Social Subordination and Language

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Introduction

Q’upakama kashan, lliwta pichana mamita. It is full of garbage, you mamita need to sweep.
Mana q’upa kananchu, limphiw kanan, mana qhillipi tiyanachu. There must be no garbage, it has to be clean.
You should not live in the middle of filthiness.

As I listened to the above assertion made by a visitor to the household that was hosting me, I thought it was a disrespectful way to behave as a guest. But, to my surprise, the host responded to the visitor’s remark by quickly saying: ya siunuña (‘yes, miss’). My first thought was that the host was allowing herself to be patronized, but her quick answer was a formulaic one. After the visitor left she jokingly said: “quwichaq mihunan q’upalla paykunapaqqa” (“they always see the guinea pigs’ food as garbage”).

In the highlands of Peru, more than three million speakers of Southern Peruvian Quechua, the language of the Inka, continue to live cheek-by-jowl with descendants of their conquerors, strangers in their own land. Social subordination is built into the most mundane activities, reproducing macro levels of dominance over Native Andeans. Subordination is also channeled institutionally through schools, clinics, and other government-run institutions and programs.

Subordination – a habitual form of dominance by one party over another – happens on a daily basis in formal and nonformal situations, across racial/ethnic, gender, and class lines. Subordination is not only a consequence of abstract ideas about how a society must be organized; social subordination is also a consequence of mundane, daily embodied practices in which individuals are enmeshed above and below the threshold of awareness.

Native Andeans, together with other impoverished groups, are the primary target of public policies orchestrated by the state. The Peruvian state has instituted public policies to mitigate structural socioeconomic inequalities across different governments (e.g., Fujimori, Toledo, and Garcia). These policies include social programs such as comprehensive health insurance and allocations of food for school children. The programs are administered by local branches of government or municipalities. Under the leadership of the Ministerio de Desarrollo e Inclusión Social, the policies seek to improve the quality of life for the poorest citizens by promoting their rights and giving them access to opportunities and the means to develop their own abilities.
However, despite the well-intentioned state policies to address socioeconomic inequalities via social programs, such policies infringe directly on people’s private lives. The social programs actually foster the very social subordination they were designated to ameliorate.

The following section will examine one such program, called the ‘Expansion and Enhancement of Water and Drainage in the village of Uqhupata’ managed by the municipality of Santiago (Department of Cuzco). This includes a home visit program called Saneamiento Intradomiciliario (intra-domiciliary sanitation, hereafter visita domiciliaria or visita). The program actively intervenes in the homes of Quechua-speaking villagers to promote sanitary domestic habits. Municipal agents go door to door to inspect households. The agents inspect the homes and determine the levels of cleanliness according to criteria listed on the program’s surveillance form (hereafter SF). The SF has five headings for scoring the hygiene habits of villagers and their households: water, personal care, latrine, kitchen tidiness, and garbage.

The Kitchen: The Heart of the Quechua Household

The use of space in the home follows the logic of the villagers themselves. The kitchen is key to a villager’s sense of interiority. In a typical Andean household, the kitchen and the patio are places where household members spend most of their time. Quechua speakers take their meals, converse about their daily activities, and attend to their kin and co-villagers in the kitchen. The kitchen usually has a clay stove, a musk’a (stone mortar) and small corrals for quwi (guinea pigs). Each morning the female head of household will sit on a small wooden bench as she feeds the mouth of the clay stove with firewood. She places pots filled with the ingredients for the morning soup over each eye of the stove.

The distribution of material things within the kitchen and the patio lead household members to handle their business in a certain way. As Keane 2005: 194 suggests, material things instigate “(by virtue of [their] form, that is, iconic suggestion) . . . certain kinds of action,” but they do not determine them. The woman is prompted to sit on the bench that is present and the action of sitting close to the clay stove may further encourage carrying out other actions. Actions are thus constituted by the interplay of human agency and the surrounding material things (signs) that are components of the objective contexts for human action. The things that are part of the woman’s objective contexts (e.g., the bench, the pots, and the clay stove) have led her to adopt particular ways of accommodating and handling her body. These objects shape human beings “through comfort, demarcations of space, channeling movement and posture” (Keane 2006: 200).

Before examining how agents as guests and Quechua-speaking hosts handle the visita domiciliaria program in face-to-face interactions in Quechua-speaking households in Uqhupata, let me briefly outline the way households have been conceptualized in anthropology more generally.

Households: Brief Review

Since the beginnings of anthropology, the household was considered a structure that organizes social relations (Morgan 2003 [1881]). For example, Bourdieu (1990) considers the household a structure that itself structures bodily practices. Following Bourdieu, Carsten & Hugh-Jones (1995: 46) suggest that the household is a way buildings are connected to people and ideas – bringing together “architecture, kinship and cultural categories.” Mueggler (2001) conceptualizes the household as a structure that creates differential social relations and hierarchy. And Fox (2006: 5) suggests that households are animate entities that are important expressions of the kinship unit. Households are a forum for social relationships, and reflect power and dynamics of growth.
In Latin America, the house is an organized set of material practices described by “the vocabulary for the physical dwelling: the house as shelter is a metaphor for the house as economy” (Gudeman & Rivera 1990: 2). In addition, the home demonstrates the relationship between social practice and meaning (Gose 1990). In the Andes, the space surrounding the household has been understood as an extension of the personal space of its members. That is, unspoken “rules concerning the approach of visitors – whether they remain at the gate or enter the yard, patio, porch or house – reflect [strangeness or] social distance from household members” (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 3). Thus, the household can be understood as a sovereign space within which social and moral values are contained.

