

<b>Institution:</b> Newcastle University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 26 Modern Languages and Linguistics		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Making Visible Indigenous Women's Work as Agents for Linguistic Human Rights in Peru		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2005 to 2019		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Rosaleen Howard	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Chair of Hispanic Studies	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> August 2005–September 2020
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014–2019		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>In southern Peru, where the native Amerindian languages Quechua and Aymara are spoken in rural areas, Howard's collaboration with female indigenous leaders of civil society associations benefited bilingual women's lives in a range of ways. These women (age range 30 to 60) work as <i>ad hoc</i> interpreters between monolingual speakers of Quechua or Aymara and Spanish-speaking officials in public service settings wherein linguistic and cultural misunderstandings and prejudice often lead to poor medical attention, miscarriages of justice and disregard for human rights. Howard's project facilitated the women's reflection on how their interpretive practices allay infringements of human rights; helped them visibilise their activity at state and society levels; enhanced their sense of worth as bilingual indigenous leaders doing an indispensable job on an unaccredited basis and going unrecognised by officialdom; and created significant opportunities for their professionalisation. These benefits first changed the lives of the 15 indigenous women directly involved in the project, whereupon their experience led to a snowballing effect from which other female members of the regional associations widely benefited. Howard's project further extended its reach, catalysing collaboration between a partner NGO and the state, which triggered changes in public servants' practice in the cultural sector and heightened public awareness of minority language rights.</p>		
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Professor Howard has a long record of research that is unique in the UK, focussing as it does on South American indigenous languages, language politics and language policies, and especially on Quechua in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. Her book on language ideologies in the Andes (<b>PUB1</b>), advisedly written in Spanish and published by a group of leading academic publishers in Peru, is widely read by academics, policy makers and students in Latin America, and led to her being invited in 2014 to act as informal consultant on language policy to Peru's Ministry of Culture. This generated a major AHRC-funded research project, supported by the Ministry ('Legislated mediation of indigenous language rights in Peru', Howard PI, 2014–2016: GRANT1), and its successor, 'Improving women's lives through the role of female social interpreters in rural Peru' (Howard Co-I, 2018–2019: GRANT2). These international collaborative projects investigated the relationship between translation and interpreting between Spanish and indigenous languages and human rights, and indigenous people's empowerment in their capacity as translators and interpreters. Institutional collaborators included University of Stirling, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, Peru's Ministry of Culture, and the Peruvian NGO <i>SER</i> (Rural Educational Services). Key findings were:</p> <p>(i) That training translators and interpreters between Spanish and the indigenous languages is culturally complex; the trainees being motivated by a pre-existing activism oriented towards indigenous rights and empowerment, in addition to seeking the technical skills required of professional translators and interpreters (<b>PUB4</b>).</p> <p>(ii) That translating the Peruvian 'Indigenous Languages Act' (Law N°. 29735) from Spanish into the native languages, and interpreting in legal settings, raise difficulties due to the lack of lexical equivalents to express legal concepts, and owing to the different discourse conventions and cultural contexts of the target languages (<b>PUBS 2, 3 and 5</b>).</p>		

(iii) That bilingual female indigenous community leaders act as *ad hoc* interpreters in Quechua and Aymara regions of southern Peru, voluntarily and without the intervention of the state (**PUB6**).

The GRANT1 project focused on the state-led indigenous language translation and interpreting programme run by the Ministry of Culture. In the course of this research, the NGO SER made the research team aware of bilingual indigenous women leaders' work as *ad hoc* interpreters and human rights advocates within their regional civil society organisations. The Ministry team had not known about the grassroots *ad hoc* interpreter activity until Howard's research team uncovered it; thanks to the project's findings, coordination between the Ministry and SER ensued, which made a significant contribution to her policy-related impact (see section 4(b)). It was on the strength of these findings that Howard and her co-researchers were awarded GRANT2 '[Female Indigenous Language Brokers in Peru](#)', enabling her to build on finding (iii) by bringing to state and public notice the *ad hoc* interpreters' work.

The significance of Howard's GRANT2 project's impact is established by the fact that it was realised in a region where people's everyday experiences are still shaped by the effects of extreme trauma: the Ayacucho department was the epicentre of Peru's internal war between Shining Path insurgents and the state (1980–2000), with indigenous people caught in its crossfire. Ayacucho was, furthermore, the focus of a 'public health' campaign in which indigenous people were forcibly sterilised (1995–2001). Howard's research generated the three types of impact, described below in section 4, by applying an action research methodology and which involved pathways to impact such as workshops, role-plays, focus groups, interviews and public events. These were undertaken in collaboration with her co-investigators, the above-mentioned NGO, the state 'Memory Museum', in addition to a political theatre company with an important national and international profile.

