Translating Jaqaru: Interstices and Intersections in Spanish and English

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Abstract

Jaqaru, a threatened language spoken by approximately 2,000 people mainly in southeastern Peru, is well-positioned for a translational analysis with an ethnographic emphasis, considering its deep sociohistorical relationship with Andean Spanish. While there are many structural overlaps felicitous to translation resulting from this mutual influence, more intriguing are the “untranslatable” aspects of Jaqaru which come to bear upon translating culture itself. In synchronically assessing how best to translate Jaqaru into Spanish across a variety of texts and methods, I attempt to illustrate the difficulty of conveying a Jaqaru worldview to disparate audiences. Maintaining a degree of otherness in the target text seems not only desirable as a means of demonstrating the profound differences in culture and thought between Jaqaru and Spanish, but also to make bare the fact of translation. The question, then, is how to balance this approach with readability, and how to avoid alienating the reader of the target text by making a translation too abstruse in the name of foreignization and thereby perpetrate stereotypes of indigenous languages as utterly other.
**Introduction**

Translation is a process that, by revealing fundamentals of meaning reflected in form, can be seen as “the area of linguistics that makes sense for the product of ethnography” (Asadzadeh and Abbasi 2012).\(^1\) In translating, as in a relational ethnography, an attempt is made to relate the positions of a set of signifiers to another in the context of culture. The boundaries erected by this linguistic relativity, rather than restraining meaning, allow for the acknowledgment of its inherent difficulty and the revelatory interstices between languages, the multifariousness of worldsenses that can be picked out from a similar variety of codes (Pálsson 1993). In addressing the process of translation from one system to another, rather than describing languages or even a language in its cultural contexts, that radical difference of innate expression is more fully revealed in the difficulties of producing and attempting/failing to find equivalences for meaning. Indeed, it is “[translation] failure [that] demarcates intersubjective limits, even as it highlights that ‘eureka’ spot where consciousness crosses over to a rough zone of equivalency or crystallizes around an idea that belongs to no one language or nation in particular” (Apter 2010: 6). That “failure” is of high interest as a key component of an anthropological translation: it is revelatory of the assumed portions of reality that,

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\(^1\) For not only her immense help on this project but also years of mentorship, teaching, conversation and guidance, I am deeply indebted to Dr. MJ Hardman. Dr. Dimas Bautista Iturrizaga has been not only a patient consultant for all of my many questions about the Jaqaru language but also a kind and wonderful conversationalist. Both recognize my agency even as I stand on their shoulders; any problems or errors that remain in this paper are certainly my own.
through diligent and aware ethnographic study, can be re-ordered and -understood as mutable and culture-specific apprehensions of the structure of the world.

What must be understood before a translation is attempted? Conventionally, the following could be included:

- The languages, both source and destination\(^2\): their structures, their lexical content, their poetics.
- The significance of the content of the text, outside of its linguistic signifiers: cultural signs.
- The intentions of the author/speaker: the subtext.

A further requirement might be a thorough understanding of the specific relationship of the languages themselves. By “relationship” I refer to all aspects of inter- and disconnection: historical, cultural, political, and more than anything, ideological and typological features specific to the languages of interest. This relationship is, for the purposes of ethnographic study, more important than the essence of the text itself; even a rendering of an oral story that captures well the rhythm and form of its original version does little for its destination audience if it fails at the specific, contextual purpose of its translation, of its relevance. By simply committing to translating a text, a further coat of meaning external to anything that appears in the translation itself is immediately applied: it

\(^2\) Though the conventional term for the language translated into is “target,” here I use “destination” as a term to better capture the people who will receive it; too, the connotations of “target” suggest that a translation can be ‘hit’ upon. In addition, it pairs metaphorically with the original ‘source’ language.
has acquired the importance of the status of hermeneutics. (Whether or not this position is merited or not is another question.) However, the literal-minded Boasian approach which maintains “linguistic fidelity to the cultural matrix” (Tedlock 1971: 116) but strips the narrative from its emotive place and resonance with a non-native reader is hardly the ideal; rather, the balance within this relationship between conveying semantic content and relaying vital pragmatic essence will be the focus of the discussion to follow.

By extension of this focus on relationship, each translation means something different for its language pairing. A translation of Spanish to English is a wholly different undertaking than Mandarin to English, naturally, in grammatical considerations and poetics alike. “Translatability” is the term that seems most relevant here, and with its implications of fit between languages (accidental or otherwise); it will serve as a point of departure for a discussion of translation between two languages of profound difference, Jaqaru and Spanish. These languages are nevertheless areally linked in deep sociopolitical and historical ways apart from the processes of grammar that have bound them together over their five centuries of contact. This treatment of culture and society and the semiotics of their interaction is just as vital a step in the translation process as locating appropriate words or phrases: indeed, it is translation, encountered and experienced in the intersection and space between ethnographies of cultures as produced through the awareness of language.
It is, of course, completely possible to create a translation that conveys the relevant content of the source text in a way that appropriately refers to its origins in form and substance. However, few would take the extreme position of Demetracapoulou and Dubois (writing about Wintu in 1932) that a translation can be produced without distortion. What, precisely, is lost or altered? How important is this lost content? To what extent can it be reclaimed in a way that is poetically parsimonious? Finally, should form be sacrificed for meaning, if meaning is clearly ameliorated? In the following discussion of the specifics of the Jaqaru language as it relates to Spanish and English, these questions will be considered in context of these problems as they naturally arise in the source texts and their transformations.