What it Means for a Quechua Household to Receive a Visit

For Quechua villagers the household is the space of all sociability. Villagers observe strict ceremonial behavior when properly receiving a guest in order to maintain boundaries and the sovereignty of the household, as well as to protect the household’s sacred interiority from exposure to “social critique.” The relationships between hosts and guests are also marked fairly strictly (Allen 1981).

Following the villagers’ own conventions about appropriate behavior on the part of both the guest and host is central to villagers’ sense of self, and sense of self-esteem. It is appropriate to offer food to guests, whether they are co-villagers or strangers. To omit to offer food would be considered a sign of rudeness or bad manners; just like for American Indian hosts, omitting to offer food “would have been a discourtesy amounting to an affront. If hungry, [the visitor] ate; if not hungry, courtesy required that he should taste the food and thank the giver” (Morgan 2003 [1881]: 45–48). Hospitality “creates a moral space in which outsiders can be treated as provisional members of the house, as aspects of” its sacred interiority (Shryock 2004: 36), because hospitality, as Shryock (2004: 37) points out, “creates a momentary overlap of the inner and outer dimensions” of a household. Offering cups of coffee, or food to welcome and please a guest configures the relationship between the host and guest.

Family Visits

Work-related visits among relatives occur early in the morning. Visitors would usually find their female relative busy cooking the morning meal. If a female relative is visited unexpectedly by a kinsman or kinswoman looking to confirm the exchange of work, she may deal with the sudden disruption of her sense of “interiority” by quickly facing her kin then returning to her task at hand. She would signal cordiality through short phrases suitable for the situation, thus keeping in line with social values of consideration if there is a visitor.

Visits take longer when relatives cross the threshold of the household. These visits can be characterized by generosity, warmness, and conviviality. Visits among kin follow the norms of hospitality, which include conventions and expected forms of behavior (Pitt-Rivers 1968: 16). Being hospitable and respectful are constituents of the social and moral values shared by relatives as members of the household and the village at large (Herzfeld 1987).

Partaking in hospitality can become risky to the extent that both guests and hosts could overstep their limits. Violations can occur, as I show in the Andean village of Uqhupata, when municipal agents rush into villagers’ households to carry out the visita. Let us examine two examples of interactions between agents and household members to show whether or not the way language is used undermines Quechua-speaking hosts.
Strangers’ Visits to Households

When a nonvillager steps into a household unexpectedly, announcing their presence with the word *visita* (visit), a household member runs toward the patio to attend to the visitor. The host keeps the visitor on the patio. Household members put a lot of energy into pleasing the visitor by offering a place to sit and by offering food. Sometimes, a nonvillager such as a municipal agent fails to reciprocate respect and consideration.

Agents demand that villagers comply with the *visita* program’s outline of cleanliness and attempts to inspect the household. Villagers maintain a hospitable attitude to reduce the chances of failing the inspection. Agents’ injunctive attitude (Goffman 1967: 25) toward their hosts compromises the values and code of conduct held by the household. The visits from municipal agents can interrupt the point of invading the household’s interiority and the household members’ personal interiorities.

As has been explained, agents – under the umbrella of the *visita* – inspect households to evaluate villagers’ level of cleanliness. The inspection is carried out based on criteria listed on the surveillance form (SF): consumption of water, personal and household hygiene, use of the latrine, kitchen tidiness, and garbage. Let us examine an example where the host openly challenges the *visita*.

Being Caught on the Patio

I am on the patio with my host Ñaña and her daughter Ususi, along with Ñaña’s sister Pani. We are chewing some *kuka* leaves. The patio has no fence and is visible to everybody from the road. Ususi is telling us about being scolded by an angry nurse. An agent appears on the road leading to the house, and is greeted as Ms Gas (G): 5 “*winus diyas siñurita Gas*” (“good morning siñurita Gas”). The host does not stand up to receive the agent, who enters the patio and glances around, carrying a clipboard with the SF in order to check cleanliness. Gas walks fleetingly by the unused toilet, the washing sink, and the kitchen door. She opens and closes the tap above the sink, and says “*muy bien, la pila funciona*” (“very good, the faucet works”).

After this comment she turns toward the host and adds:

9 G:  *Limphiw kayqa kanan. LIMPHIWTAWA*  G: This must be clean. You have to clean it.

MAQCHIRUNKICHIS.

[...]

The agent pushes the latrine door to open it but a startled chicken noisily emerges from inside. Gas notes something on the SF and turns to the host to speak:

11 G:  *Mirea pues(.) mana kayqa wallpa puñu- nanpaqchu. KAYQA BAÑUN USANAYKICHISPAQMI HISP’ANAYKICHISPAQMI.*

*Ya doña chay bañutawan limphiwta pichachiwanki AH (,) mañaña voy a volver*

G: Look at this. This is not for chickens to sleep in. This is a bathroom; you must use it. You must pee there. Okay doña, you will make somebody clean this bathroom; ah, it has to be done (leaving) I’ll come back tomorrow.

