immersed in a broader context. I have met teachers who are trying to teach “against the grain” (Constantino & Faltis, 1998) to implement IBE in their schools. These teachers have understood the importance of it and made the decision to confront parents, educational authorities, and the larger society. However, they have noticed that their students’ parents take their children out of the community school because of IBE implementation. Of course IBE needs support from diverse sectors (not only education), as well as the support of the parents. As long as IBE is implemented only for indigenous populations, from the top to the bottom, and perceived as low-quality, remedial special education (López, 1996; Speiser, 1996; Zúñiga & Galvez, 2002), important changes will not occur. I agree with Speiser (1996) in that for interculturality to be a possibility, the subordinate languages and cultures of indigenous people should be recognized by the national society. Only in this situation, indigenous people will be able to move back and forth from one world to another “without losing their own place, to which they belong, and without having to accept a place [in society] against their own will” (Speiser, 1996, p. 111, my translation).

I propose that in a similar manner as literacy, mathematics, for example, is defined as a universal phenomenon and imposed on children in a meaningless way stressing the formal and mechanical aspects of it. I suggest ethnographic research on local numerical practices in order to continue working towards constructing the Intercultural Bilingual Education perspective. I also believe there is the need to continue the research on literacy practices in diverse areas of Peru. Since literacy is a local phenomenon, we should not risk generalizing findings of one area to other areas. I think key topics for further elaboration are: literacy practices among young Quechua speakers and their connections to gender relations and the uses of Quechua literacies in domains other than the church.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDES

### **Interview about literacy practices:**

1. How did you learn to read and write? (Where? Who taught you?)
2. Was it easy or difficult to learn to read and write? (What did you do if it was difficult? Who helped you?)
3. Presently, is it easy or difficult to read and write? (What do you do if you have difficulties?)
4. What do you think about the people who do not read or write? Why?
5. When do you read (in the community, in the city)? What for do you read and write? What do you read and write?
6. How do you feel about knowing how to read and write? Why?
7. Do you think reading and writing is useful to you/your family/people of the community? (How? What for?)
8. In what language do you read/write? Why?
9. Do you think the members of the community (adults, children) should learn to read and write in Quechua? Why?
10. Which activities you do in your community are similar to reading and writing? Can you “read” in the world instead of in a piece of paper or a book? (Is it the same or different weaving and working the land to reading and writing? Why?)
11. Is telling or listening to stories (cuentos) from the community similar or different from reading a book? Why?

### **In Spanish:**

1. ¿Cómo aprendiste a leer y escribir? (¿Dónde? ¿Con quién?)
2. ¿Te fue fácil o difícil aprender a leer y escribir? (¿Qué hacías si era difícil? ¿Quién te ayudaba?)
3. Ahora, ¿Te es fácil o difícil leer y escribir? (¿Qué haces si es difícil?)
4. ¿Qué piensas de las personas que no pueden leer o escribir? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿En qué ocasiones lees y escribes (en la comunidad, en la ciudad)? (¿Para qué? ¿Qué lees y escribes?)
6. ¿Cómo te sientes contigo mismo al saber leer y escribir? ¿Por qué?
7. ¿Crees que saber leer y escribir te ha servido a ti/ a tu familia/ a la gente de la comunidad? ¿Cómo?
8. ¿En qué idioma escribes y lees? ¿Por qué?
9. ¿Crees que los miembros de la comunidad, adultos y niños, deben de aprender a leer y escribir en quechua? ¿Por qué?
10. ¿Qué actividades que haces en la comunidad dirías que se parecen en algo a leer y escribir? ¿Puedes leer o escribir en el mundo, en otras cosas que no sea un papel o un libro? (¿Es lo mismo leer y escribir que hilar, trabajar en la chakra? ¿Por qué?)

11. Cuando cuentan cuentos acá en la comunidad, ¿eso se parece o no se parece a leer un libro? (¿Es lo mismo contar un cuento que leer un libro?) ¿Por qué?

**Interview about education:**

1. Where do your children learn important things for their lives?
2. What do you teach you children?
3. How do you teach them? What do you do so they can learn?
4. What do you want you child to be in the future?
5. What does you child need to achieve that?

**About schooling:**

6. Tell me about your experience at school (what do you remember the most?)
7. Was it useful for your life (in the community, outside the community)? What for?
8. Presently, is the school the same or different than the school which you attended?  
How?
9. What is the most important thing the school teaches you children?
10. What do your children like the most/the least from the school?
11. What would you change in the school in Huancalle? How would you do that?
12. Are you/ the communal leaders doing something to make those changes?