In undertaking this project, I acknowledge my doubly outsider status: as a native speaker of English, both Jaqaru and Spanish occupy the other-space for me as systems that require conscious acknowledgement at nearly all times to effectively interpret, much less communicate in. I also cite here Emily Apter’s cautious admonition of falling into “a translation studies overly indebted to linguistic ecology...fetishizing heritage language as it devotes itself to curatorial salvage: exoticizing burrs, calques and idiomatic expressions as so many ornaments of linguistic local color reinforcing linguistic cultural essentialism, and subjecting the natural flux and variation of dialect to a standard language model of grammatical fixity” (2010: 5). In picking out and translationally curating specifics of Jaqaru, I hope to evince an understanding and appreciation for the larger systems of meaning they stand for and their place in relationship to Jaqi and Andean cultural
constructions. Because I am concerned with ethnographic representation, I am focusing less on specific typologies of texts (oral narratives, poems, song, etc.) than on the overarching systems themselves and what they mean within and between their societies and speakers.

Background on Jaqaru and Genetic/Areal Relationships

Jaqaru is a language spoken by some 740 people, primarily in the town in Tupe in mid-southeastern Peru (Lewis et al. 2013). It is a member of the Jaqi family of languages, a group that includes sister languages Aymara (spoken by approximately two to three million people) and Kawki (a dying language, spoken by only a dozen or so people) (Hardman 2000). Jaqaru (as well as the rest of the Jaqi family) is a highly morphological language, with roots, stems, particles, and morphemes interacting according to complex rules of morphophonemics. While the Jaqi languages are not genetically related to Quechua, due to geographic proximity of their respective speakers there has been much mutual lexical and grammatical influence over time. Both share data source markers (likely first found in proto-Jaqi—see Hardman 1985), as well as a good deal of vocabulary. The Jaqi languages

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3 Much of the data for this paper comes from the online Jaqi Languages Database. It consists of several thousand entries from Dr. MJ Hardman’s field notebooks, translated into Spanish, English, and containing the original source language, and is searchable by morpheme. The database was an invaluable resource for the collection and analysis of these data, and has many applications for all manner of linguistic projects. It can be accessed at test.aymara.ufl.edu/LyraEditor/languageeditor.html
first came into contact with Spanish in the sixteenth century, when Spanish conquistadors invaded southeastern Peru.

Background on Andean Spanish

Andean Spanish has been uniquely and deeply influenced by the areal indigenous languages of the central Andes. Dialects vary, naturally, by physical separation and by local indigenous language influence; however, some commonalities in Peruvian Spanish are of especial interest to questions of adequate translation:

- Tenses for “epistemic usage” (Manley 1999: 3): pluperfect for indirect knowledge and preterite tense for direct knowledge (Martin 1981)
- Frequent use of exclamation pues “well, therefore, then” as discourse marker
- Frequent use of no más as mood marker (often written as a single word, nomás or nomas)

Two concerns regarding the notion of “adequate translation”: First, it is difficult to claim that any part of Andean Spanish as a whole (considering the above broad characteristics) is more influenced by any one indigenous language or dialect, considering their own mutual influence and long history of contact—Zavala (2001, working in Peruvian Quechua Spanish) and Laprade (1981, working in La Paz Aymaran Spanish) both find strong evidence that the Spanish exclamatory pues functions as an aspecual discourse marker that always occurs clause-finally, which is how this author impressionistically observed it being used in Tupean Andean
Spanish. For the purposes of this paper—synchronic and chiefly concerned with real-time representation of language systems, as opposed to a diachronic approach in which the adequacy of translation would begin with an analysis of the most historically felicitous forms—convergences in Jaqaru and Andean Spanish function as homoplasies, though of course their contact (and that of their speakers) tells a story that is much more than accidents of morphosyntax. Second, there is a concern (not shared by this author, but important to note) present in relying heavily upon the components of Andean Spanish unused outside of that region. Lexical choices that are accurate and appropriate translations, yet scan as Apter’s “burrs” by many Spanish speakers, present a problem imposed by the preconceptions of non-native Jaqi speakers of the “way” indigenous speakers talk. Likewise, and to a more severe degree due to the extent to which speakers associate standard syntax with socioeconomic prestige and intelligence, the Andean Spanish use of pluperfect and preterite Spanish tenses to describe impersonal and personal experience, respectively, can read as simply ungrammatical to a Spanish speaker unfamiliar with applications of these tenses to connote mood outside of their more conventional uses to solely denote completive or incompletive aspect.

