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| 1. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION | A. PRIMARY | Education |
| | B. SECONDARY | General Education |

2. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
 Peruvian language education policy toward speakers of indigenous tongues

3. AUTHOR(S)
 Grant, S.R.

| | | |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| 4. DOCUMENT DATE | 5. NUMBER OF PAGES | 6. ARC NUMBER |
| 1974 | 16 p. | ARC |

7. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS
 Florida State University, College of Education, Center for Educational Technology, Tallahassee, Florida 32306

8. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (*Sponsoring Organization, Publishers, Availability*)

9. ABSTRACT

Since the establishment of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces in Peru in 1969, a new bilingual language education policy has emerged as part of the educational reform. Based on modern principles of cultural pluralism and reaffirmation of ethnic diversity, Peruvian educators have articulated an impressive, far-reaching language policy. Whether the policy can be successfully implemented will depend on many factors, particularly on the research and development efforts needed to implement a workable system involving more than 20 dialects of the major native language, Quechua, over a wide geographic area. Political necessity is a strong incentive in the present situation. The Peruvian experiment in bilingual education will present a rich research milieu for those interested in bilingual education, in the role of education in national integration, and in the blend of the social science disciplines for the analysis and assessment of an important social and cultural development program.

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|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 10. CONTROL NUMBER | 11. PRICE OF DOCUMENT |
| PN-AAC-488 | |
| 12. DESCRIPTORS | 13. PROJECT NUMBER |
| | 14. CONTRACT NUMBER |
| | 15. TYPE OF DOCUMENT |
| | CSD-2945 211(d) |

CSO 2945
PN 44-789

PERUVIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY TOWARD
SPEAKERS OF INDIGENOUS TONGUES

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FOR
PRESENTATION AT THE ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SOCIETY

March 1974

PERUVIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY TOWARD SPEAKERS OF
INDIGENOUS TONGUES

The Peruvian government launched a new national education language policy in October 1969 when the armed forces ousted President Fernando Belaúnde Terry, thus ending almost six years of gradualist reform government under the Acción Popular aegis. Since the coup, General Juan Velasco Alvarado, leader of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces, has steered his country toward an independent socialist course with marked nationalist self-awareness.¹ Part of this new self-awareness is expressed in a new education policy that promotes bilingualism in Peruvian education. The new bilingual education policy is a radical departure from past policy, practice and belief. In the present paper we shall examine this new policy and explore its significance within the Peruvian context.

Background

Considering that Peru's population is divided almost equally between White and Mestizos on one hand and Indian groups on the other,² the Indian population, who predominate in the Sierra (Andean Region) and the Selva (Amazon Region), have been

¹Joseph Novitski, "Peru Military, in 4th Year of Power, Presses Social Reforms," The New York Times, October 5, 1972, p. 16.

²R. J. Owens, Peru, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 11.

in non-participatory, subservient roles since the conquest in the mid-Sixteenth Century.³ A large part of the Indian population living in the rural areas do not speak Spanish, the official national language. The rural indigenous population in the Sierra speak primarily and often exclusively Quechua (or Aymara in the Puno Region), and are able to maintain relatively closed communities. In the Selva, many other autochthonous languages are spoken by small, widely distributed groups.

Pozzi-Escot reports that 60.04 percent of Peru's population speak Spanish, 19.60 percent speak an indigenous language, and that 19.13 percent are bilingual (sic). Further, there is an extremely uneven distribution of these various speakers: e.g. in the Department of Lima 81.62 percent of the population report Spanish as their mother tongue, whereas in the Department of Ayacucho in the Sierra only 5.36 percent report Spanish as their mother tongue.⁴ Thus, the problem of language in Peru is a significant one, and until now it has been largely discounted, ignored, or considered like the Andes themselves, part of the eternal landscape.