**In Spanish:**

1. ¿Dónde aprenden tus hijos cosas importantes para sus vidas? Ejemplos.
2. ¿Qué les enseñas a tus hijos?
3. ¿Cómo les enseñas esas cosas? (¿Qué cosas haces para que aprendan? ¿Qué cosas dices?)
4. ¿Qué quieres que tu hijo sea en el futuro?
5. ¿Qué necesita tu hijo para lograr ser eso?

**Sobre la escuela:**

6. Cuéntame sobre tu experiencia en la escuela (lo que más recuerdas).
7. ¿Te sirvió la escuela en tu vida (dentro o fuera de la comunidad)? ¿Para qué?
8. Ahora la escuela, ¿es igual o diferente que la escuela dónde tú estudiaste? ¿En qué?
9. ¿Qué es lo más importante que la escuela enseña a tus hijos?
10. ¿Qué les gusta más a tus hijos de la escuela? ¿Qué les gusta menos?
11. ¿Qué debe cambiar en la escuela de tus hijos? ¿Cómo lo harías?
12. ¿Qué haces tú o los líderes comunales para lograr esos cambios?

**Life history interview:**

1. Tell me about your past life. (When did people start to read and write in this community? When did the school start to function?)
2. Tell me about your experiences when you learned to read and write?
3. What role do reading and writing play in your life, your children's lives, and the life in the community?

**In Spanish**

1. Cuéntame sobre tu vida pasada. (¿Cuándo la gente comenzó a leer y escribir en la comunidad? ¿Cuándo comenzó a funcionar la escuela?)
2. Cuéntame sobre tus experiencias cuando aprendiste a leer y a escribir.
3. ¿Qué papel juega saber leer y escribir en tu vida, la de tus hijos y la de la comunidad?

APPENDIX 2  
BILINGUAL SCHOOL SONG GATHERED IN THE SECOND GRADE CLASS.

\* The spelling is original.

*Munayllan leyeyqa  
munayllan qelqayqa  
escuela peruana  
chayllata chayllata  
qhawa qhawalluspa  
yuyasqa qanmanta  
Escuelita linda  
con todo cariño  
con todo afecto  
te canto escuelita mía  
manan sasachu  
manan karuchu  
escuela wasiqa  
hacuchu Juanacha  
hacuchu Carluscha  
ripukapusunchis  
yachaywasinchisman*

It is just beautiful to read  
it is just beautiful to write  
Peruvian school  
watching, watching  
only that  
I remember about you  
Beautiful little school  
with all my care  
with all my affection  
I sing to you little school of mine  
it is not difficult  
it is not far away  
the house of the school  
let's go Juanacha  
let's go Carluscha  
we go together  
to our school



APPENDIX 3:  
ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPTIONS OF LITERACY EVENTS PRESENTED.

The following transcription conventions are used throughout the document:

*Italics*, when reading from the board, the paper or when dictating a text.

**Bold**, when participants spoke in Quechua.

Regular, when participants spoke in Spanish.

Underlined, to mark emphasis.

( ), translation.

(( )) contextual information.

/.../, there was an excerpt I selected to leave out, due to space constraints.

**“She has not respected the semi-colon.”**

- Teacher: De acá no me han leído.  
Entonces Claudia, Claudia, Claudia, tienes que leer. Párate!  
Número tres! Claudia, fuerte!
- Claudia: *Nombre, apellido...*
- Teacher: *D.N.I.*
- Boy 1: ((getting ahead in the reading)) *dónde...*
- Claudia: *dónde...*
- Boy 1: ((getting ahead in the reading)) *vive...*
- Claudia: *Dónde vive traba...*
- Teacher: *Traba... No lo ha hecho, no ha respetado la coma.*  
*A los que no respetan signos, señalización les da. ¿No saben?*  
*Les ponen multa. Tienes que respetar.*
- Teacher: ((turns to a different child)) Acá. Sigue hijo acá. *Trabaja*, a ver, a ver...
- Boy 2: *o estudia.*

**Dictation**

Teacher: título: *Las flores, con rojo. Punto aparte. Con azul: Son muchos los insectos que se alimentan del polen de las flores.*

**Rounds**

- Teacher: ¿Qué vocal es esto?
- Boy: a
- Teacher: ¿Cómo se llama esto?
- Boy: avión
- Teacher: Esto, ¿qué cosa es?
- Boy: o [la letra o]
- Teacher: La o? No. Son redon... ¿Cómo se llama esto?
- Boy: redondos ((the local and schooled way of calling the circles))
- Teacher: Y con esto se convierte en ...