**Typologically Contrastive Features of Jaqaru and Spanish**

The Jaqi and Indo-European language families exhibit fundamental differences in structure. There are some relatively felicitous means of expressing these differences in translation of Jaqaru to Spanish; evidentiality markers are a component of Jaqaru that can be represented somewhat robustly in Spanish. Other aspects of the
languages—namely, Jaqaru’s treatment of subject and object and Spanish’s obligatory gender marking of pronouns and adjectives—align less felicitously.

**Evidentiality Markers**

In order for a sentence to be grammatical in Jaqaru, it must include an evidentiality (data source) suffix, which indicates how a speaker acquired the knowledge they state; this can be connotated in Spanish and English, but in Jaqaru it is a grammatical class, expressed through morphology. The three main categories are knowledge through personal experience, knowledge through others’ speech, and non-personal (e.g. historical) knowledge (Hardman 2000: 111); these correspond with the grammatical persons as well, such that a suffix of person knowledge could not be used to describe another’s interior state, since it is impossible for the speaker to experience it themselves. Six of the most common are listed below, in descending order of speaker certainty/proximity to the event (Hardman 2008: 57) (*ill-* = see, *w-* = past tense, *ima-* = 1p>2p):

**Data source**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Category</th>
<th>Suffix</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal knowledge</td>
<td><em>ill.w.ima.wa</em></td>
<td>“I saw you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attenuated</td>
<td><em>ill.w.ima.qa</em></td>
<td>“I did see you, I’m sure.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sureness, but contradictable</td>
<td><em>ill.w.ima.ja</em></td>
<td>“I most certainly saw you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td><em>ill.w.ima.psa</em></td>
<td>“I doubtless saw you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge-through-language</td>
<td><em>ill.w.ima.mna</em></td>
<td>“They say I saw you.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These data source markers can be represented in a broad way in Andean Spanish by verb tenses, the pluperfect tense for non-personal –*ata*, and preterite tense for the personal knowledge suffixes. This is an interesting case of grammatical tense/aspect taking on mood in Spanish; they quite readily, albeit with less nuance and gradation, represent the Jaqaru data source markers. These Andean Spanish usages should be employed with care, however, as they are not used to connote mood in other varieties of Spanish (see section “Audience/Text” for a discussion of the difficulties of translating within language and across dialects). In English, there is no way to transfer data source so fluidly between verbs:

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yam.k.i.mna
hunger.3>3P PRES.KNOWLEDGE THROUGH LANGUAGE
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“She says she’s hungry.” (Hardman 2000: 112)

The quotative phrase “she says” must be utilized in English as an overt marker of how the knowledge was acquired, conveyed in Jaqaru through morphological class. Making the quotative overt in English reflects the grammatical necessity of it in Jaqaru; it would be more common or at least an option in English, in relaying information about another’s interior state, to simply state it as bare fact: “She’s hungry.” Translating it more literally from Jaqaru captures a postulate of the language, namely that one cannot know another’s interior state and must always qualify it appropriately. Still, however, the English gloss introduces a valence of
doubt: it could imply that the quoted speaker might not be telling the truth and therefore her statement needs couching; this connotation is not present in the Jaqaru.

Treatment of Subject and Object

In Spanish and English (and all Indo-European languages), subject and object are separate morphemes (though the Spanish subject is often null, e.g. [Tú] me viste “You saw me”; [Yo] te vi “I saw you”). In Jaqaru (and all Jaqi languages), subject and object are the same morpheme, so there is a ten-person conjugation (a nine-person conjugation in Kawki and Aymara) (Hardman 2008: 49):

| 1p to 2p | ill.k.ima | “I see you” (-k- = pres. tense) |
| 2p to 1p | ill.k.uta | “you see me” |
| 2p to 4p | ill.k.ushta | “you see us” |
| 3p to 1p | ill.k.utu | “they see me” |
| 3p to 4p | ill.k.ushtu | “they see us” |
| 3p to 2p | ill.k.tma | “they see you” |
| 2p to 3p | ill.k.ta | “you see them” |
| 1p to 3p | ill.k.t’a | “I see them” |
| 4p to 3p | ill.k.tna | “we see them” |

4 “They,” and all translations following that use the word, is employed as the most convenient gender-neutral gloss in English. However, it is important to note that the Jaqaru morpheme encodes any human gender, and does not specify any singular or plural agent/theme. “They” as used colloquially by some English speakers as a third-person gender neutral singular actually represents this Jaqaru non-contrast nicely in its ambiguity.
Although this is not inherently difficult to translate, it is worthy of note for the way in which Indo-European languages represent agency as compared to the Jaqi languages. In Jaqaru, subject and object are bound together, and do not exist hierarchically as they do in English and Spanish; the subject is not privileged as the agent in the Jaqi languages.

