



Endangered Language: Chipaya

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Reasons

- It is a culture in which I have been very interested for many years.
- Although I have learnt about this culture before, I have never had the opportunity to investigate it by my own until now.
- I attended a class last semester where I had the chance to get to know latin american languages related to the one I am going to work on (p.e “Aymara”).
- Chipaya language shares a number of characteristic with other languages, for example Spanish.

Summary

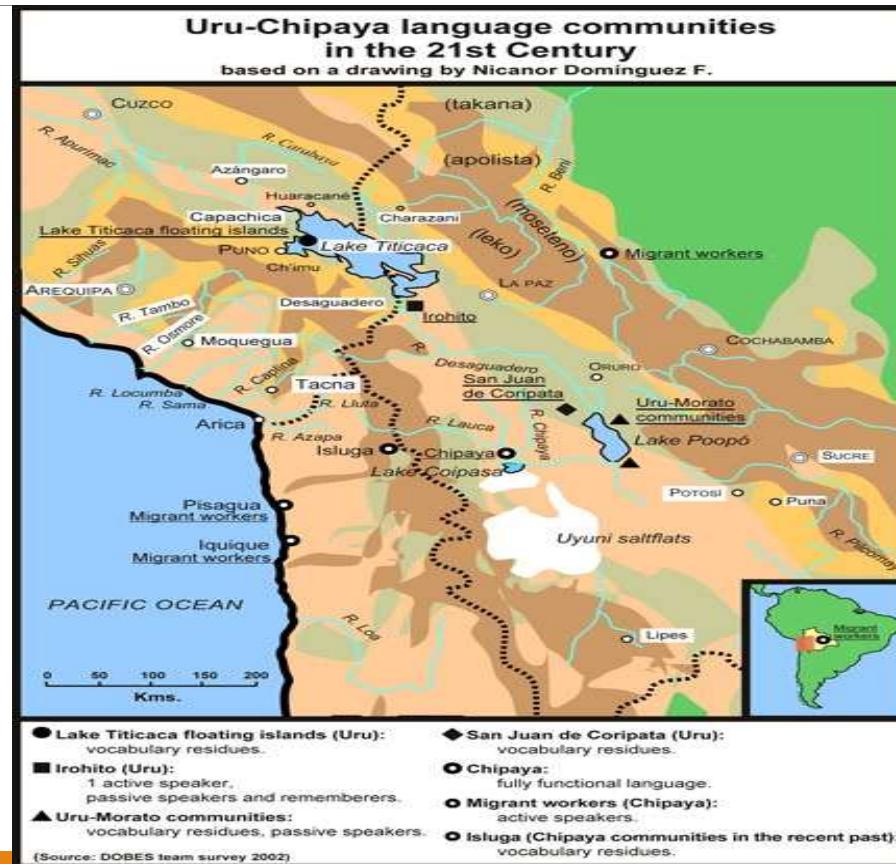
- 1) Chipaya language (concept).
- 2) History of Chipaya language.
- 3) Chipaya culture.
- 4) Linguistic characteristics: vocabulary, phonetics...
- 5) Example with video.

1) Chipaya language (concept)

Chipaya language comes from the **Uru-Chipaya family**. “Uru” is a dialect of Chipaya, although they have some differences, they share many cultural characteristics. It could be said that Chipaya language is **endangered** but based on Ethnologue list, there are still **1200** speakers.

Chipaya has grown around other Latin-American languages that is why it has been influenced by them, for example **Aymara** and **Qechua**, but also by international languages, like **Spanish**. It is used in the area of Lake Titicaca near the Desaguadero River and in the city of Chipaya, in **Bolivia**.

Geographic Location



2) History of Chipaya language

“Bueno werh tshi k'int'asača tukita timpu mathñillaź qamta – Well, I will tell you a story of the lives of the grandparents ...”

The history of this language **starts** around the **16th century** in the early colonial period. The place where it started was the Southern Central Andes, what today is Bolivia and Peru. It was also spoken around the Desaguadero River and in the Lake Titicaca, as we said before.

The first **documentations** that were found were in the **19th century**. This people survived the years of Spanish conquest because they fight to keep their traditions and culture, that is why it could be said that the Chipaya are **one of the most ancient people in South America**.

History or myth

This language and culture's origin has brought a lot of doubts. This quote introduces one theory of the beginning of the language:

“The first was the existence of a lake where the inhabitants of a nearby place used to come to hunt and fish and eventually construct a house called ch'ipa so that they wouldn't have to walk every time. Gradually they settled by the lake, thereby losing their access rights to where they had lived before. The Chipayas are related to the chullpas (ancient burial towers), their ancestors. These chullpas lived and worked by night and the light of the moon. When they started going to another village, Sabaya, they were captured. When communication was finally achieved (which was difficult because their language was different from that of the Aymaras) they were questioned by the priest about how and where they lived. According to their answers he gave them their surnames which they have kept until today.”¹

1 Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz, S., (May 2007), Chipaya mytho-history, Chipaya DOBES team .

History or myth

Although many theories cannot be proved, many researches have agreed in this statement:

“the origin of the community name and the localisation of the village, their origin as a people of land AND water, their particular language, their contact with and expropriation by the Aymaras, their relation to the chullpa ancestors, their Christianisation, and the origin of their family names.”²

So we can be sure that Spanish and Aymara, among other languages, have influences very much the Chipaya language.