The agent was not welcome and was ignored by the host. Ñaña does not invite the agent to sit down and she does not stand to show the agent the kitchen. Ñaña silently observes and only the daughter responds laconically to the agent’s commands: “*Ya siñurita*” (“okay siñurita”).

The host’s unwillingness to receive the agent does not preclude the inspection. The agent inspects the sink and the latrine located on the patio. Her phrase “*limphiw . . . kanan*” (line 9) denotes that the sink must be cleaned with urgency. Ususi’s
response is noncommittal. The hen in the latrine prompted a louder injunction from the agent: “HISP’ANAYKICHISHPAQM” (“you must pee in the latrine” [line 11]). The injunctive and threatening last phrase “. . . limphiwta pichachiwanki AHI” expresses the authoritative demand in the name of cleanliness, and exposes the agent’s patronizing attitude that undermines the host in her own house.

Despite the host’s refusal to acknowledge the agent as a guest and her refusal to allow the scrutinizing visitor access to her kitchen, Ñaña could not prevent the agent from coming in and intruding on the household. The agent carries out her inspection and demands cleanliness in both Quechua and Spanish (line 11). Ñaña is scolded and humiliated. Her lack of response to the injunctions can be read as a stance against the agent’s actions, or as an act of giving up and allowing the agent to continue with her course of action.

Ñaña cannot escort her unwanted visitor out to the road as the Greek Glendiots did with guests from Texas who failed to recognize that “hospitality is not only a privilege, but one that confers a reciprocal obligation to offer respect” (Herzfeld 1987: 80–81). Ñaña is made powerless by the agent, who enters the house without consent. As an official, the agent can be bold and inspect every corner of the household if she wishes. The visita reaffirms the agent’s superordinate stance, while it subordinates the host.

The “law of hospitality,” in Pitt-Rivers’s (1968: 26) sense, is broken during the visita. The agent’s entry beyond the gate and attempt to enter the kitchen breaks the normative “social distance” that should be kept with strangers (Carsten & Hugh-Jones 1995: 3). The agent’s means of interrupting – and her use of language when demanding cleanliness – exceeds the bonds of a proper Quechua guest–host relationship. Such an interruption violates the household’s interiority.

The visita domiciliaria inadvertently reinforces the perception that villagers live in unhygienic conditions. Hence, villagers require professional assistance to change their habits and adopt a “clean” lifestyle. In the above examined interaction, villagers are depicted as filthy and in need of acquiring clean habits. This need to cleanse “unclean” Quechua practices, according to urban policies of cleanliness, is a “civilizing” project that aims to include villagers as members of the Peruvian citizenry. Let us examine a further example in which the civilizing project of cleanliness – embedded in the visita – violates not only villagers’ household sovereignty, but the host’s personal interiority as well.

A Friendly Visit

It is around 9:30 a.m. Sasiku and I are chewing kuka leaves in her kitchen. We hear a female voice (A) calling out:

12 A: Doña(,) Doña Sasiku(?)
A: Doña(,) Doña Sasiku(?)

Wrapping up her bag of kuka leaves, Sasiku hurries to the patio to attend to the unexpected visitor. The municipal agent is already standing on the patio. Sasiku (Sa) greets her: “winus diyas siñurita” (“good morning siñurita”), takes her sweater off to lay it on a rock, and says: “chaychapi tiyakuy siñurita” (“please siñurita sit down over there”). The visitor sits down, smiles, and says “gracias” (“thanks”). She points out:

[ . . . ]

15 A: Mamita visita AH (,) VISITA DOMICILLARIA ña yanchkichisña riki(?)
A: Little mama [this is] a visit ah(,) [This is a] house visit (,) you are familiar with this already right(?)
The visitor warns the host that the *visita* is necessary to ascertain whether her household meets municipal guidelines for a “hygienic house.” The agent will examine the organization of the household and check for cleanliness, inspecting the tableware, kitchen and latrine. In this context, the Spanish word “*mamita*” signals that the host is in a lower position and has to comply with this official surveillance. The phrases “*visita AH*” and “*VISITA DOMICILIARA*” convey the purpose of the visit and give it legitimacy (line 15). To avoid any doubts, the agent explains using Quechua that everybody in the village is familiar with the *visita domiciliaria* program. The host utters “*aha*” (“yes”), implying that she cannot reject an official visit.

While the agent fills in some general data on the SF (information like the geographical location and date), the host grabs a stick from a pile of eucalyptus firewood and walks toward her kitchen, with the agent following behind her. There, the agent stands near the threshold of the door and says:

16 A: Y::: este- como se llama- de una vez A: And::: this- how can I say- I will proceed right away with the supervision *mama*(.)