**Gendered Pronouns and Adjectives**

In Spanish, grammatical gender for human pronouns is obligatory, and is especially marked in the singular:

- 3p sg. female: **ella**
- 3p sg. male: **él**

It appears less overtly derived in the third person plural; however, its covert implications are no less present in the dual representations of conventional Spanish orthography:

- 3p pl. female: **ellas**
- 3p pl. male OR neuter: **ellos**
In granting the masculine gender the dual meaning of neutral, maleness is made neutral, and female other; maleness is pseudo-generic. But morphological gender is not present at all in Jaqaru; expression of gender is marked, and only used when relevant to discourse; then it is lexical, and not present grammatically. Nor do verbs require a gendered human agent in the singular, as they do in English (though the popularity of “they” as a singular, neuter pronoun is no longer uncommon in many dialects of American English). At a basic level, translating a gender-neutral plural in Jaqaru, for example, *qaylla* “child/children” or *allchi* “grandchild/grandchildren” to Spanish “*niño(s)*” or “*nieto(s)*” is potentially factually ambiguous, as it could be understood as referring to male children or grandchildren, respectively, when it is in fact gender-neutral. In the following example, in fact, one turn later in the discourse the child/grandchild referent is revealed to be female:

Petronila:  *qaylla.psa, allchi.ps*

child.AGGREGATE grandchild.AGGREGATE

“...the child, the grandchild.”

*wallmchi.txi lluqla.tx*

little girl.INTERROGATIVE little boy.INTERROGATIVE

“Is the child a little girl or a little boy?”

Dimas:  *wallmichi.wa*

little girl.PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE
“A little girl.” (Petronila Vilca 1977, Jaqi Database, p. 130)

A recent orthographic trend in Spanish (as well as Portuguese) that seeks to address both potential ambiguity and moreover insidious gender dominance of male-as-neutral is the use of the @ sign (“at” or arroba in Spanish), customarily used to denote the site of a particular user in e-mail but co-opted for a gender-aware orthography “since its form suggests the vowels a and o at the same time” (Gené Gil 2007). Using the arroba to translate nouns, pronouns, articles, and adjectives that are/have a human referent is standard practice in the Jaqi Database, and is a sensible solution to both approximate the relative gender neutrality of Jaqaru while calling attention to the way Spanish has conventionally represented gender.

The use of @ is not without some problems. As far as prescriptivism goes, it is still frowned upon by the Real Academia Española (RAE), the institution that attempts to regulate the Spanish language, and is not an accepted standard orthographic sign outside of its use in email addresses (or historically as a unit of weight) (Real Academia Española 2005). This only concerns this author inasmuch as it affects the representation of Jaqaru in translations that require a register that is not only formal but also standard/prestigious, in the interests of elevating Jaqaru to something equally standard; otherwise, the efforts of the RAE mostly do not come to bear upon the systems people actually choose to represent themselves and their
language. More pressing is the question of how to represent the Spanish singular female/male articles la/el or una/un, which do not feature a convenient –a/-o minimal pair distinction (Gené Gil 2007). There is also no obvious way to pronounce niñ@s, but many feminists simply say both gendered iterations of the pair, often placing the female form first to draw attention to its non-secondary position in society and correct the inherent imbalance of derived thinking that sees male as “naturally” preceding female (Hardman 1999); mostly, this is not hugely relevant to problems with written translation, though in order for the arroba to be accepted more widely as a legitimate grapheme, this sort of defense must be articulated more widely in addition to its use across written registers. However, just because gender is not expressed does not mean it is not insidious: contrast English’s covert categories with the non-presence of the same in Jaqaru (Silver and Miller 1997: 158).

Representing Culture and Beliefs

Translating set, idiomatic metaphors has long presented a problem in translation. Equally, if not more difficult, to translate are those overarching (generative) metaphors, conveyed through linguistic expression, that undergird cultural practice; for instance, the Jaqaru societal treatment and view of women’s roles vis-à-vis an emphasis on human vs. animal as opposed to the arguably more prevalent gender binary of Spanish and English. Worthy of note as well are the original Jaqaru lexical embodiments of color and time, both of which have been supplanted nearly completely by morphophonemically naturalized Spanish vocabulary and therefore Spanish concepts.
It is important to note that the translation of metaphor is not unidirectional, even within a language itself. For instance, in discussing unique features of a language, are we guilty of after-the-fact circular logic? In Silver and Miller’s example, is “sun” in Cree “an animate noun because it is viewed as being alive, or is it viewed as being alive because it is an animate noun in Cree?” (1997: 25) The question of “which came first” is worth noting, though in the end the presence of such metaphors in some language and their absence in others is more relevant than their diachronic origins.