² Dedenbach-Salazar Sáenz, S., (May 2007), Chipaya mytho-history, Chipaya DOBES team .

3) Chipaya Culture

Although the Chipaya people lived in a region that was usually based on agriculture, they based their food production on fishing and hunting mainly. Nowadays they still hunt and fish, in order to keep their traditions. Their subsistence is also based on the cultivation of quinoa and cañawa, two Andean crops. Many people from this area migrated to Chile in order to find work that is why after the beginning of the 1970s the community lost part of its inhabitants.

3) Chipaya culture

Now we are going to focus on one region where this language is spoken: Lake Poopó.

The chipaya people live in three communities on the Lake Poopó. Although as we said before their lifestyle is still based on fishing and hunting, now men often migrate temporarily to the city to find work. The people from this area live in poverty and they are usually discriminated by people around them because of their old traditions. They also have to face the contamination of Lake Poopó and the pollution, and the climate changes that is bringing.

The Chipaya see freedom as more important than land. They have always had conflicts with their neighbours, the Aymaras. This conflict was resolved when in 1970 the Chipaya gave them some of their lands.

4) Linguistics Characteristics

In order to maintain this language the DOBES team did a research where they described the language, based on help given by native speakers.

Focusing on the consonant system, we can see the next:

These consonants seem to have different pronunciations: [ś] ~ [śh], [ź] ~ [źh], [r] ~ [rh] the pronunciation differs depending on the context, which makes a closer study necessary. There also seems to be some uncertainty about articulation point of /s/ and /ś/ as well as about their status as single units of sounds.

** Labial consonants /kw/, /jw/ and /xw/ also exist, although these consonants are not represented in the Chipaya 2005 alphabet.

*** Olson & Olson (1962: 25) distinguish a voiced alveolar lateral (sounds made with the tongue) from a voiceless one.

Chipaya official alphabet 2005 (revised) Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar (DOBES team) May 2007

| articulation point | bilabial | alveolar | prepalatal | palatal | | velar | postvelar |
|--------------------------|----------|--|------------|----------------|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| | | | | retro- flex | + retro- flex | | |
| simple occlusive | p | t | | | | k** | q |
| aspirated occlusive | ph | th | | | | kh | qh |
| glottalised occlusive | pʰ | tʰ | | | | kʰ | qʰ |
| simple affricate | | ts | | ch | čh | | |
| aspirated affricate | | tsh | | chh | čhh | | |
| glottalised affricate | | tsʰ | | chʰ | čhʰ | | |
| fricative | | s | s* | | z* | j** | x** |
| nasal | m | n | | ɲ | | | |
| lateral | | l (voiced) lh (voiceless) *** | | ll | | | |
| vibrant | | r* | | | | | |
| semi consonant | w | | | y | | | |

Vowels

ALFABETO DE LA NACION "URU CHIPAYA, URU IRUHITO Y URU MURATO"

| FONEMAS CONSONANTES | | PUNTO DE ARTICULACIÓN | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| MODO DE ARTICULACION | BI LABIALES | DENTALES | ALVEOLARES | PREPALATALES | PALATALES | POS PALATALES | VELARES | POS VELARES |
| OCLUSIVAS SIMPLES | P parina | T tothi | TS tsars | ʃ ʃana | CH chara | | K kerka | Q qawni |
| OCLUSIVAS ASPIRIDAS | PH phasi | TH thami | TSH tshayi | SH shogi | CHH chhahi | CHH chhata | KH khañis | QH qhás |
| OCLUSIVAS GLOTALES | P' p'ata | T' t'anta | TS' ts'irqa | | CH' ch'ama | CH' che'ega | K' k'ari | Q' q'oñtu |
| FRICATIVAS | | | S sami | Z zofi | Z zhuki | CH chara | J jek | X xora |
| NASALES | M maska | | N noña | | N ñiri | | | |
| LATERALES | | | L las | LH lhuwa | LL lluch'uta | | | |
| VIBRANTES | | | R royta | | | | | |
| SEMI CONSONANTES | W wasi | | | | Y yaku | | | |

LAS VOCALES EN CHIPAYA

| | ANTERIOR | CENTRAL | POSTERIOR |
|-------|----------|---------|-----------|
| ALTA | i | | u |
| MEDIA | e | | o |
| BAJA | | a | |

Chipaya vocabulary

- Chipay taqu zizz pekutra- I want to learn the Chipaya language.
- Niikhu chhizwimi t'antami zheltra- There there is even meat and bread
- Amtrukzti ana wetkiz kriyimtruktra- You don't believe me
- Wertra amkiztanaki huk'anti thuptki- I am the strongest one.
- Nuzhullaqam anki am qhuya chertra- Your house looks the same.

5) Why do we have to take care of this culture?

We live in a globalized world, where the minority languages are not taken into account. These minority languages bring diversity to the world, they allow us to learn new cultures and history. Moreover, they also are an important part of someone's life, most of us speak international languages and do not feel the need of taking care of our language, but those people that speak languages that are used by the minority feel alone, because no one thinks of them. We also have to be aware that most of these languages are the ones that build the languages that are spoken nowadays, that is why we have to take care of our heritage.

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJjFNAFxpMA>

References

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<http://dobes.mpi.nl/projects/uru-chipaya/people/>

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