((the teacher writes on the notebook, turning the letter “o” letter “a”))  
Boy: La aaaa

### The solitudine

1. Teacher: Muy bien, dice acá que debe ir su nombre, su libreta,
2. dónde vive, dónde estudia, pero de la persona que soli...
3. Child 1: cita  
/.../
4. Teacher: Si tú pides, ¿de quién su nombre sería?
5. Child 2: De mí!
6. Teacher: Muy bien Manuel. Sería mi nombre, yo estoy pidiendo.
7. Toodo mi nombre voy a poner.
8. Por ejemplo, Juan va a escribir su solicitud.
9. Tu nombre completo ((asking the child for his complete name)).
10. Child 2: Juan Raya Cruz
11. Teacher: Dónde vives?
12. Child 2: Wata
13. Teacher: Ya. Juan Raya Cruz. ((she used a “puntero” to mark each word in the air, as if she was pointing the written name of the child on the board))
14. Teacher: Con domicilio en, a ver, con domicilio en ...
15. Children: Wata!
16. Teacher: Wata. Estudia en...
17. Children: Huancalle!
18. Teacher: Huancalle, ¿así se dice?
19. Child 2: centro educativo
20. Teacher: en el centro educativo número...
21. Children: cincuenta cero cuarenta y dos
22. Teacher cen... (cen...) ((children made noise))
23. Teacher: a ver, centro cincuenta cero cuarenta y dos de ...
24. Children: Huancalle  
/.../
25. Teacher: Ustedes van a escribir a posta de Huancalle. ((points at the next group)).
26. Child: a wawawasi
27. Teacher: a “La ONG”.
28. Van a solicitar premio para el día lunes.
29. Sí, el martes de la siguiente semana es 28.
30. Para el 28 van a solicitar premio para el concurso de cometas.
31. Solicito... no se dice “regalarme premio,” sino se dice “donar.”
32. Un sinónimo de regalar es donar.
33. Voy a poner “donación de premio,” ya?

34. Y ustedes escriben a las instituciones que les he dado, ya?  
/.../
35. Boy 1: **“Alcaldeta churaruspayku chay noqaykuri imata escribisaqkuri. Manataq yachaykuchu sutinta, chayri?”**
36. Teacher: No, no, no, no. No tiene que ir su nombre en la solicitud.
37. Va simplemente su nombre que es señor o señora
38. y su cargo, alcalde, doctora, presidente, gerente.
39. No sé qué cosa será, ¿ya?
40. Boy 1: Aaaaah! ((smiling)) Nuestro centro va mandar. Eso lee.
41. Teacher: ¿ya? ¿Donación de qué?
42. ((children do not respond))
43. Teacher: donación de premios, ¿no cierto?
44. Girl 1: **noqanchismanchu chayamunqa premio.**
45. Girl 2: **Ari, iskayninchismanmi.**
46. Teacher: ((reading from the board)) *de premios.*
47. Boy 2: **noqapaqpas**
48. Boy 3: **Ari!**
49. Boy 4: **Ajá!**
50. Teacher: Y en el cuerpo ya me explican para qué es ese premio,
51. para el concurso de cometa,
52. de qué grado... ponen.  
/.../
53. Sihuar: *señora, señora de “La Ong,” señora.* ((Dictating to the writer of the group in Spanish, and giving the explanation in Quechua)).
54. **ima, imachá churanayki chayman hina. Ima**
55. **carguyuqtaqri, periodistachu, presidentachu,**
56. **imataqri. Alcaldechu, imachá anqaychapi rinan**
57. ((Sihuar goes to the all-girls group to help them)).  
/.../
58. Sihuar: ((reading)) *an... te usted me presento y expongo.*
59. ((Girl 1 came back from the board and confirmed that the word they should write is “ante” and immediately wrote it on the paper))
60. Teacher: ((comes to the group and reads from their writing)) *con todo respeto, muy bien, sigue, sigue, muy bien.*  
/.../
61. Sihuar: *necesito... de donación de premio para hacer volar cometas. Ya está!*
62. ((Sihuar starts to go towards his group))
63. Girl 1: ((looking towards Sihuar)) **imaynata, imaynata.**
64. Sihuar: ((looking at the girl who is writing)) *donación de premio.*
65. *premio.*
66. ((Sihuar started to go again))
67. Girl 1: ((looking at Sihuar)) **Yaw, yaw, chikucha! donación de premios?**
- 68.