In Peruvian writings one finds ample evidence of past attitudes towards indigenous groups and their languages:

"Years ago I had an opportunity to talk in the Ministry of Education with an official in charge of the service which as proposing the changes

³ José Carlos Mariátegui, Siete Ensayos de Interpretación de la Realidad Peruana, (Lima: Biblioteca Amauta, 1928, 1965), pp. 29-40 "El Problema del Indio."

⁴ Inés Pozzi-Escot, "El Castellano en el Perú: Norma Culta Nacional Versus Norma Culta Regional," in Alberto Escobar, El Reto del Multilingüismo en el Perú, (Lima: Institutos de Estudios Peruanos, 1972) pp. 127-128.

desirable in state educational policy. Among those modifications one supposed that those foreseen for the rural areas were of particular importance. When I suggested that he go over the linguistic and anthropological bases which had been worked on in said areas during the republican period, his remark cancelled all possibility of a fruitful dialogue. He said, 'We have to dash a bucket of water on the heads of those Indians so they forget their Quechua.'"⁵

Frequently, such attitudes are related bitterly and show the depth of indignation which many observers feel about the subject:

"...When (education) arrived at the small town, to the distant community--and at times it didn't even arrive--it was like a wedge of foreign material. Education burst in arrogantly upon the humble villager and it imposed on the child who spoke only Quechua a language that he wasn't acquainted with. Despised, Quechua, the imperial language, the language of men, was relegated to the periphery of all possible culture. It wasn't worth while to teach the A,B,C's in the language of the community. That inferior language had to be eliminated, the community had to be subordinated to orders from Lima; it had to renounce its tradition, its soul."⁶

Despite the long neglect and the negative policy of the official regimes during the years, there were some modest beginnings and some important research going on in Peru even before the Revolución of 1969. Beginning in 1945, missionary groups in collaboration with the Department of Linguistics at the University

⁵Alberto Escobar, "Lingüística y Política," p. 15 in Alberto Escobar, Op. Cit.

⁶Francisco Miró Quesada C., "Prologo a la Edición de Cartillas de Quechua de Ayacucho," in Veinte Años al Servicio del Perú: Publicación Conmemorativa del Instituto Lingüístico de Verano (No place: 1966), p. 25. Miró Quesada's remarks dated 1964, Lima.

of Okalahoma worked cooperatively with the Ministry of Education to carry out research in linguistics and pedagogy and to teach Spanish as a second language to Quechua and other indigenous language speakers.⁷

There were also independent isolated efforts by imaginative teachers such as Prof. José Luque at the Núcleo Escolar at Quinoa who experimented with methods and materials to teach reading via Quechua, and Spanish as a second language.⁸

But beyond these modest undertakings, the picture was bleak, and the official policy was that Spanish was the national language, and that instruction everywhere at all ages had to be in Spanish no matter what the native language of the children.⁹

With the advent of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces (RGAF), the old language policy no longer served the social, political or educational goals of the regime. As Arnove has pointed out:

"The most powerful determinant of political integration or alienation is ultimately the socio-political reality of a country. Individuals' attitudes toward the political system are largely shaped by the opportunity structure in a society, by the resources and services available to them, and by the mechanisms that exist to make claims on their society."¹⁰

⁷Ibid.

⁸Personal visit 1964.

⁹The exception to this were the few courses in Quechua language and literature at the University level, especially at the Universidad de Huamanga and at San Marcos.

¹⁰Robert F. Arnove, "Political Participation in Latin America." (Comparative Education Review, Vol. 17, No. 2, June 1973) p. 210.

The old policy of denial of access was on its way out, and the RGAF recognized very quickly the need for a change. As Safa has shown, national integration of plural societies often requires an overthrow of the traditional elites and

"its substitution by an institutional system that represents the subordinate elements and is justified by a new ideology."¹¹

In its search for the "new Peruvian man," the RGAF turned to a new language policy.

