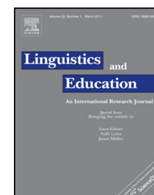
Linguistics and Education 32 (2015) 16–26

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Linguistics and Education

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/linged



"It will emerge if they grow fond of it": Translanguaging and power in Quechua teaching

Virginia Zavala*

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Peru

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Available online 25 February 2015

Keywords:
Quechua
Translanguaging
Bilingualism
Critical language awareness
Classroom interaction
Ethnography

ABSTRACT

This article addresses Quechua instruction to emergent bilinguals in urban schools, as part of the implementation of a language policy promoting Quechua in the Peruvian Andes. In the light of two other teachers who work in similar scenarios and the language ideologies of Quechua experts leading the language policy, this article analyzes a focal teacher who constructs alternative ideologies and subjectivities that contribute to transform the power relationships typically enacted in these racially segregated urban schools. Through translanguaging strategies for involving her diverse audience (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009) and a critical language awareness approach to make the invisible visible and the inaudible audible (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004), this teacher constructs a community of legitimate Quechua speakers, which subverts the dominant representation of the bilingual speaker as the "perfectly" coordinated bilingual and the invisibilization of emergent bilinguals in the official language policy. Like other studies that conceptualize teachers as policy makers (Menken & García, 2010), the present study shows that teachers negotiate with official language policies and can ultimately contest them in practice. However, in the case under study, this constitutes a process where the teacher initially reproduces ambiguous and contradictory discourses before reaching more critical positionings.

© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Introduction

For half a century, intercultural bilingual education (IBE) in Perú has been implemented only in rural areas. In a context where the use of the Quechua language has long been associated with social and political marginalization, economic poverty and low educational achievement, IBE has acquired a remedial and compensatory connotation (Aikman, 2003; García, 2005; Hornberger, 2000; Howard, 2007; Oliart, 2011; Valdiviezo, 2009). However, in the last decade, top-down policies in the Southern Andes have been opening up ideological spaces for the revitalization of Quechua (Zavala, 2014). Mostly since the process of political decentralization starting in 2000, some regions have developed initiatives to raise the status of Quechua in relation to Spanish through regional educational policies, municipal ordinances for the use of the language in public services and cultural policies in general. This is precisely what has been happening since 2005 in Apurímac,[1] where

* Correspondence to: Avenida Universitaria 1801, San Miguel, Lima 32, Peru. Tel.: (511) 6262000x4455.
E-mail address: vzavala@pucp.edu.pe

[1] According to the census of 2007 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2007), the Apurímac region in the southern Andes had a population of 438,782, which is distributed between urban and rural areas (45.9% live in urban areas and 54.1% in rural areas). The census also shows a phenomenon of migration toward urban areas. The Apurímac region is considered to be one of the poorest ones of the country. According to the census, 28.1% of Apurimenians have Spanish as their first language while 71.5% have Quechua as their first language.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2015.01.009
0898-5898/© 2015 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

social actors from both the State and civil society have been developing a regional education project in order to design a "unique" and "appropriate" education plan for the region (Gobierno Regional de Apurímac, unpublished manuscript). After acknowledging that more than 70% of Apurimenians speak Quechua, those who participated in this process (teachers, public workers, EIB specialists, students, NGO workers, etc.) proceeded to create a general language plan titled "Expanding Quechua in the Apurímac Region 2008–2021" (Gobierno Regional de Apurímac, unpublished manuscript).

Quechua instruction in urban primary schools is part of the implementation of this language policy promoting the indigenous language. Although it is being taught as a course for only 1 or 2 h a week, the teaching of Quechua in the urban area challenges dominant representations that associate Quechua with rurality (and with a rural way of life) and assume that it is absurd to keep using Quechua if someone already knows Spanish (Zavala, 2014).