69. Sihuar: Profesora, **allinchu kashan?**  
 70. Girl 1: Profesora, ya pues!  
 71. ((the teacher comes to the group))  
 72. Sihuar: ((reading)) *Necesito donación de premios...*  
 73. Teacher: Ajá. ¿Para qué?  
 74. Sihuar: para concurso de cometas.  
 75. Teacher: concurso de cometas. ¿De qué grado?  
 76. Children: de quinto.  
 77. Teacher: de quinto grado. ¿Cuándo va a ser?  
 78. Girl 2: para el 28.  
 79. Teacher: Muy bien, eso es lo que quería aquí.  
 80. Sihuar: Ves, ves, te dije!  
 81. Girl 1: ((looking to Sihuar)) **Ah! chaytachu.**  
 82. **Aknatachu churasaq.**  
 83. ((smiling and looking at the members of her group)).  
 84. Sihuar: **Manaraq escribinkichu**  
 85. ((pointing at the piece of paper started to dictate to girl 1.))  
 86. *del concurso*  
 87. ((Girl 1 started to write))  
 88. Sihuar: ((Looking at the teacher)) *Concurso de cometas.*  
 89. **Allinchu. Ruwashayku noqaykuqa.**  
 90. ((After a couple of minutes the teacher came back to the group))  
 91. Teacher: A ver ... ¿qué dice? ((reading))  
 92. *Ah! el 28, que será el 28 de agosto de...*  
 93. *Y ¿En dónde van a hacer volar?*  
 94. Sihuar: Huancalle  
 95. Teacher: ((shaking her head negating the answer))  
 96. *¿Qué se llama ese cerrito que hay allá arriba?* ((pointing))  
 97. Sihuar: Cuál?  
 98. Girl 1: Ah! Erapata!  
 99. Teacher: ya, entonces, que lo vamos a hacer en Erapata ((Making imaginary lines on the paper as if she was writing))  
 100. Girl 1: ((immediately started to write what the teacher dictated, stopping when the teacher was in silence)).

### Riddles during formation

- Child 1: Compañeros, compañeras, voy a hacer una adivinanza. Adivina, adivinador.  
 All children: ADIVINAMOS!  
 Child 1: Mi madre tiene una sábana y no puede doblar. ¿qué es?  
 All children: La nube!  
 Teacher: ¿Qué? ¿La nube? Muy bien! Aplausos! Fuerte! ((children clap))

Child 2: Adivina, adivinador.  
All students: ADIVINAMOS!  
Boy: ¿Qué planta tiene las cinco vocales?  
All students: Eucalipto!  
Teacher: ¿Por qué eucalipto, a ver?  
Children: Lleva las cinco vocales.  
Teacher: Claro, porque lleva las cinco vocales, ¿no cierto?  
Child 3: ¿Cuánto es la mitad de uno?  
Child 4: Cero  
Child 3: El ombligo  
Teacher: Muy bien, aplausos. La mitad de uno es el ombligo, ¿no?

### **Interactions between a mother and a child (Luzmila and Alberto)**

Alberto: Su faldita, su manita, su patita, su ganchito. Mamicha tu ganchito.  
Luzmila: Mi ganchito, su cabeza, su cabeza?  
Alberto: Aquí está, pe!  
Luzmila: Su naríz, su naríz.  
Luzmila: ¿Qué cosa es esto?  
Alberto: Nuestra casa, casita.  
Luzmila: Nuestra casita.  
Luzmila: Ah, ya! Hartas florcitas. A ver, dibuja a la mamá.  
Alberto: Ya, ya, mamicha, ¿cómo? ¿picando?  
Luzmila: Así pe, picando.  
Alberto: Así, picando con cuchillo.

APPENDIX 4:  
ORIGINAL TEXTS WRITTEN BY THE TEACHER FOR THE LESSON: THE  
SOLICITUDE.

