Lesson 3: Talking about Family

<INSERT IMAGE 3.1 *ayllu* ‘family’>

In Conversation Model 3 at the conclusion of Lesson 1, there was a brief exchange between two people who had a type of relationship, the *compadrazgo* relation, which anthropologists refer to as ‘fictive kinship.’ The *compradazgo* system originated in European Spanish culture as a way of establishing bonds between nonrelatives through godparenting practices. However, it has become embedded into Quichua culture in unique ways. For example, Quichua people who are already closely related as siblings may decide to further strengthen their ties through godparenting each others’ children, rather than asking an outsider to do so. As a consequence of this, it is not uncommon to hear the following exchange between two sisters:

*Riungichu kumari*? ‘Are you going comadre?’

*Ari. Riunimi kumari, kayagama.* ‘Yes, I’m going comadre; Until next time.’

Fictive kinship, as the term implies, allows people to construct meaningful social relationships with others who are not part of their families. Another way to do this is, obviously, is to establish affinal relationships through marriage. Terms for in-marrying relatives are discussed in Lesson 6. For Quichua people, social relationships are most meaningful when based on family ties. Words for friend such as *amigo*/*amiga* are borrowings from Spanish which are used, but not invested with as much significance as family relationships. In Quichua social interactions, it is most likely that a first question asked of someone will not be ‘what is your name?’ but rather ‘whose son/daughter are you’?

The extended family or *ayllu* is the most important unit of Quichua society. We know from earliest records, such as that of Juan de Betanzos, that the Inca empire, called *Tawantinsuyu* was organized around *ayllus*. Kinship terms werealso used to express the relationship between the Inca and their deities. Inca Yupanque was the first to be given the title *Indichuri*, which can be translated as ‘the sun’s son’ or ‘son of the sun.’

Family and Kinship Terms for Consanguineals (Blood Relations)

Although it is probably true for all human cultures, Quichua speakers place a strong emphasis on family relationships, and feel a very poignant sadness at the prospect of not having one’s family around them. Look at the following list of kin terms and then go to the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1ECt5i2U2c>

Listen to the first 20 seconds. The speaker tells about all of the family members who have passed from her life. She lists each kinship category that she does not have, and calls herself a *wakcha* ‘orphan.’ She uses the impersonal verb *illana* ‘to lack’ (Lesson 7), which is suffixed with the attributive suffix –*k* (Lesson 12). She also uses the despitative suffix –*was* (Lesson 9), shortened to –*s* on each kinship term.

Try to pick out as many kin terms mentioned by the speaker, as you can from the following list:

*ayllu* ‘family (blood kinship)’

*wakcha* ‘orphan’

*yaya* ‘father’

*mama* ‘mother’

*mikya* ‘aunt,’ also used as a term of respectful address by a younger person to an older, unrelated woman

*hachi* ‘uncle’

*apa yaya* (PQ) ‘grandfather’

*apa mama* (PQ) ‘grandmother’

*ruku* ‘old, big’

*ruku yaya* (NQ) ‘grandfather’

*ruku mama* (NQ) ‘grandmother’

*musu* (PQ) ‘adolescent male’

*wambra* (NQ) ‘adolescent male; (PQ) adolescent male or female, boyfriend or girlfriend

*churi* ‘son, small boy’

*churiguna* ‘little boys’

*ushushi* (*ushi*) ‘daughter, small girl’

*turi* ‘brother of a female’

*wawki* ‘brother of a male’

*ñaña* ‘sister of a female’

*pani* ‘sister of a male’

*wawa* ‘baby, young child, toddler’

*llulluku* ‘newborn’

*kari* ‘male (adjective), husband (noun)’

*kari wawa* ‘boy baby, child’

*warmi wawa* ‘girl baby, child’

Asking Questions about Family with –*yuk*

Although questions to others about their families might be considered overly personal in some cultural contexts, the same is not true for Quichua speaking people who freely discuss their family matters, including illnesses, deaths, traumas, break-ups, and many other kinds of issues as well.

