



# The Language of the Inka since the European Invasion (Texas Linguistics)

*Bruce Mannheim*

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The Inka empire, Tawantinsuyu, fell to Spanish invaders within a year's time (1532-1533), but Quechua, the language of the Inka, is still the primary or only language of millions of Inka descendants throughout the southern Andes. In this innovative study, Bruce Mannheim synthesizes all that is currently known about the history of Southern Peruvian Quechua since the Spanish invasion, providing new insights into the nature of language change in general, into the social and historical contexts of language change, and into the cultural conditioning of linguistic change.

Mannheim first discusses changes in the social setting of language use in the Andes from the time of the first European contact in the sixteenth century until today. He reveals that the modern linguistic homogeneity of Spanish and Quechua is a product of the Spanish conquest, since multilingualism was the rule in the Inka empire. He identifies the social and political forces that have influenced the kinds of changes the language has undergone. And he provides the first synthetic history of Southern Peruvian Quechua, making it possible at last to place any literary document or written text in a chronological and social context.

Mannheim also studies changes in the formal structure of Quechua. He finds that changes in the sound system were motivated primarily by phonological factors and also that the changes were constrained by a set of morphological and syntactic conditions. This last conclusion is surprising, since most historical linguists assume that sound change is completely independent of other aspects of language. Thus, *The Language of the Inka since the European Invasion* makes an empirical contribution to a general theory of linguistic change.

Written in an engaging style that is accessible to the nonlinguist, this book will have a special appeal to readers interested in the history and anthropology of native South America.

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