### 3. References to the research

The below items were all peer reviewed and appear with preeminent journals or publishing houses in their fields.

**PUB1.** Howard, Rosaleen. 2007. *Por los linderos de la lengua. Ideologías lingüísticas en los Andes (Along the Borderlines of Language. Language Ideologies in the Andes)*, Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos/Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos/Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. 425 pp. Book available at <https://books.openedition.org/ifea/5275>. Widely read by staff and students on Latin American university sociolinguistics programmes. A review essay inspired by the book was published by eminent Peruvian scholar Enrique Ballón as '[La dentera multilingüe e intercultural en las sociedades andinas \(conflictos de lengua, habla y escritura\)](#)' in leading Peruvian journal *Revista Andina*, Vol. 49 (2009) pp. 135–164.

**PUB2.** Howard, Rosaleen, Luis Andrade & Raquel De Pedro Ricoy. 2018. [Translating rights: the Peruvian Languages Act in Quechua and Aymara](#). *Amerindia. Revue d'Ethnolinguistique Amérindienne*, 40: 219–245. Prestigious Amerindian ethnolinguistics journal published by the C.N.R.S., France.

**PUB3.** De Pedro Ricoy, Raquel, Rosaleen Howard & Luis Andrade. 2018. [Walking the tightrope: The role of Peruvian indigenous interpreters in Prior Consultation processes](#). *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 30 (2): 187–211. Leading Translation Studies journal.

**PUB4.** Andrade Luis, Rosaleen Howard & Raquel de Pedro Ricoy. 2018. [Activismo, derechos lingüísticos e ideologías: la traducción e interpretación en lenguas originarias en el Perú](#) (Activism, language rights and ideologies: translating and interpreting in indigenous languages in Peru). *Indiana* Vol. 35 (1): 139–163. Journal of the prestigious Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Berlin.

**PUB5.** De Pedro Ricoy, Raquel, Luis Andrade & Rosaleen Howard. 2018. [The role of indigenous interpreters in the Peruvian intercultural, bilingual justice system](#). In eds. Esther Monzó Nebot and Juan Jiménez Salcedo. *Translating and Interpreting Justice in a Postmonolingual Age*. Malaga: Vernon Press, pp. 91–109. Invited piece, viewed by the editors as breaking new ground in the field of postmonolingualism studies.

**PUB6.** De Pedro Ricoy, Raquel, Rosaleen Howard, Luis Andrade, & Raquel Reynoso. 2020. 'Nosotras le llamamos *acompañamiento*': dirigentas quechuas y aimaras del sur peruano y la interpretación *ad hoc* ('We call it "accompanying": Quechua and Aymara women leaders in southern Peru and *ad hoc* interpreting). *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies*. An imprint of Routledge edited by leading Latin Americanists at University of California, San Diego. DOI: 10.1080/17442222.2020.1770986

#### 4. Details of the impact

The research produced a range of interrelated impacts, namely: it influenced the practice of public servants in the field of human rights; it provided new development opportunities for our NGO partners; it contributed to the public recognition, self-esteem and ongoing capacity building of the project's female indigenous *ad hoc* interpreter participants. In order to understand the reach and significance of these impacts, Howard and her co-researchers conducted focus groups and interviews with the 15 *ad hoc* interpreters (Lima, 11 November 2018; Ayacucho, 7 August 2019; Puno, 9 August 2019) and with 4 members of the LUM team (Lima, 4 April 2019). The quotes in this section are extracts from these interactions, translated from Spanish and Quechua.

**Impact is divided into 3 categories: a. Impact on Individuals; b. Impact on Policy; c. Impact on Public and Institutional Attitudes and Understanding. Proper names in this section are pseudonyms.**

##### **(a). Impact on individuals. Raising public visibility, self-esteem and opportunities for bilingual indigenous women leaders working as ad hoc interpreters for non-Spanish speaking people in rural Peru.**

The 15 *ad hoc* interpreters emphasised that working with the project gave them a sense of empowerment and visibility with which to carry on their practice with renewed confidence: 'We are no longer hidden like before; sometimes we feel weak within our organisations, but now we have the courage to stand up for ourselves and carry on'. They noted a snowballing effect among their peers: 'This experience has made visible not just us but other women and men who do the same work as we do. We [the participant group] are just the "thin end of the wedge", making the State realise that among Andean and Amazonian peoples there are individuals who provide this (*ad hoc* interpreting) service voluntarily' (IMP4).