After some hesitation, the visitor informs the host of her intention to proceed with the inspection “*de una vez*”; the agent uses Quechua towards the end to soften the nature of the intrusion (line 16). The use of Quechua, however, does not bring the agent “closer” to the villagers and it does not lead to her acceptance as a temporary member of the household. The agent notices the *quwi* that Sasiku is preparing and remarks that it looks delicious. Sasiku looks for a bench to offer her guest and places her sweater on the doorway in response to a request from the visitor. The visitor manages to sit where she likes. The guest is offered a plate of cooked *muraya*. After saying thanks, the visitor eats a couple of *muraya* and puts the rest in a plastic bag to store in her backpack. Returning to the list in the SF, the agent translates the Spanish into Quechua and announces:

18 A: *Imaynataq practikashankichis wasipi chayllatan tapuyusayki doñita ya(?)* A: *Doñita I’ll ask you about how you are exercising ((cleanliness)) okay(?) ((follows the SF written guide))*

19 Sa: °*Ya siñurita*° Sa: *Okay siñurita* ((feeds the stove’s mouth with firewood))

20 A: *Ya doña Sa:: Sasiku no(?)* A: *Okay doña Sa:: Sasiku, right(?)*

22 A: *May bien, kaypi ununchismana rimariyusun khunan(,) unu-batiyan-chispis(,) ununchispis khashan riki(,) khunangqa qankuna limpiesata-limpiesatan riki practikanaykichis(?)* A: *Very well, now we’ll talk about our water(.) we have our washbowl and our water right(.) now you have to practice cleanliness-cleanliness right(?)*

23 Sa: °*Ah°* Sa: *Yes ((peeling muraya and putting them into a pot))*

24 A: *Orden wasipipis(.) wawakunapis limpiw kananku(.) timpuchata hap’iyurukuspaqa munayta wawakuna-tapas allinta aistana mamita ya(?)* A: *The house has to be organized(.) and the children must be clean (.) you find the time to clean the children nicely okay mamita(?)*

25 Sa: °*Ya°* (siñurita) Sa: *Yeah (siñurita)*

26 A: Primera visitapiqa asta- mana allinta tarishaykichis (.) pero huq visitapiqa ñacha mihurña visita kamunqa ya(?) A: *In this first visit un- I’m not finding you all organized and cleaned, but in the next visit everything has to be better okay(?)*
The agent sets the topics of the conversation (line 18). She points out that the house has every-thing needed to “cultivate” hygienic practices (line 22). The agent finds the host’s house and children are not sufficiently neat or clean. She demands more obvious effort at cleanliness on her next visit. Most of the time the host assents to what the agent is recommending. If we follow the interaction between the agent and Sasiku, we learn how the host is subordinated despite the interaction occurring in Saskiku’s own house. The agent addresses the host as “doñita,” “doña,” “mamita” (lines 18, 20, 24); these address forms place individuals in a lower position in relation to their interlocutors. The Spanish diminutive “ita” in the first and third words denotes a con-descending attitude towards the host. The host addresses her interlocutor consistently as siñurita (lines 19, 25, 31, 33, 35, 41), which denotes distance and respect. By doing this the host expects the agent to behave kindly, as is expected from an educated professional. The forms of address used in this interaction reinforce the host’s lower position vis-à-vis the agent.

In line 22 the agent implies that in the past the household and its members were not clean. But the use of “khunanqa” (“now”) signals that this should no longer be the case. The household now has the means to practice hygiene. Hence, hygiene should be the “norm”; the children and the household should be clean and tidy respectively: “limpiesa . . . praktikanaykichis” (“you must practice cleanliness”). Such activities should be obvious to any visitor such as the agent. The phrase in line 26 denotes that the household and its members do not meet the criteria for cleanliness. The agent expects to find conditions improved on the next visit.
The focus on the task at hand downplays the encroachment of the agent into the house. Throughout the conversation, the host continues to feed the mouth of the stove with firewood and tends to the roasted guinea pig. She also peels *muraya*, and so forth. The host responds laconically to her interlocutor’s questions and injunctions while carrying out her tasks. She tries to keep her sense of interiority, thus her lack of interest in the agent’s enquiries. The lack of interest is noticeable in the host’s response to the question about the regular chlorination of the water (line 28), for example “*nusi imaynacha kakpunpas*” (“I have no idea”), and “*mana . . . riparanichu*” (“I haven’t noticed”) (lines 31, 33).

It is the agent’s insistence (lines 32, 34, 36) that compels the host to pay attention to the agent’s question on water quality. The host recalls a past event from months ago when the water appeared “milky” (line 39). The milky appearance provides proof that the water has been chlorinated. The agent uses the opportunity to scold the host: “*Manaya mana ninki-mana riparanichu*” (line 42). The host should not say “I haven’t noticed”; she should speak “the truth,” given that she is able to notice whether or not the water has been chlorinated. It implies that the host’s responses in lines 31 and 33 are not accurate answers. The agent continues asking:

43 A: *Unuykita este- waqayanchikichu icha diriktamente pilitamantachu tumanki?*  
A: Your water, eh- do you keep water in buckets or do you drink it straight from the faucet?

44 Sa: *Ummm- pilitamanta siñurita purunguchapi aysayakamuspalla tumaykuqa.*  
Sa: Mmm- in order to drink water we fetch it in a gourd-shaped vessel.