One of the most basic questions one can ask is a question that clarifies which family members a person actually has. The easiest way to do this is to ask a question using the possessor suffix –*yuk* along with the verb *ana* ‘to be’:

*Mama-yuk-chu angi*? Literally: ‘Are you a mother-possessor?’

*Nda/Ari Mama-yuk-mi ani*. Literally: ‘Yes. I’m a mother-possessor.’

When a form of the verb *ana* is preceded by a word ending in –*mi* or –*chu*; however, there is a slight change in the resulting spoken form. In such an utterance, the suffixes –*chu* and –*mi* seem to ‘jump over’ to the verb, rather than staying on the original word they were attached to. Therefore, rather than pronouncing the question as follows:

*Mama-yuk-chu angi*?

The speaker will combine the –*chu* and whatever form of *ana* ‘to be’ follows, into one word: *changi*:

*Mama-yuk-chu angi?* > *mamayuk changi*?

It is as if the suffix –*chu* has hopped over to the next word. However, this ‘hopping over’ only happens when the next word is some form of the verb *ana* ‘to be.’ Another aspect of this process is that the vowel of the suffix –*chu* is deleted. This process happens no matter which form of the verb *ana* is used:

‘I’ First person singular: –*chu* + *ani* = *chani*

‘you’ Second person singular: –*chu* + *angi* = *changi*

‘he/she/it’ Third person singular: –*chu + an = chan*

‘we’ First person plural: –*chu + anchi = chanchi*

‘you-all’ Second person plural: –*chu + angichi = changichi*

‘they’ Third person plural: –*chu + anawn = chanawn;* –*chu + anun = chanun*

The very same process takes place when a word ending in the –mi suffix is followed by a form of *ana* ‘to be’:

First person singular: –*mi + ani = mani*

Second person singular: –*mi* + *angi* = *mangi*

Third person singular: –*mi + an = man*

First person plural:–*mi + anchi = manchi*

Second person plural:–*mi + angichi = mangichi*

Third person plural:–*mi + anawn = manawn;* –*mi + anun = manun*

Practice 1

Construct questions and answers about which *ayllu* members your conversationalists may have, using the preceding model.

*Example:*

*Wawayuk changi?* ‘Do you have children?’

*Nda, wawayuk mani.* ‘Yes, I have children.’

1. *Yaya* ‘father’

2. *Apa yaya* (PQ) ‘grandfather’

3. *Ruku yaya* (NQ) ‘grandfather’

4. *turi* ‘brother of female’

5. *wawki* ‘brother of a male’

6. *pani* ‘sister of a male’

7. *ñaña* ‘sister of a female’

8. *mikya* ‘aunt’

9. *hachi* ‘uncle’

10. *ushushi* ‘daughter’

11. *churi* ‘son’

12. *warmi wawa* ‘girl baby’

Telling about One’s Family with *charina* ‘to have’ and Direct Object Marker –*ta*

We now introduce a fundamentally important new grammatical relation, that of the direct object. The ideal direct object is something that is in some way directly affected by the action of a subject, but the notion of being ‘affected by’ has to be interpreted rather broadly. In the following examples, the direct object is italicized:

I kicked *the ball*.

I drink *aswa*.

I saw *my friend*.

Although the ball is certainly affected by being kicked (it is moved from one place to another), it is arguable whether the *aswa* is affected by being drunk or whether a person is affected by being seen. Nevertheless, English speakers would consider these noun phrases to be direct objects, which must occur after a verb.

If you are still struggling to conceptualize direct objects, think of the most important part of a sentence that remains after a subject and verb are expressed. If that leftover part is not expressing locational ideas, it is more than likely a direct object.

Quichua direct objects generally occur before the verb. In PQ the direct object marker is the suffix *–ta*, which is pronounced as –da when it follows a voiced sound, such as n:

*aswa-ta upini* ‘I drink aswa’

*lulun-da mikuni* ‘I eat eggs’

For simplicity, we will represent all direct object markers as –ta.