They also commented on how the project had made them aware of their linguistic rights: 'Before, we were afraid to speak our [Quechua] language in public. [...] We were discriminated against because of it. Now, with the project, we have become aware of our rights, we talk Quechua in the bank, in the town hall, in the street. If people look at us, we carry on talking it' (IMP4).

For some, the project led them to language certification organised by the Ministry of Education: 'Never in my life did I think that our Quechua language was important. And then when you brought the project about "interpreting" (...) I said to myself "Ah ok, without being professionals, we were interpreters". (...) It was a surprise to me that without being a professional or having official documents in that field, they gave me a certificate for the Quechua I spoke' (IMP4).

Another participant attributes her professional growth to experience with the project: 'It's because of that I believe that I was elected President of the Departmental Association of Peasant Women of Puno.'\* Aurora describes herself as providing a role model for other women, using the USB recording of the project's stageplay provided in order to extend the reach of her message: "Look at comrade Aurora! Why can we not be like her?" she quotes them saying (IMP4).

\*Clarification from President of SER: "Aurora was nominated President of the Organising Committee of the Association's Annual Congress, November 2019; this is an influential Association at Department level and Aurora is an increasingly active member." (E-mail to R. Howard, 8 September 2020).

Involvement in the project led to two participants benefitting personally and professionally via their acceptance onto the Ministry of Culture training course for indigenous interpreters (IMP3; IMP10). As one of them expressed: 'The project was an awakening for me, making me recognise my potential as a translator and interpreter, that this could bring me opportunities'. The training led to her qualifying both as interpreter and translator. Both participants now appear on the National Register of Indigenous Translators and Interpreters (IMP10). Since the project's end, the women have continued to build on this experience and extend its reach to others: 'There's the

opportunity to continue spreading the skills [we have acquired] to other women in our communities, so that they can take part in training courses, and continue growing over the next ten, fifteen, twenty years' (IMP4).

On a poignant note, one woman commented that the experience was cathartic for her: 'When we gave our testimony [on camera] some of us shed tears as we remembered the difficulties we have had'. Yet she asked us not to edit the footage: 'We need to show not only that we are strong but also that we have emotions when we remember the comrades who are no longer with us' (IMP4).

**(b). Impact on Policy: The project influenced policymakers to include bilingual indigenous women leaders in formal judicial processes.**

The project led directly to some of the *ad hoc* interpreters on the project being recruited by Peru's Ministry of Justice Commission with the task of registering Quechua- and Aymara-speaking victims of the 1990s forced sterilisation programme (*REVIESFO*), thus helping ensure the rightful registration of victims. Howard and *SER* had co-convened a public debate on language rights in Ayacucho with panel members from the Ministry of Culture, the Ombudsman's Office and the *REVIESFO* Commission (19 August 2016). The majority of attendees revealed that this panel was instrumental in making them aware of the forced sterilisation programme for the first time, and that, as a result, they now recognised the importance of language rights (29 audience questionnaires: IMP1). The *REVIESFO* Commission member described the lack of female interpreters in the hearings; a fact of which the researchers, the public and *SER* had been unaware. Shortly afterwards, on behalf of the *REVIESFO* Commission, the Ministry of Justice asked the Ministry of Culture to provide them with female interpreters familiar with the cultural and linguistic context. The Ministry of Culture, having learned about the *ad hoc* interpreters through the project, contacted *SER*, who, now understanding the need, identified 4 suitable interpreters from the group and wrote them letters of recommendation which led to their being hired by the Commission. For the President of *SER*, this sequence of events evidences the significant impact of Howard's project on governmental practices (IMP2, IMP3, IMP10).

Sara was one of those appointed to interpret on behalf of the Quechua speaking victims as they gave their testimonies: 'On the back of this project, I worked as a Quechua interpreter for the *REVIESFO* commission [...] This was very important and very painful work... because (the witnesses) gave their testimonies of how they had been deceived into allowing themselves to have their fallopian tubes cut, and they told their stories in tears. [...] We were able to explain [to the commissioners] what the [indigenous] women were saying. [...] Our participation was very important because the women trusted us more than they trusted [the interpreters] they didn't know' (IMP4).

Other participants commented that, in the context of a sharp rise in femicide cases in 2019, interpreting should also be provided 'for the judicial authorities in general' (IMP4).