45 A: *Ya, muy bien.*  
A: Okay, very good.

47 A: *Ya, batiyayki khunan:: fonctionashanchu limphiwchu kashan?*  
A: Okay is your sink clean and in working condition now? ((keeps filling in the SF))

48 Sa: >Khunallanmi chikuchay siñurita papata maychhiramuran chaypi<  
Sa: Just now my child has washed potatoes there

49 A: *Ya, voy a ver ahorita ya. (%) higiene personal dice si se había limpiado la señora (%) se había base habia peinado us- tutamantan ñaqch’aruskankiña umaykita he?*  
A: Okay I’ll check that in few minutes ((reading the SF)) it said personal hygiene if the woman has cleaned herself up. If she- if she has combed- at dawn you have already combed your hair right?

50 Sa: *Ya siñurita*  
Sa: Yes siñurita

51 A: *Allinmi(%) allinmi(%) chay practikana mamá sapa unchay chay limpiesata wawakunawanpas ya?*  
A: Very good, very good. Mamá that kind of hygienic habit has to be practiced everyday also with the children, okay?

52 Sa: *Ya siñurita*  
Sa: Yeah siñurita

53 A: *Makichanchista imakunapaq maqchikunchis mamita?*  
A: Why do we wash our little hands mamita?

56 Sa: *Wayk’unapaq primirta siñurita maqchikuna.*  
Sa: We have to wash our hands before cooking siñurita.

57 A: *Ya, muy bien.() lavadonri hap’ispachu(%) pilitapichu directamente?*  
A: Yes, very good. Do you wash them in a bucket or right in the sink?

58 Sa: *Aywis siñurita pilitapi(%) aywisqa lavadonpipas*  
Sa: Siñurita sometimes we wash in the sink, and sometimes in the bucket

59 A: *Ya muy bien.*  
A: Okay, very good.
61 A: Ya muy bien(,) na- WAWAKUNATA ASTAWAN mamita idukana ya(?)

62 Sa: "Ya siñurita"

63 A: Siempre mihunapaqqa lipin chiku- wawachaykimunata phaway makichaykichista maqchikamuychis nispa

[...]

65 A: Makinchispi contaminación kashan imaymana unquykuna ya(?)

66 Sa: "Ya siñurita" /

67 A: /Ya wawakunapaq mas que nada(,) uu- tutaymanta hatarimsapas simichankuta ima maqchikunanku(,) primeramente paykuna(,)

68 Sa: Aha

69 A: /Ya wawakunapaq mas que na da(.) uu- tutaymanta hatarimuspapas simichankuta ima maqchikunanku(,) primeramente paykuna(,)

70 Sa: Ma:: na:: i- wawakunaq hisp'asqaun siñurita kashan(,) unuwanqa hich'ayamunku(,) hisp'ayspankuqa

71 A: Ya(,) limphiwchu mamita kunallan kashan(,) manachu(?) ((keeps filling in the SF))

72 Sa: Mana siñurita(,) °baldipi hap'ikuspaykupuniya hich'ayuyku°

73 A: Ya(,) muy bien, chay allin kashan ya(,) wawakunata primeramente bañuta haykqtinkuqa makichaykichista maqchikuychish(,) paykunata primiruta ninayki

74 Sa: "Ya siñurita"

A: Okay, very well(,) the- mamita children have to be educated more and more, okay(?)

Sa: Yeah siñurita

A: Always before eating, all chil- you make your children wash their hands by telling them to do so

Sa: "Our" hands are contaminated, they are the source of many diseases, okay(?)

Sa: Yeah siñurita

A: Okay, we have to be careful for the sake of the children(.) early in the morning they have to wash their mouths before anybody else

Sa: Yes

A: If the children see that their parents keep hygienic practices- for sure- they will know what to do every morning(.) okay doníta(?)

Sa: [... ]you have a latrine right(?)

Sa: Yes, there is one siñurita

A: Okay(.) right now it is clean(.) or not(?)

((keeps filling in the SF))

Sa: No:: ne:: e- the children have used it siñurita(,) but when they use it(.) afterwards they pour water

A: Okay(.) I’ll check it in a moment(?)

Sa: Okay siñurita

A: So you use the latrine

Sa: Yes, we use it

A: Okay(.) when you are done in the latrine señora- what you do?

Sa: Of course we wash our hands siñurita(,) the faucet is also there siñurita

A: I expect you are not opening the faucet to make the stool pass(.) right(?)