**Direct vs. Oblique Translation of Sayings and Idioms**

Set sayings and idioms ostensibly convey poetic or otherwise nuanced information, but also convey tacit beliefs and cultural ideologies. Is it better to translate more literally, using a smaller unit of translation (the word) to convey meaning, or for equivalence, by using what the translator deems a cultural correspondence in the destination language? The former carries intracultural weight, while the latter carries intercultural weight. Koller (1979, in Palumbo 2009) suggests that the further apart the source and destination languages are from one another in structure, the larger the unit of translation tends to be; when languages are at odds not only in grammatical structure but also belief systems (in the following case, as they relate to normativity), the net may have to be cast quite wide if one’s goal is a translation that scans as perfectly fluent and source-language-like (a covert
translation). Take, for example, the following saying in Jaqaru (Dimas Bautista Iturrizaga 2013):

ñuñ.m    pitx.cha.w    was.k.t”a
breast.POS.YOUR    full.just.SS    walk.PAST NEAR PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE.1>3P

“Your breast[milk] was just enough to keep me walking.”

The above gloss is a more literal interpretation of the saying, which nuance is perhaps better expressed in English as “no matter what, you gave me enough to go on; I will always have enough” (Hardman 2013). The metaphor expresses respect and love for one’s mother; it might be said, for instance, by an adult child to their mother as a way of expressing their thanks for the support and love given to them when they were growing up. A relatively equivalent quotation, in sentiment though not form, might be for example Miguel Asturias’s “Madre, te bendigo porque supiste hacer de tu hijo un hombre real y enteramente humano” (“Mother, I bless you because you knew to make your son a real man, and fully human”).

But the expression of an idea, its form, may be just as important as the idea’s more readily understood, intercultural meaning. This particular saying demonstrates Jaqaru attitudes towards bodies, especially, as contrasted with Western ideologies, towards female bodies. A presently “dominant value in [Western] culture is that breasts are to be looked at and enjoyed by grown men, not babies. ...This limited view of the breast is so pervasive it has limited women’s ability to successfully
breastfeed,” with just 22% of American women still nursing at six months after childbirth (Ward, Merriwether and Caruthers 2006: 704). This limited exposure to breasts as anything besides a sexual symbol scans as strange and discomfiting, yet for Jaqaru people (and many other Peruvian people of indigenous cultures) breasts and breastfeeding is wholeheartedly embraced both as an act (the open breastfeeding I saw in Tupe) and as symbolism besides that of sex. See, for example, the enormous popularity and millions of YouTube views (many, certainly, in ridicule) of the young Peruvian huayño singer Wendy Sulca's song “La Tetita” (endearingly, “Sweet Breast”), which features lyrics such as “Cada vez que la veo a mi mamita, me esta provocando con su tetita” (“Every time I see my mother, I’m tempted by her sweet breast”). To translate “ñuñ.m pitx.cha.w was.k.t”a” as an equivalent rather than direct representation of the original metaphor would create an unseen lacuna for the reader between the destination text and the source text.

**Women in Jaqaru Language/Culture: Human vs. Animal/Woman vs. Man**

Expressing women’s roles in Jaqaru presents another problem of cultural translation. In Jaqaru, a prevailing metaphor is human versus animal, as opposed to Western notions of woman versus man. In Spanish, a Jaqaru parent might tell her child, “Tienes que ser Jaqaru no más” (“You simply must be Jaqaru”) rather than “Be a good girl/boy”; in Jaqaru, she might say *jaqar arma!,* which, due to the dual meaning of *jaqaru* as both a demonym and the word for people in general, could be translated as both “be Jaqaru!” or “be human!” (Bautista 2013).
This human/animal instead of woman/man dichotomy signals that all people are seen as having equal footing and importance in Jaqaru society. Women have autonomy and full legal rights in Jaqaru culture: they maintain their own name, farmland and property before and after marriage. Western notions of gender bifurcations as “universal and timeless...present in every society at all times” (Oyewumi 1997: xi) simply do not apply. How, then, to reflect these attitudes as in the phrase *shumay warmi* “beautiful/good woman” (Bautista Iturrizaga 2013)? The adjective *shumaya* can mean both “good” and “beautiful/attractive,” and can be equally used with male referents, in both significations (Hardman 2000: 13); there are few English words that can be used to describe both female and male beauty, with there being many more accepted ways to describe the way a younger woman looks. It can also be used as *shumay apaka/acxaka* “attractive old woman/old man” (Bautista 2013), in contrast with English, where one could use the same word to describe an attractive older or younger man (“handsome,” for instance) but not as frequently the same word for an older or younger woman (“pretty,” “lovely”). In the case where “handsome” is used for people of both cis genders, it has a decidedly different meaning when applied to a woman as opposed to a man—it can be broadly used for men of all ages, but connotes a woman both older and “unconventionally” attractive. This double standard is imposed upon a translation from Jaqaru to English.