**(c). Impact on Public and Institutional Attitudes and Understanding: The project educated the public on the importance of indigenous language rights and influenced the practice of a human rights institution.**

The research process produced video and audio recordings, and photographs that became the basis for 3 public events in which the interpreters actively participated. These were: (1) An audio-visual exhibition entitled '[Companions: Indigenous translators for a more just society](#) / *Lugar de la Memoria, la Tolerancia y la Inclusión Social*', curated by Peru's national Museum of Memory [LUM] (December 2018–March 2019); (2) A piece of testimonial theatre, 'Women's Voices', based on their own words, created and performed with the high-profile *Yuyachkani* theatre company in Lima (10 November 2018); (3) A screening of the filmed theatre performance in Ayacucho and Puno (October 2019). To ensure the impact's sustainability, the audio-visual material gathered has been housed in [a uniquely designated SER collection](#) in LUM's 'Truth Commission' digital repository. These comprise a video interview, testimony, and a photograph of each of the 14 *ad hoc* interpreters.

Audience responses to the 'Women's Voices' play, which was performed live in Lima (38 x exit questionnaires (IMP5)) and watched on screen in Ayacucho and Puno (16 x post-it notes (IMP6)), testify to the impact of the play's message regarding linguistic human rights. The

screening informed the regional public about linguistic human rights and visibilised the women leaders' work in their home localities.

A focus group conducted by Howard and Co-I Andrade with the *LUM* team, who had curated the 'Companions' exhibition, revealed that the Newcastle project contributed new dimensions to their work: 'The exhibition has been very timely, especially as we are currently in the UN International Year of Indigenous Languages and there is heightened public interest in revaluing native languages. We also try to make the connection between the period of violence and the fact that 75% of the victims were Quechua and Asháninka speakers. The exhibition helped us highlight the connection between speaking an indigenous language and vulnerability [...]' (*LUM* Executive Director). They also listened to the *ad hoc* interpreters' comments as they were filmed viewing the museum's permanent exhibition and found their own experiences of the internal war reflected in the interpreters' comments: 'it made a powerful impression on us' (*LUM* education officer). Further, they drew lessons for changing their future practice: 'We realised that the exhibition participants should also take part in the round table discussion...this experience has taught us to be inclusive in our approach' and: 'We have learned that curating, museography and education have to go together' (*LUM* team member) (**IMP7**, **IMP8**). Public reactions to the temporary 'Companions' exhibition are embedded in the more general Visitor's Book and these reveal how the public came to understand the role of women in the struggle for human rights, including their role as *ad hoc* interpreters, during the period of terrorism itself and that period's enduring aftermaths (**IMP9**).

In summary then, this participatory action project provided the indigenous women participants with a life-changing experience that had considerable significance for their personal and professional growth. For the majority, this was the first time they had visited their nation's capital where their engagement with this high-profile, internationally funded project provided them with a highly visible platform in Lima from which to collaborate with national cultural institutions. Through their theatrical performance, their exposure in the *LUM* exhibition space and their interactions with theatre professionals, they benefitted by acquiring new skills as well as gaining a life-enhancing sense of self-affirmation and an understanding of the broader significance of their—hitherto unrecognised—experience. The effect carries on, as testified by messages that reach Howard through their online networks, testifying that the positive impact of the Newcastle project on their lives continues. This project, therefore, enriched the lives of these women and created a ripple effect within their communities, enhancing their personal and professional standing within their local associations and with the NGO. Finally, the need for their experiences, linguistic identities and skills to be recognised, and the cultural-political healing that their work engenders has been brought to the awareness of the state, regional authorities and the public, thus ensuring the enduring visibility and voice of this community.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

**IMP1.** 29 x Exit questionnaires from Ayacucho public event & synthesis, 19 August 2016.

**IMP2.** Transcript of interview with President of *SER*, 5 April 2018.

**IMP3a.** Letter from President of *SER*, 30 April 2020.

**IMP3b.** Email from President of *SER*, 8 September 2020.

**IMP4.** Amalgamated transcripts of focus groups and interviews with project participants.

**IMP5.** 38 x Exit questionnaires from audience at 'Women's Voices' play & analysis, 10 November 2018.

**IMP6.** 16 x Audience comments on screening of 'Women's Voices' play, Ayacucho 15 October 2019.

**IMP7.** Transcript of focus group with *LUM* curators of 'Companions' exhibition, 4 April 2019.

**IMP8.** Letter from Director of *LUM* to testify to the benefits of 'Companions' exhibition.

**IMP9.** 73 x Exit comments from visitors to *LUM* 'Companions' exhibition, December 2018.

**IMP10.** Letter from Director, Indigenous Languages Division, Ministry of Culture, 8 September 2020.

Evidence sources are available on request.