Sa: No siñurita(,) we fetch water in a bucket to pour water in the latrine

A: Okay(,) very good, that is good(.) you have to say to children first that after using the latrine they have to wash their hands

Sa: Okay siñurita
At this point in the interaction, the host responds attentively to the agent’s questions (e.g., line 44 and onward). The host’s answers satisfy the agent, which is denoted by “very good” and “okay” (e.g., lines 45, 49, 57, 59). Following the SF, the agent shifts attention to the working condition of the sink and its cleanliness (line 47). The sink may not be “clean” given that the host’s child had washed potatoes there, leaving traces of soil (line 48). This answer prompts the agent to check the hygienic conditions of the sink (line 49). In line 49, again following the SF, the agent makes sure that the host’s hair is combed by asking if she combed it early this morning. The agent’s injunctive phrase “praktikana . . . sapa unchay chay limpiesata” (line 51) denotes that combing your hair is a sign of hygiene, a practice that must be embraced by all the household’s members. Such a routine is interlaced with awareness on why “we” must wash our hands. To ask the host why she should wash her hands would be regarded as disrespectful behavior in any guest–host relations. Nonetheless, the host is subject to the agent’s questioning (e.g., line 53) despite the fact that all this is taking place in Sasiku’s house.

The agent’s repeated questions about hand washing lead the host to remark that “of course one washes ones hands to cook” (line 56). After the agent asks where one should wash one’s hands, the host quickly informs the agent that she and her family wash them in the sink or in a bucket, depending on how much time they have. The injunction that the host’s children must be taught about hygienic habits implies that children have to be habituated to washing their hands before meals (lines 61, 63). “Our” hands are contaminated; they are the source of different illnesses (line 65). The agent goes on to stress that children must also brush their teeth as soon as they get up (line 67). Children would fall into the habit of washing their hands and face if their parents do the same (line 69). The implication is that currently children are not socialized to adopt hygienic habits because of their parents neglecting to teach them.

The agent continues to review the SF and asks about the latrine and its cleanliness (lines 72, 74). The latrine has been used by the host’s children and the host is not sure if water was poured properly (line 75). Thus, it will be inspected by the agent (line 76), who asks whether they are washing their hands after using the latrine (line 80), which prompts a strong response “makitaya . . . maychikuyku” (line 81). This sentence connotes that people know for sure they have to wash their hands after using the toilet. What is more, they know that water should be fetched in a bucket to pour in the toilet and keep it clean (line 85). Despite the host’s confident responses to the questions about hand washing, the agent stills maintains a patronizing attitude and insists that the host instructs the children to wash their hands after using the latrine (line 86). Finally, the agent shifts attention to the cleanliness of the kitchen.

88 A: [. . . ] utensilio kusaskunata maypi waqaychanki mamá (?) Sa: Sirvishu kusasniykuna sínurita anchaycallapi “sínurita(.) misachaypi kashap”
90 A: Ya (,) aschatawan mihurayusun mamá ya (?) Sa: “Ya sínurita”
92 A: Phurarunki plastikuchawan(,) chayman p’aqtinki platukunata, huq laduchaman tasatapas(.) mihuytataq huq larupi hap’inki ya (?) Sa: ya sínurita su/

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The agent’s self-response in Spanish “la cocina . . . no está ordenada” shows the kitchen is not tidy according to official standards. The agent asks about the tableware. She is directed to a table and a wooden crate (line 89) placed at the left side of the doorway. After pulling aside a plastic curtain to inspect the tableware, the agent states that there needs to be improvements made (line 90). The crate must be covered with plastic, with the plates placed face down. The mugs should be placed next to them. The raw food has to be stored separately (line 92). The host is instructed she should make these changes before the next visita (line 94). However, the host indicates with her index finger that the tableware is kept in the crate and the food is stored on the ledge above it (line 95). The agent stands up to check the utensils and approves of their state, but she highlights that things need more organization to comply with cleanliness criteria (lines 96, 98). The food should also be protected with a piece of plastic. The agent sits in the doorway again and continues asking:

100 A: Kurral animalniykikunapaq kan eh?
101 Sa: Kaypiqa mana siūrita animalniyku "kanchu" Llawlliq’asa larupi animalniykuqa.
102 A: Ya(.) muy bien (.)
103 Sa: Kaypiqa tiyaku quwichallantinya siūrita(.) quwichantin michichallantin(.)
104 A: Ya(.) el patio alrededor limpiwchu(?) falta(.) falta mamá limpieza(.) ama chhaynachu tiyachisch(.) chay nata este- latakunatapas siq’akunatapas huk laduman k’uchunay(.) wawakunaq libre purinanpaq ya(.)
105 Sa: Ya siūrita
106 A: Por favor(.) basuruta imata muwashankichis doña:: Sa- Sasiku(?)
107 Sa: Mm:: geyninpapa siūrita karru kasqa(.) chaymanya dispachayku(.)
108 A: Ya(.) agnatapun siq’akunapi por favor huñunkichis ya(.)
On having animals and keeping them penned in, the host informs the municipal agent that her animals are kept elsewhere, which the agent approves of readily. Regarding guinea pigs and cats, the host is self-assured and asserts that all villagers share their kitchen with them: “kaypiqa . . . quwichantin michillantin tiyayku” (line 103). These animals are not a problem for them. Faced with this response, the agent makes no further comments, instead she asks about the patio’s cleanliness. Glancing at the patio, the agent forcefully highlights that it is by no means clean: “falta . . . limpieza” (line 104). The authority with which she is vested to guide villagers towards a “hygienic life” is denoted in the injunctive phrase “ama chhaynachu tiyaychis” (line 104). The phrase connotes that the host has to develop hygienic habits and that the villagers change their “unclean” houses. Even cans and plastic bags should be kept in one place. The host’s response on the collection and disposal of garbage satisfies the agent (line 106), who asserts approvingly that garbage must always be collected (line 108). After filling in Sasiku’s name on the SF, the agent goes on to inspect the latrine, the sink and the faucet. She comes back to the kitchen doorway and points out the following:

112 A: No deben de echar tierra al baño(.) A: You shouldn’t put soil in the latrine(.) there [ . . . ]

The agent’s scolding, first in Spanish and then in Quechua, denotes that the addressee must “understand” that soil is a sign of filthiness and a latrine must be free of any traces of soil. The louder voice denotes the authority of the agent to proceed as she wants. The procedures subordinate the host to the visita requirements of cleanliness. The host, however, is more interested in roasting the quwi than addressing the agent’s concerns. The agent asks the host for her fingerprint in lieu of a signature on the SF, after which the agent assigns a score to the level of the household’s cleanliness. She is not asked to stay to share the quwi. Not sharing food would be unthinkable for villagers under other circumstances. The visitor maintains her condescending attitude while leaving, warning that the tableware has to be kept clean. After the agent departs, Sasiku pulls out her kuka leaves and we continue chatting.

Even though the municipal agent has trespassed upon the boundaries of the household, the host manages to connote her lack of interest by continuing her activities even while she is policed on how the housekeeping should be handled. The terms of the relationship between the host and the visitor were established at the onset of the visit. The visitor assumed an official presence in order to carry out the visita domiciliaria. The host villager cannot decline an official visit, and as a consequence the host is forced to resign herself and open her household for the inspection. The inspection disrupts the household’s and its members’ interiority, which undermines the power of the host’s stewardship over her own household.

Coda

In both official visits the hosts are treated as subjects of subordination, i.e., contentious relations of domination are produced in the interactions between hosts and guests that are evident in the languages used (spoken Quechua and Spanish). In the first case, the visita is carried out despite the host not explicitly granting permission to have the house inspected. The agent goes ahead and inspects the sink and the toilet anyway, but she could not inspect the kitchen nor ask the host about cleanliness more generally in order to complete the information necessary on the SF. The host ignores the official visitor’s surveillance, which can be read as act of resistance.

In the second example, the visitor does not subordinate herself despite the hospitality offered, although this would be normal custom and expected behavior in a Quechua household.
Rather, it is the host who is subordinated despite being in her own home. The host acquiesces, but doesn’t fully engage with the visitor’s agenda by continuing to cook and replying with short responses. That is, the host’s actions play down the *visita*.

The construction of the sewage system and accompanying latrines to improve villagers’ lives transgress the heart of the villagers’ households (and consequently, the personhood of the householders) through the *visita domiciliaria*. The construction unknowingly led villagers to submit themselves to the demands of cleanliness, which reinforced the ideology that Quechua-speaking people live enmeshed in filthiness and “stench” by nature. To “remedy” this situation the *visita* seeks to make sure that water is chlorinated and kept clean; that households’ members practice cleanliness; that latrines are used and kept clean; that kitchens are tidy and free of *quwi*; that patios have no feces around; and that garbage is collected.

The discourse on cleanliness connotes that villagers live in unhygienic conditions and that their life is full of filth, which is instantiated through spoken Quechua and Spanish. In such a discourse the “stench” of households must be removed by sanitizing measures, that is, by regimenting households to urban ideologies of housekeeping and cleanliness.10 The *visita* is invasive and it infringes on the host’s intimate life and the household’s sovereignty. In both cases the *visita* reveals relations of subordination that unfolds during the inspection.

Quechua-speaking women are placed in the lowest social position within the Peruvian social hierarchy; they are seen as objects of subordination by those placed in a superordinate position. This subordination is channeled unintentionally by institutions such as the municipality of Cuzco. For instance, the large-scale subordination of Quechua women is not inverted in the *visita* when they receive visitors in their households. Hospitality is not “a means of [articulating and inverting] a pattern of domination at one and the same time,” as is proposed by Herzfeld 1987: 77. Or better, relations of domination are articulated in both visits but domination is not inverted. Rather, open and conflicting ways of subordinating hosts take place through the enactment of the scripted words of the SF, and agents’ superordinate stance.

What is more, interactions between the agents as guests and the villagers as hosts in Quechua households do not yield “some approximation to equality” (Dresch 2000: 117). In the household-centered events, interactions are most of the time under the visitor’s control. In both events the set of conventions that combine the “rule of self-respect and the rule of considerateness” are not maintained (Goffman 1967: 10). The conduct of the visitors is not considerate, nor do they reciprocate respect. Rather, the patterns of hospitality that normally engender respect are demoted in the Quechua households.

The *visita* violates Quechua-speaking women’s own interiority and the sacred interiority of households. The hosts understanding of households’ space, organization, distribution, and use is affected. Even the act of chewing *kuka* leaves11 is affected. The *visita* is a process of changing household members’ own personal organization and relationships with the household’s space and forms of housekeeping. The household, particularly the kitchen, is the center where main events of life take place, events that include cooking, birthing, raising children and acquiring, adulthood, attending to a kin, agreeing or disagreeing with a mutual work obligation, and learning the everyday basis of being a member of a Quechua-speaking village.