**Lexical Supplanting of Hours and Color**
The Jaqaru time system is based on relative light, rather than numerical times; e.g., *int muynatza* “bajada del sol (descent of the sun)” ≈ 1 p.m.; *junhk’tata* “aparición de sombras (appearance of shadows)” ≈ 2 p.m. (Bautista Iturrizaga 2010: 313). The traditionally agrarian society, based around going out to the *chakra* (fields) every day, gave rise to the exacting attention to shadow and light that would produce words for such concepts. There is also no single Jaqaru word for “day” as a unit of 24 hours, suggesting that the notion of a unit combining night and daylight is not native to Jaqaru culture (the closest is *aps akurkama*, “until tomorrow at this time” [Bautista Iturrizaga 32]). The language’s color system likewise differs significantly from that of the Indo-European family. There are eight unique Jaqaru color morphemes, all describing various shades of white, grey, black, red or pink; the rest are metaphors or Spanish borrowings (Hardman 1981).

Translating original Jaqaru time and color systems literally could scan as Apter’s “lexical burrs”—linguistic “color” that not only inhibits understanding by the reader of the destination text but moreover renders the source language inaccessibly strange.

That is “Blonde Woman/*Alpaca Hair-Colored Woman.*” [the name of a song] (Jaqi Database: Irene/music, p. 115)
Taking the approach of a thick translation (one replete with footnotes and intratext explanations), as suggested by Kwame Appiah with Twi (1993), could be a means of retaining the original significance and origin of the time system and color metaphors while avoiding the production of lexical oddities. Depending on the type of text and translator’s preference on a scale of readability, the literal translation could serve as the main text or the footnote—but either way, it would orthographically call the reader’s attention to the fact that what they are reading is not, somehow, what was originally thought or said in the native culture/by the original speaker; “getting the meaning...right is hardly even a first step towards understanding” (Appiah 809).

Discussion

Lawrence Venuti proclaims the importance of foreignizing translation “as a form of resistant translation opposing the prevailing ethnocentric modes of transfer” (Palumbo 2009: 48; emphasis author’s own). Maintaining a degree of otherness in the target text seems not only desirable as a means of demonstrating the profound differences in culture and thought between Jaqaru and Spanish, but also to make bare the fact of translation, demonstrating to the target audience that the transfer of ideas between the two languages is fundamentally fraught. The question, then, is how to balance this approach with readability, and how to avoid alienating the reader of the destination text by making a translation too normatively abstruse in the name of foreignization and thereby perpetrate stereotypes of indigenous languages as utterly other.
In beginning a translation of Jaqaru or any indigenous language with a rich history of areal contact and a “corresponding” influenced dialect, it seems that a fundamental consideration of the task is the destination audience. Translating a fox story into, say, a bilingual Spanish-Jaqaru text for pedagogical purposes, Andean Spanish provides both grammatical and cultural equivalence. That same text, when repurposed for a broader South American audience, acquires “color” and otherness through its non-standard use of epistemic verb tenses and discourse markers. Though giving a non-privileged dialect its due as a rightfully useful system is important, the perception of Jaqaru and other indigenous languages—and their speakers—is still very much culturally negative in the eyes of far too many.

The state of indigenous language literary privilege is not quite as dire as it used to be, as when in Daniel G. Brinton had to dignify his English translation of Nahuatl sacred hymns by couching it in terms of an accepted foreign text, calling it Rig Veda Americanus (León-Portilla 1983). It was necessary to overcome the notion, too, that translation was part of a more general trend toward a platonic ideal of language and an “ultimate” grammar: Fray Geronimo prefaced his translation of Tarascan with the defense that “I think I will be criticized...as a faithful interpreter, I have not wanted to alter their form of speaking, nor to do damage to their own sentences” (León-Portilla 1983: 107).
By translating Jaqaru into a privileged, "standard" dialect of Spanish, the source language is likewise promoted to a position of merit. In this case, foreignization could be approximated by providing footnotes and a translator’s note to make clear the most problematic and marked differences, though it does not compare to the experience of reading a fully foreignized text. Though solely aspiring to be like the linguistic/sociocultural status quo is hardly ideal, it is hoped that in translating Jaqaru for a very wide audience and thereby reducing the dissonance of an unfamiliar grammar the reader could be made open to other aspects of Jaqaru culture equally worthy of consideration and valuation.

The following translation leans towards a foreignized form—that is, relative to Western readers and those unfamiliar with Andean Spanish. For native speakers of Andean Spanish, it is arguably less foreignized. There is a tricky balance between a blanched, more formalized (and therefore "stiffer") translation, at the high cost of being less true to conventions of Jaqaru and Andean Spanish—but, perhaps, more accessible to a wider audience. The original context of the story, as an oral telling, is maintained; this is at odds with and foreign to the Western emphasis on the written, third-person story. Though Westerners recognize the conventions of storytelling, privileged, “classic” Western stories (that which we are comfortable calling “literature”) are usually told using a more formal, distant register. The following “semi-foreignized” texts are, with modifications, the Spanish and English translations that can be found in the Jaqi Database. Providing secondary media—recordings of voices that capture the tenor of the story, photos of the original teller
and landscape/objects they describe, or illustrations of the story—are all also possible ways to add to understanding (the database features original recordings of sociolinguistic interviews, songs, and photos).