*La solicitud.*

*Es un documento que se emplea para pedir algún servicio o favor a las autoridades (instituciones).*

*Sus partes-: son:*

8. *Sumilla: Se resume lo que se pide.*
9. *Nombre y título del funcionario.*
10. *Nombre, apellidos, DNI, dónde vive, trabajo o estudio del solicitante.*
11. *Texto o cuerpo que indica lo que se pide.*
12. *Conclusión o despedida.*
13. *Lugar y fecha de la solicitud.*
14. *Firma y posfirma.*

**The model of the solicitude written by the teacher**

**Solicito: trabajo**

Señor Alcalde del distrito de Taray

S.A. [sírvese atentamente]

*Marcelino Sosa Peña con DNI*

*24600846 con domicilio en la comunidad*

*de Rayanniyoc. Ante Usted me presento con todo respeto  
y expongo:*

*Que habiendo terminado mi carrera  
de mecánica eléctrica, necesito trabajar  
en la plaza vacante que hay en el C.E.O. que dirigen, para  
ello acompaño con currículum vitae.*

*Suplico atender mi petición por ser de justicia*

*Rayanniyoc 20 de agosto del 2001*

*Firma y posfirma*

APPENDIX 5:  
CHILDREN'S WRITTEN PRODUCTS: ORIGINAL SOLICITUDES.

\* the spelling is original.

Children's written product 1:

**Solicitos: donación**  
**PREMIO**

*Srta: Presidente de WaWaWasi*

*S.P.*

*Pancho Mata cruz ida (edad) 11*

*donde estudia C. Edocativo 50002 Huancalle*

*Ano 2001*

*Ante usted me presento con todo*

*respeto y expongo.*

*Que habiendo terminado mi carrera*

*De mecanica elictro nesiseta trabajo*

*En la plaza vacante que hay en el*

*Que deregen para ello acompaño mi cureculo Vida:*

*Suplico atende a mi*

*Se de justicia*

*Huancalle 22 de agosto 2001*

*Firma del niño*

Written product 2:

*Solicito: donación de  
Premio*

*Señora Presidenta de Plan Internacional C.  
Sihuar Huaman Quispe año 12  
años domicilio en la comunidad  
de Huatta estudio en la comunidad  
de Huancalle. Ate usted me presento  
con todo respeto y expongo:*

*Necesito donación de premio  
de concurso de cometa 28 de  
Agosto del Quinto grado que lo voy hacer  
bolar en erapata. Y queremos  
saber quien gana.*

*Suplico atender a mi petici  
ón sea de justo.*

*Huancalle 22 de agosto 2001*

*Firma*

*Nombre del niño*



APPENDIX 6:  
READING LITERACY EVENT: WHAT-TYPE QUESTIONS.

One child had read aloud a passage of the reading “El caballito de siete colores” (The horse of seven colors), a story book in Spanish produced by the IBE program. After the reading the children had a brief conversation around the content of the text. The interaction was driven by the teacher’s what-type questions about the content of the reading:

- Teacher: There was a man who had an orchard.  
Child: Three children.  
Teacher: And he had ...  
All children: Three children!  
Teacher: Now, the first child, what happened to the first child?  
Marta (child): He told [the father] to buy him a ...  
Sihuar: a band, a harmonic ...  
Several children: BANDORE  
Teacher: Ayayay! You know I travel a lot by bus, and my ears hurt when you shout, OK? Speak quietly. A bandore, and ... also you forgot to raise your hands, what has happened? A bandore, and ... he went to ...  
Several children: to flirt with young ladies.  
Teacher: In other words girls, right? You will have time for that in twenty years, I have already told you that. Now, the second [child], what did he do? What did the second one do?  
Sihuar: He told him to buy an harmonic.  
Teacher: A harmonic. And then, what happened?  
Sihuar: The same, he went to flirt with the young ladies.  
Child 2: Like his older brother.  
Teacher: Just the same as the older brother. And the last one we have said that ...  
Marta: that he said [the father] he did not want any presents, and that he would take care of him his whole life.  
Teacher: He did not ask for ANYTHING to his father, and he was going to take care of the orchard. And then he started to, what did [the book] say?  
Boy: to braid  
Girl: to braid  
Teacher: to braid ...  
Boy: nets  
Teacher: nets  
Boy: made out of skin  
Teacher: and, so, he waited for, what for? They were taking away the flowers and, who came?  
Children: the horse of seven colors.

Teacher. The horse of seven colors, who later will give him some desires, the horse of seven colors. And tomorrow we will find out. We have two pendant stories.

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