The moral foundations and social values of households is eroded by the *visita*, affecting the code of conduct of households’ members and violating Quechua norms of reciprocity. This in turn affects the village at large. It is an assault on the host’s sovereign territory and the host’s autonomy; it is also a system of regulating villagers’ social and cultural practices. The “civilizing” (and discriminatory) effects of well-intentioned, state-supported programs, be they local or national, affect villagers’ sovereignty to live on their own terms. The desire to regiment the living space and household members’ moral behavior is a civilizing process, in which the *visita*
is a medium and a strategy to subordinate villagers to “standards” of what is considered as clean and hygienic life in the Peruvian southern Andes.

The pervasiveness of relations of subordination, evident in face-to-face interactions within the village households, undermines the right of the host to organize her life in her own home, in spite of the small acts of resistance. Given the facts, it is plausible to assert that, in general, widespread relations of dominance, evident when visitors violate hospitality and subordinate villagers within their own households, are not just residual effects of a colonial past (for historical insights see Méndez 1996; Larson 2004), but are produced by the actions of individuals in everyday situations. Everyday interactions between hosts and visitors inform national understandings about those who do not conform to an imaginary of a homogenous nation. In these interactions, domination and subordination are produced, as well as patterns that project a high level of domination (Gamson 1985), in which rural Quechua speakers are enmeshed.

**Recommendations for Practice**

To learn to speak a second language includes not only learning the formal grammatical structure, but it also means learning social and cultural cues in order to behave appropriately and show respect in any situation. In the southern Andes, government and NGO employees, together with acquiring the language, should learn respectful behavior, as well as observe the boundaries of social respect in both Spanish- and Quechua-speaking cultures. In any other Latin American country where there are social groups that speak other Native languages than Spanish, individuals should learn a second language together with the cultural nuances to respect the society that speaks the language.

**Future Directions**

Based on my study I suggest pursuing additional thorough research to uncover the systemic ways by which dominance and social subordination are perpetuated. For instance, research on how this perpetuation is reproduced, or challenged at micro- and macro-scale levels, to maintain a hierarchical system that maintains privilege would be useful; as well as a study of how language is used to build boundaries among interlocutors and how these boundaries refract national racial imaginaries about individuals who have no access to a “national” language. The focus on social practices of interaction shifts the attention to how relations of social oppression are produced and how they are part of the interactional order beyond individuals’ ethnic or identity self-ascription. This focus moves the discussion on to relations of subordination beyond debates on racial/ethnic categories that do not reveal how such relations are built and reproduced. The systematic ways by which relations of domination are produced and challenged across cultures, across linguistic boundaries, and across the world can be revealed by paying attention to the interactional order.

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**Related Topics**

15 Language and Racialization (Chun & Lo); 24 Discrimination via Discourse (Wodak); 25 Racism in the Press.
Notes
1 Italic bold: Quechua; italic: Spanish. Capital letters denote a louder voice. Words within double parentheses are comments of the author. Translations made by the author.
3 To run the project villagers had to resettle their houses. Houses were rebuilt next to another in straight paths. Small water springs were diverted, and swamps dried. Currently, the main brook is polluted by the sewage that runs straight into it before reaching the sewage collector.
4 The sheet shows logos of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (known as COSUDE in Peru), the Regional Government of Cuzco, and the Ministry of Health.
5 Villagers had a difficult time saying the agent's Spanish name and they ended up pronouncing it as “Gas.”
6 Regarding transcription conversations, in addition to the details highlighted in note 1, I follow Goodwin (1990) and Sack et al. (1979). A dot (.) shows falling, or final, intonation, underlined words is emphatic stress, hyphen (-) indicates a cut-off or self-interruption, colons (::) indicate elongation, comma (,) indicates a short pause, a question mark (?) indicates a rising intonation, an oblique (/) indicates that the exchange between them is low or very low in volume. Words within more than and less than symbols (< . . . >) indicate that the talk is rushed, and words within parentheses indicates a likely possibility. Some transcription conventions accompany the English translated version to facilitate the reading.
7 Sasiku's child is crying and the agent tries to quiet the child by saying: "Don't cry, okay? We'll eat roasted quwi, okay?"
8 Muruya are dehydrated potatoes.
9 This picture differs from London. As a guest I was introduced to the house's rules of conviviality and communal use of the kitchen. The host showed me the cabinets in which tableware and pots are kept, as well as what kind of cutting boards I should use to cut bread, meat or vegetables. I was put on a schedule to clean the house although I was not staying for free. I have to follow my host's rules and organization.
10 Kitchen organization responds to different necessities and views on what is tidiness or cleanliness.
11 Kuka leaf is a symbol of proper hosting, a form of amusing and sweetening conversation (for further details see Allen 2000). It is seen by nonindigenous people as a sign of filthiness. On many occasions I witnessed villagers throw away their ball of chewed kukka and rinse out their mouths as they approached a health center or a town.

References


Further Reading


Eckert, Penelope & Sally McConnell-Ginet. 2013. Language and Gender, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