Background to Fox and Toad Story

Fox stories are common in Jaqaru. As in many other Native American cultures, foxes are sly and savvy tricksters. In this story, recounted by native Jaqaru and Kawki speaker Justo de la Cruz, the fox gets bested by a group of toads. This text is a translation of an oral story; for that reason, I do not attempt to provide a translation that suggests a deliberate written telling. At the same time I recognize the validity of both the spoken and written word, especially for Jaqaru (a strongly oral society where people can easily recite elaborate family trees without any written aid), and make the largest edits in structure where to not do so otherwise would be suggestive of an unwelcome and unrelatable otherness, or simply lead to confusion. This translation is more ethnographic in nature and relatively true to original speaker’s words, as opposed to taking a freer reign to lengthen and contextualize the story within the text, which might be more appropriate for a more “literary” as opposed to sociocultural context. For this reason, a synopsis has been provided below, as context is not worked into the translation itself.

Synopsis of Fox and Toad Story

A group of toads decided to conspire against the wily and stubborn fox. They had one toad go to the fox and make a bet to race the other in a gorge. The fox and toad
agreed that each would shout out to the other as they raced, so that they would
know how far along the other was—in the steep, winding Andean foothills, it can be
easy to get lost or see farther than a few kilometers. But the toads had set a plan in
place beforehand to position themselves all along the path, each calling out just a bit
before the fox so the fox would think the one toad was just a bit ahead of him. This
caused the fox to run night and day and become so exhausted as to die. (See the
appendix for photos of Tupe for a visual representation of the gorges.)

Original Jaqaru (Justo de la Cruz 1977, Jaqi Database) (Note: {spa} indicates a
lexical borrowing from Spanish.)

Uk"ama jayas achkanhw kuynktunat atquqa {spa apuys} nurkn {spa
sapu}wshqa. {spa Sapu}qa arisht'awat may q'aja, atquqa maynich. Ukachmn ukat"qa
{spa apuysht}shuq, {spa este} wal wa qallyanushptak , {spa sapu}qa arisht'awat .
Sashu < jumaqa {spa mas} manhna, maynsh"a {spa mas} manhna maynsh"a {spa
mas} manhna > uk"amamn {spa sapu}q , arisht'ushuqa, qallyaw {spa ganitakiq
atquq ulluchp". {spa Apuystu}t wal qallywat, uka walkushuqa, sakna atquqa < {spa
bos} yakshitina {spa kankula}tn jumatximn {spa gan}tumata natximn {spa
ganu}man sashuq {spa bos} yakshisn > qam sashumna wasimna sapanqa atquq. <
naq "waq" sanha > sawimn, < jumaqa < naq "quququqs" sanhw naqa > sawimn {spa
sapu}q, < jumaqa "waq", na yatxkt"wa > sashu wal qallyaw. Walki walki walki
t'ursaq, atquq wal qallyawat {spa terrible} uk {spa sapu}wshq, {spa sapu}qa
arisht'askiqa, {spa sapu}q manhatamn “quq” saki , atquq {spa sirk}chatmn "waq"
saki , {spa mas} manhankas {spa sapu}qa saki , atqumn sikk walki walki
Spanish (adapted from Jaqi Database)

Así de antes mis viejos me contaban que el zorro había hecho una apuesta con el sapo. Los sapos se habían conversado en una quebrada; el zorro era uno solo. Dizque sí no más después de haber apostado, para que inicie la carrera, los sapos se habían conversado, diciendo “tu más abajo, otro más abajo, en turno otro más abajo”—así dizque los sapos. Al haberse puesto de acuerdo, empezó para ganar al zorro solito. Por la apuesta el zorro había empezado a correr—eso estaban corriendo. Decía el zorro, “Vamos dándonos la voz: calcularemos si me ganarás tú o si no te ganaré—entonces la voz nos estaremos dando,” que dizque diciendo el zorro.

“Yo diré ‘waq,’” dijo dizque; “Tú dirás—”

“Yo diré ‘quququqs,’” dizque que dijo el sapo, “tú ‘waq’, entonces sé, ¡yo sé!”

