

Willem F. H. Adelaar (Leiden University Centre for Linguistics)

Quechuan

In the present version of the ASJP World Language Tree, the Quechuan family exhibits an overrepresentation of members of a single low-level sub-branch (Ecuadorian). On this basis it is difficult to assess the suitability of ASJP for the recognition of higher level branching in Quechuan. The Quechua I branch is represented in the ASJP Tree with only one member (Ancash-Huailas). It is correctly set apart from all other Quechuan languages. Even so, family-internal lexical borrowing in past periods of political unification and internal colonization may produce a distorted picture of the Quechuan family structure if more Quechuan languages are included. The inclusion of morphological criteria is essential in order to correct possible deviations.

A close genetic relationship between Quechuan and Aymara, as suggested by the ASJP Tree, was never demonstrated in spite of thorough qualitative investigations conducted over decades. The ASJP seems to preserve the same shortcomings as early traditional research in this field.