*Yaku aycha-ta hapini.* ‘I catch fish.’ (literally: I catch water meat.’)

The direct object marking system for Napo Quichua is a bit more complex because the direct object marker has, in addition to –ta and –da, another variant form –ra, which occurs after a vowel:

*Aswa-ra upini.* ‘(I) drink aswa.’

*Lumu-ra mayllangi*. ‘(You) wash the manioc.’

*Wasi-ra pichan.* ‘(He/she) sweeps the house.’

Besides the –*yuk* plus *ana* ‘to be’ construction, the verb *charina* ‘to have’ may also be used to ask about which family members a person may have. In this construction, the family member becomes a direct object and is suffixed with –*ta* or one of its variants:

*Mama-ta charingichu*? ‘Do you have a mother?’ (PQ)

*Mama-ra charingichu*? ‘Do you have a mother?’ (NQ)

Practice 2

Construct questions using *charina* and a kinship term suffixed with a direct object marker.

*Example:*

Pastaza Quichua

*Apa yaya-ta charingichu*? ‘Do you have a grandfather?’

*Nda. Apa yaya-ta charinimi*. ‘Yes. I have a grandfather.’

Upper Napo Quichua

*Apa yaya-ra charingichu*? ‘Do you have a grandfather?’

*Ari. Apa yaya-ra charinimi*. ‘Yes. I have a grandfather.’

1. *yaya*

2. *apa yaya*

3. *ruku yaya*

4*. turi*

5. *wawki*

6. *pani*

7. *ñaña*

8. *mikya*

9. *hachi*

10. *ushushi*

11. *churi*

12. *warmi wawa*

Written Exercise 1

Draw lines connecting the Quichua kinship term in the first column below to its English language equivalent in the second column.

1. *yaya* ‘aunt’

2. a*pa yaya* ‘sister of female’

3. r*uku yaya*  ‘son’

4. *turi* ‘grandfather’(NQ)

5. *wawki* ‘father’

6. *pani* ’brother of male’

7. *ñaña* ‘daughter’

8. *mikya* sister of male’

9. *hachi* ‘grandfather’ (PQ)

10. *ushushi* ‘brother of female’

11. *churi* ‘girl baby’

12. *warmi wawa* ‘uncle’

Written Exercise 2

Construct sentences about the most important kinship relations you have, using Quichua terms. You may use either the direct object + *charina* ‘to have’ construction, or the –*yuk* construction.

*Example:*

*Ñuka yayata charini, wawata charini, turita charini…*

Or:

*Ñuka yayayuk mani, wawayuk mani, turiyuk mani…*

Romantic Love: *llakichina*

Although love for one’s family is very important, Runa also invest a great deal of energy in romantic love, which is seen as a kind of natural force that is in need of proper channeling and focusing through magical means. The closest term to English ‘love’ is *llaki*, although it has important differences in sense and connotation. For Runa, *llaki* involves notions of tenderness, affection, empathy, and can even involve sadness if one’s feelings are not reciprocated. If the object of one’s feelings of *llaki* are not reciprocated, then magical practices may be used

Love magic may involve the singing of songs, possibly along with the use of special substances from plants, animals, or insects. Peoples’ explanations for why a particular substance is chosen vary. For example, animals judged to be very successful at love include the freshwater dolphin, *bugyu*, said to travel in male/female pairs, and the toucan bird, *sikwanga,* who, upon losing a partner, will seek another one that very day.

Listening and Writing Exercise

Go to the following link and listen to approximately the first 30 seconds while the speaker explains how attached to each other toucan birds are: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_lrLznnM6gI&feature=youtu.be>

Although this short narrative has been translated into English, see if you can listen and find 10 Quichua words that you recognize and write them down. There are also a number of kinship terms from this lesson. New verbs from the video include: *wañuchina* ‘to kill,’ *kantana* ‘to sing,’ *kayana* ‘to call,’ *sakirina* ‘to remain, stay,’ *shamuna* ‘to come.’

Try to write each word as you hear it, even if you don’t yet understand all of its suffixes:

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