Empezó a correr. ¡Corre, que corre, que corre, dia y noche! El zorro empezó a correr harto con el sapo. Así los sapos se habían hecho conversar entre ellos y empezaron su plan. El sapo de abajo, dizque, “quq” había dicho; el zorro de cerca, dizque, ‘waq’ dice; el sapo de abajo ya dijo. El zorro seguía, corría, corría así no más, dizque. El sapo de más abajo ya dizque ‘waq’ dijo, ¡después otro, ‘waqaquq’ dijo! El zorro, dizque, ‘waq’ dijo, allí corría que corría así no más, dizque se terminó, el zorro, del todo murió. Los sapos ganó, el zorro murió.
So in the past my parents used to tell me about how the fox made a bet with the toad. The toads made a plan in a gorge; the fox was alone, away. They do say that after betting with the fox, the toads conspired in order to race with the fox, saying “you, farther down the road; another even further lower down the road; and another still farther down the road!”—so the toads said. In coming to this agreement, the toads set their plan to win against the lone fox. The fox started to run to win the bet—they were all running. The fox said, “So, we will shout out along the way to let each other know if you end up beating me or if I end up beating you,” so they say the fox said.

“I will say ‘waq,’” they say the fox said. “You will say—“

“I will say ‘quququqs,’” they say the toad said. “When you say ’waq,’ I will know—I’ve got it!”

So they began running. They ran and ran and ran, day and night. The fox began to catch up with the toad. So the other toads talked amongst each other and set their plan in action. So they say the toad that was down below said ‘quq’; they say that the nearby fox said ’waq’; then the toad already even lower down spoke. So the fox just kept on running, just like that, they say. A toad from down below said ‘waq,’ then another called out ‘waqaquq’! Then the fox, they say, said ’waq,’ and just kept on running and running until the fox was done for and died. The toads won, the fox died.

Notes
Issues arise from the large structural differences between Jaqaru and the two Indo-European languages, and occasionally between Spanish and English. “The toads made a plan” loses the distance conveyed in both Jaqaru “nurkn” (base data source morpheme -ana\ conveys remote personal knowledge) and its Andean Spanish equivalent “había hecho”; but the alternative, literal translation that would accord with the Spanish “The toads had made a plan” would be an inaccurate rendering of the pluperfect construction, which does not convey aspect here but rather a reflection of the distance of knowledge. Speaker distance is conveyed elsewhere, in the Spanish “dizque” and English “they say that” to convey Jaqaru -mna\, or knowledge-through-language, as in ukachmn “they just do say that,” “dizque sí no más.” The Spanish “dizque” itself is an adverb or adjective that expresses distance and doubt, from an archaic form of the verb decir, “to say” and the conjunction que, common in Spanish of the Americas (Celi Arellano 2012). Another way the Jaqaru postulate of data source comes through in both the Spanish and English translations is the frequent use of quotative speech, often bookending a single utterance; for example, Ukachmn ukat"qa {spa apuysht}shuq, {spa este} wal wal qallyanushptak, {spa sapu}qa arisht'awat ... uk"amamn {spa sapu}q: “They do say that after betting with the fox, the toads conspired ... so the toads said.” This robust use of quotatives may also be due to the fact that the speaker is recounting (an order of distance) a fable (another order of distance) and frequently quoting a character (yet another order).
Some of the usages throughout the translations are not of any convention in those destination languages. Many fables/stories in English and Spanish with anthropomorphic animals use human pronouns; since Jaqaru does not have a gendered pronoun, the full nouns “toads”/“sapos” and “fox”/“zorro” are used instead of imposing any gender. Imposing plurality, however, is unavoidable; see, for example, “the frogs won”/“los sapos ganó” vs. the unmarked \{spa sapu\} \{spa gana\}wi, which unfortunately misses the ambiguity conveyed in the unmarked original that encapsulates the fact that the toads as a unit posed as one. Some usages are novel in the translations, meant to serve as both in-text translation and extratexual, deitic signaling that the speaker may originally have conveyed with intonation or gesture: the original \{spa sapu\}qa arisht’askiqa literally means “the toads talked amongst each other,” but is meant to illustrate their reaction to the fox’s progress; adding an explicit context, “So the other toads talked amongst each other and set their plan in action,” makes up for what was likely paralinguistically suggested.

Further Questions

Jaqaru is not, fundamentally, “untranslatable.” However, care must be taken in translating it, as with any language, especially in consideration of the nature of the destination text—keeping in mind, however, that the source text is that which ultimately contains and reflects the language, culture and humanity of Jaqaru. The questions of how to translate various Jaqaru texts, so frequently oral, to the imperial languages, so often written, are often highly bound in their end purpose. Further
study on the specific effects produced by translations along the scales of foreignized and thick in various genres would be useful in this regard. How best, between specific kinds of texts, to produce a good representation of Jaqaru poetics? When is it more important to make the literature of the “other” relatable versus “preserving” it as a mirror of an alternative culture and worldsense? What is certain is that further study of indigenous/colonial language translation will produce stimulating glimpses into sociocultural differences and similarities, especially those that transcend language.

Bibliography


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Appendix

a) The region Jaqaru is spoken in (Tupe) in southwestern Peru.
b) The town of Tupe. Visible are the craggy, steep gullies that provide the topographical context for the fox and toad story.
c) A picture of myself (right) with one of my consultants, Ludina Casas (left).