Peru's New Language Policy

The development of the new Peruvian language policy has its origins deep in the social and political history of the nation. Writers on social, political and philosophical themes (Mariátegui,¹² Carlos Delgado,¹³ A. Salazar Bondi¹⁴) and others have joined the linguistic researchers in adumbrating the policy outlines that were crystallized into the new General Law of Education (Decreto Ley 19326 of March 1972).

The law in its statement of motives on the National Condition and Educational Policy is unique as an action-oriented social treatise. Even allowing for the rhetoric inherent in

¹¹Helen Icken Safa. "Education and National Integration," in M. Wax, S. Diamond, and F. Gearing, Anthropological Perspectives on Education, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1971), p. 210.

¹²José Carlos Mariátegui, Op. Cit.

¹³Carlos Delgado, Testimonio de Lucha, (Lima: Biblioteca Peruana, 1973).

¹⁴Augusto Salazar Bondi, "La Cultura de la Dominación," in Documentos de Trabajo, (Lima: INIPM No. 1, Ministerio de Educación, 1972).

such documents, one is struck by the adherence of its statements to the peculiarity of the Peruvian situation. With respect to language policy, it sets the stage with:

"It is understood that the reform, in order to be profoundly humanistic, must be defined as a movement oriented towards development and structural changes in Peruvian society and consequently in the liberation and affirmation of our national being..."

And then it strikes at the heart of what Peru believes to be the essence of a new language policy for education:

"The rigid uniformity, the dependence on authority and lack of initiative have traditionally bound Peru to a truly colonial mentality and regime which strengthened the domination of the metropolis over the sectors which were further away from the centralized power. The uniformity of the methods and the lack, or frustration, of local initiative are other negative aspects of this system of cultural imposition. Hence, also, the need to overcome the present urge to spread the Spanish language and the contempt for native vernacular by establishing a system of bilingual education as a preliminary process to an easier, more certain and more permanent spreading of the Spanish language and better understanding and appreciation of the cultural patterns of each ethnic group..

"This concern for the creation of a popular and traditional Peruvian culture is not unique to the Education Reform, but rather it fully bears out the spirit of cultural renewal which is deeply rooted in the critical awareness of our society's alienation and the need to build an original and vigorous national culture. Hence this Decree Law is directed toward the overthrowing of cultural domination and the liberation of the creative and expressive abilities of the Peruvian, which education must insure and promote."¹⁵

¹⁵ Ley General de Educación (Decreto Ley No. 19326, Lima, March 1972 - Ministry of Education) (Unofficial Translation). (Italics in the original.)

The language policy itself is spelled out in a booklet published by the Ministry of Education and entitled, "National Policy of Bilingual Education."¹⁶

It begins by relating how in the early days right after the conquest, there was great interest in indigenous languages, but that this was soon overwhelmed by the drive to hispanicize the population and to unify the people under a single pattern. Yet, despite this attempt to "extirpate the vernacular," its stubborn resistance showed that another approach had to be taken: i.e. the new policy.¹⁷

The booklet then cites the new General Education Law, and points out that despite the new look, the movement to hispanicize the population will continue:

"Hispanicization of the entire population will be carried out, respecting the cultural personality of the diverse groups which make up national society, and utilizing its language as a vehicle of education."¹⁸

Bilingualism is defined as the use of two or more languages.¹⁹ Further, it means in Peruvian policy the existence in geographic space of two languages without meaning automatically that each inhabitant will use more than one language.²⁰

On the individual level it means the use of two or more

¹⁶Ministerio de Educación, Política Nacional de Educación Bilingüe, (Lima: Dirección Central de Publicaciones, 1972), pp. 32

¹⁷Ibid. p. 1

¹⁸Ibid. p. 2

¹⁹Ibid. p. 4

²⁰Ibid. p. 5

languages, whether acquired at home or in school. The document briefly outlines the socio-cultural context of the new policy: national under-development, cultural pluralism of various "disoriented" and "semi-integrated" cultural groups, and linguistic pluralism wherein:

"An important part numerically of the population speaks a language of European origin, Spanish. Another equally important part of the Peruvian population speak exclusively or in bilingualism with Spanish, numerous languages of American (New World) origin."²¹

There are six policy guidelines²² as follows:

- (1) Bilingual Education refers primarily to the population speaking the vernacular, and not to second language learning by other groups in the academic sense.
- (2) Bilingual Education will take place within a socio-economic context with emphasis on revaluing cultural patterns. Literacy and Hispanicization programs as an academic endeavor outside of this framework are "unproductive and undesirable."
- (3) Bilingual Education is aimed at the formation of a "critical conscience" among the members of a community, and to avoid the imposition of an exclusive cultural model. It is aimed at achieving a cultural plurality in the country in terms of equality.
- (4) Bilingual Education is linguistically oriented so that it promotes the learning of the broadest socially accepted dialect without denigrating or erradicating lesser valued dialects.
- (5) The vernacular will be used in education in the respective areas, depending on the peculiar situation.

²¹Ibid. p. 8

²²Ibid. pp. 9-10 (paraphrased here in English)

- (6) Present bilingual programs will be re-oriented to comply with the new policy.

The aims of the policy are three:²³

- (1) "To promote, in vernacular language communities, the critical interpretation of its socio-economic reality to achieve its conscious, creative and spontaneous participation in the process of structural change oriented towards the elimination of the mechanisms of dependency and domination."²⁴
- (2) "To contribute to the formation of a new man in a just and dignified society by means of the reinterpretation of the cultural and linguistic pluralism of the country, with an eye toward the creation of a national culture."
- (3) "To achieve the use of Spanish as the common language of the Peruvian population affirming, at the same time, respect for linguistic diversity and for the revaluation of the diverse vernacular languages."²⁵

With respect to policy implementation, the booklet identifies programs already under way and to the credit of the RGAF it shows that earlier work had already been done back in

²³Ibid. p.10 (Author's translation)

²⁴See also Paulo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) for a similar sentiment.

²⁵The third aim is not so inconsistent as it may seem. Central language policy is not unusual, e.g. "It does not follow, of course, that requiring minorities to learn the majority language need be put down to linguistic imperialism. In modern conditions, most countries feel the need for a common medium of communication, both for practical purposes and to obviate the disintegration of the national unit. Even systems which positively encourage minority languages require all school children to learn the national language, or try to." Nigel Grant, "Education and Language," in J. Lowe, N. Grant, and T. Williams, Education and Nation-Building in the Third World, (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1971), p. 184.

1953 and 1965 in the Selva and Sierra respectively. Implementation is to be carried out through bilingual schools, in-service education courses for bilingual teachers, occupational training centers, community development education centers, and through community development projects. In addition, research and development projects in universities located in Ayacucho, Lima and Cusco are highlighted.

The booklet mentions also some of the deficiencies which must be taken into account such as lack of specialized personnel, lack of coordination, methods, materials, and supervision to guarantee full implementation. Nevertheless, the last part of the booklet contains a section on strategy and shows the actions outlined for the years 1972-1975, in terms of organization, conversion, personnel, studies and research, and infrastructure.

At the very end of the booklet there is a glossary of terms and an organization chart, showing the relationship of the bilingual programs to the other structures in the Ministry. It is appropriate to examine and comment briefly on the implementation of this new policy and on its significance.

Aspects of Implementation

The realities of implementation of Peru's new language policy are formidable. An implementation program will involve not only the development and publication of materials of instruction, but also the creation of a new methodology and a new way

of thinking among the teaching staff.