In the district of Talavera in Andahuaylas (one important province of the Apurímac region in the Peruvian Andes), three teachers have been teaching Quechua in three urban schools for several years and each of them has developed his/her own bilingual methodology. Each of them constitutes the Quechua teachers in their schools and they are in charge of imparting 1 or 2 h of Quechua per week from first to sixth grade through out the primary level. The three teachers' life stories in relation to Quechua, labor trajectories and language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000; Schieffelin, Woolard, & Kroskrity, 1998) clearly influence the way they teach the language and implement the language policy in their classrooms. Two of these teachers (Simon and Thomas) reproduce dominant language ideologies, while the third (Silvia) constructs alternative ideologies and subjectivities that contribute to transform the power relationships typically enacted in these racially segregated urban schools. Through translanguaging strategies for involving her diverse audience (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009) and a critical language awareness approach to make the invisible visible and the inaudible audible (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004), Silvia subverts the official language policy discourse.

In this article, I will focus on this third teacher, but within the context of the macro language policy and the work of other teachers who are teaching Quechua in similar scenarios. I will show that, through translanguaging strategies -or the movement and fluidity between Quechua and Spanish- Silvia constructs a community of legitimate Quechua speakers and empowers her students, both the ones with high proficiency in Quechua and the ones with less proficiency. The former are positioned as legitimate "teachers" of the ones with less proficiency and the latter, as emergent bilinguals who are able to speak in Quechua and must respect their peers.

The scenario

In the Southern Peruvian Andes where Quechua is spoken, intercultural bilingual education (IBE) programs have been mostly restricted to rural areas, although the use of Quechua is not limited to rural peasant communities. In the cities of the Southern Andes, most people who are 50 years old and older speak Quechua, including socioeconomic elites who do not identify as indigenous. However, the census shows that a process of language shift toward Spanish is developing, since new generations born in the cities tend to be raised only in Spanish (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2007).

Migration from rural to urban areas is also common as Quechua speakers move to the cities to attend high schools and sometimes universities, and increasingly work in socially prestigious jobs such as public service or elected leadership. Therefore, many mayors and municipal employees no longer originate from urban elite classes (as was typical decades ago), but rather from lower classes and even from rural areas, which are generally the poorest areas of Peru. Today the use of Quechua is becoming more visible in urban scenarios and people are less ashamed of speaking it (Zavala, 2014). Teachers no longer forbid the use of it in schools; or at least do not forbid it with violence, as was the case when these children's parents went to school.

It is important to point out that the ones driving this pro-Quechua language policy in Apurímac are "Quechua experts" who are part of a community of practice in an ample sense (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992; Lave & Wenger, 1991). These Apurimenian Quechua experts are a community of people who interact in different places (like workshops, meetings, conferences, etc.) and who share particular practices or ways of doing things. They hold a diverse range of degrees in Linguistics or Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE). In addition, they work in NGOs as teacher trainers about Quechua topics, in the local office of the Ministry of Education as IBE specialists, or in universities as Quechua teachers. Most were born in rural communities and were socialized in Quechua during their early childhood but now live in cities and speak mostly in Spanish. In addition, they share common beliefs about Quechua and Peruvian education, ways of talking not only in Quechua but *about* Quechua, and ways of connecting with other communities of practice. Even if conflicts between members' positions constantly arise, there is a general common project that these people identify with and that defines the community as such. These people do not refer to themselves as "Quechua experts"; however, other Quechua speakers conceive of them as people who know a great deal about Quechua and who have the authority to give legitimate opinions about the language and ways of teaching it. In Apurímac some people refer to them as Quechua *Yachaq*, which means "the one who knows about Quechua" (Zavala, 2015).

These "Quechua experts" construct their authority based on particular language ideologies that tend to coincide with the dominant discourse on intercultural bilingual education in Perú and bilingual education in other contexts. They favor traditional and grammaticalized methods for language teaching; reproduce a representation of the ideal bilingual speaker as two "perfect" monolinguals in one body; and enact reductionist language theories based on monolingual and purist perspectives, which sanction linguistic transference, borrowing and code switching. The latter coincides with many bilingual

Download English Version:

https://daneshyari.com/en/article/366057

Download Persian Version:

https://daneshyari.com/article/366057

Daneshyari.com