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Callahuaya in Bolivia

Pieter Muysken

The relevant map is listed at the end of this text.

Callahuaya (also spelled Kallawayá, Callawayá) or Machaj juyay 'language of the people, the family', is spoken in a region of northwest Bolivia, northeast of Lake Titicaca, by the older members of a group of 2000 itinerant healers, all male. The centre of the Callahuaya healers, who also work in the capital La Paz and travel widely in South America, is Charazani.

Processes of genesis

We can assume that probably the mixed language Callahuaya emerged at some point during the process of shift in the region from Puquina to Quechua. The curing rituals required a secret language, while the increased radius of action of the curers (through the whole Quechua-speaking Andes) made a Quechua-based secret language desirable (so that to someone overhearing it would sound like Quechua). Callahuaya has a word of its own for elements of Spanish origin where Aymara and Quechua have a borrowing. This suggests at least lexical elaboration during the Colonial or Republican periods. The group of healers is first mentioned in 1764. However, if most Quechua morphology is intact, while the Puquina lexicon is reduced and several other languages have contributed as well, this either suggests that original Quechua speakers invented Callahuaya, or that quechuization was well advanced when the language emerged. There has been some morphological restructuring.

Nature of the mixture and structure

The language is a form of Quechua with a vocabulary drawn from different sources, mostly from the by now extinct language Puquina (?Maipuran), but also from Tacana (Pano-Tacanan). The basic features of the language are generally agreed upon. A list of sources and

analytical studies is given in the references; a recent summary is Muysken (to appear).

Abbreviations in the interlinear translations of all examples:

AF	affirmative
AG	agentive
BN	benefactive (for), purposive (in order to)
CA	causative
FN	finite nominalizer
PA	past tense
RF	reflexive
TO	topic marker
1-2	first person subject acting upon second person object
2	second person subject or possessive
3	third person subject

Consider a sentence such as (1):

- (1) *Cchana-chi-rqa-iqui isna-pu-na-iqui-paq*
call-CA-PA-1-2 go-BN-FN-2-BN
'I had you called so that you can go.'

Here *cchana-* 'call' and *isna-* 'go' are non-Quechua, but all the other morphemes are Quechua and the structure corresponds to a Quechua one. A similar example is (2):

- (2) *mii-qa llalli oja-cu-j-mi acha-n*
man-TO good eat-RF-AG-AF be-3
'The man is a very greedy eater.'
(Oblitas Poblete 1968:40)

Here *mii* 'man', *oja-* 'eat', and *acha-* 'be' are non-Quechua. Again, the rest of the morphemes and the syntactic structure are Quechua.

In essence, Callahuaya presents a merger of Quechua and Puquina, adopting the series of aspirated and glottalized stops (lacking in Puquina) from Quechua, and the five vowel system with distinctive lengthening from Puquina (Quechua has a three-vowel system and the Southern varieties lack a length distinction). While long vowels only appear in words of Puquina origin, aspirated and glottalized stops appear in words taken from Quechua and Puquina. When we consider the distribution of consonants and of consonant clusters, the Callahuaya system resembles that of Quechua much more than that of Puquina.

The Callahuaya case system is largely identical with the Quechua system: about ten affixes attached to the head nouns right within the noun phrase. The Quechua locative *-pi* alternates with *-pichu*. As to word order, the data all conform to Quechua OV word order, as may be expected from the discussion so far. Question words are initial, objects and complements tend to precede the verb, predicates precede the copula, all modifiers precede the head noun. There appears to be a system of nominal postpositions similar to the one in Quechua, but with different lexical shapes.

The largest difference between Callahuaya and Quechua morphology involves the second and third person, which are marked in Quechua with *-nki/-yki* and *-n*, respectively:

- (3) *wasi-yki* 'your house'
wasi-n 'her/his house'
puri-nki 'you walk'
puri-n '(s)he walks'

The Quechua second person verb form *-nki* is used five times in the present for a second person in Callahuaya sentences, twice unambiguously for a third person, and six times it is ambiguous, because the Spanish translation has a third person, which in Spanish could also be the polite second person form, and the sentences have no context. Some examples:

- (4) *yani kkena yuna-nki*
 much money earn-2
Ganabas mucho dinero.
 'You made a lot of money.'

- (5) *ikili-n acha-pu-nki kitaj*
 father-2 be-BN-3 who
Quién es tu padre?
 'Who is your father?'

We can conclude from this a variable overgeneralization of the verbal second person marker *-nki* to third person contexts in Girault's data, while the verbal third person marker *-n* is not used in second person contexts.

For nominal person marking, the picture is yet more complicated. The overall picture is one of great irregularity. First, the second and third persons have been exchanged in the singular. In parallel with this, the Quechua second person plural marker *-chis* is used as an emphatic form in the third singular, and the Quechua third person plural marker is used as a second person emphatic form. Finally, the morphophonemic alternations in the Callahuaya person forms are patterned on the Quechua use of euphonic *ni* after consonants, but have incorporated sensitivity to the Puquina feature of vowel length. With nominal possession we have genitive *-j* or benefactive *-paj* on the pronominal possessor, and *-n* (*-an* after consonants) on the possessed element. The *-n* form is the expected Quechua third person form (since a nominal possessor is by definition third person), while the alternant *-an* is not derived from Quechua. Thus nominal and pronominal possession follow different rules.

Wider social context

Little is known about the context in which Callahuaya is spoken, but some things may be surmised with reasonable certainty. It is not intelligible for speakers of possible source languages (as far as it is known), but sounds like some form of Quechua. It is an in-group ritual language, and certainly not comparable to

anything like code-switching between the putative source language. The Callahuaya are held in awe, and part of this is due to their knowledge of a secret languages, termed by some "the language of the Incas". The latter denomination is probably incorrect.

Language acquisition aspects

Unfortunately we know nothing of how the language emerged; it may well be that the itinerant

healers mixed the half-forgotten Puquina that they used to speak with the Quechua that they had become fluent in. Thus language death may well have played a role (one of the contributor languages is effectively dead), but probably not mixed marriages. There is a clear separate identity for the Callahuaya, and their secret healing language may well contribute to it. It is not probable that it ever was a contact language.

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Relevant map

Contact languages: Ecuador and Bolivia (Callahuaya). Compiled by Pieter Muysken. Map 142.