Many Peruvians, especially those living in Lima and the bigger cities on the coast, believe that all that is required is an instructional program and an accompanying methodology. They assume that Quechua speakers, for example, form a monolithic block, but this is not so. The linguists who have studied these matters report marked differences in the dialects of Quechua:

"As a matter of fact, there are forms of Quechua which are, from an impressive point of view, so different among themselves as French is to Spanish, and in one area of Central Peru (the border between Junin and Huancavelica) those forms of Quechua appear in geographically contiguous zones."²⁶

Moreover, the bilingual policy calls for attention to all language groups, not only to the Quechua and Aymara groups, but also to the more than twenty other language groups.

In the Sierra, which the author visited many times between 1964 and 1968, it seemed that many teachers were bilingual. If good rapport were established and if one showed interest in languages, they would reveal their knowledge. But at the time, knowledge of Quechua was not something teachers boasted about, and one never heard anything but Spanish spoken by the teachers in the school context.

Successful implementation of Peruvian language policy will require a well organized, well researched, determined

²⁶Gary Parker, "Falacias y Verdades Acerca del Quechua," in Alberto Escobar, Op.Cit., p. 112

program. The program itself must be designed into component parts that will deal with each unique context of language, environment, and culture. Furthermore, the crossover-transitional aspects must also be studied so that the obverse of the new policy, gradual hispanicization, can also be brought about.

There are certain risks inherent in the implementation of this new policy--risks associated with over-zealous or blind implementation. They are the same risks educators and developers experienced twenty and thirty years ago in the literacy campaigns: skills development in isolation and with no purpose but the development of the skills themselves, educational campaigns without development of other areas such as agriculture, health and civism, and a paternalistic imposition of unsought and often injurious outside values--now known as "internal colonialism."²⁷

As one reads the new language policy, one is impressed with the policy's humanistic,²⁸ social and anthropological underpinnings. But behind these well intentioned approaches lie the economic and, above all, the political motivations. As Arnove reminds us:

"Despite the extraordinary development efforts undertaken by the Peruvian military regime since 1968, a principal failing has been the limited degree of political mobilization which has occurred under the generals and the colonels."²⁹

²⁷Andre-Marcel d'Ans, "La Alfabetización y la Educación de los Pueblos de la Selva Peruana en la Perspectiva de su Porvenir Socio-económico" in Alberto Escobar, Op. Cit., p. 183

²⁸See especially Edgar Faure (Ed.) Learning to Be (New York: UNESCO, 1973) for concerns and language quite akin to some major aspects of Peruvian development policy.

²⁹Robert F. Arnove, Op. Cit., p. 212

Safa perceives another facet of national integration that goes beyond the development of political mobilization. She cites Richard Adams regarding the process of national integration in Latin America:

"National integration in Adams' terms thus becomes a conscious attempt by the government to break down community bonds that inhibit communication and control from the larger political system."³⁰

Yet beyond the political factor which one would expect to find in the present Peruvian situation, one is impressed by the skillful turning of linguistic, anthropological, and political literature to educational programs leading to increased political socialization. Peru has discovered "soul." It is using its new bilingual education policy to conjure up the myths³¹ of the past to promote a new sense of pride in the Peru of the present.

Summary

Since the establishment of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces in Peru in 1969, a new bilingual language education policy has emerged as part of the educational reform. Based on enlightened principles of cultural pluralism and ethnic reaffirmation as components for the creation of the "new Peruvian man," Peruvian educators have articulated an impressive, far-reaching language policy. Whether the policy can be successfully

³⁰Helen Icken Safa, Op. Cit., p. 208.

³¹Alejandro Ortíz Rescaniere, De Adaneva a Inkarri, Una Visión Indígena del Perú (Lima: Retablo de Papel, 1973).

implemented will depend on many factors, particularly on the research and development required to set up a workable system involving more than twenty dialects over a wide geographic area. Political necessity is a strong incentive in the present situation. The Peruvian experiment in bilingual education will present a rich research milieu for those interested in bilingual education, in the role of education in national integration, and in the blend of the social science disciplines for the analysis and illumination of an important social and cultural development program at the national level.

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