

SWEET SONGS AND SOFT HEARTS: METAPHORS IN CUZCO QUECHUA¹

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1. Introduction

1.1 Quechuan languages

Quechua, known as Runasimi, or the “people’s language,” is a family of agglutinating, SOV languages consisting of Aymara, Quechua I and Quechua II. There are 8-10 million speakers throughout the Peruvian Andes, Bolivia and Ecuador (Pedersen et al. 2010). The language consultant is from Cuzco, Peru and speaks Quechua II. The material studied from Almeida and Haidar (2012) is also from Quechua II.

1.2 Quechuan culture

Quechuan culture has a rich mythology and tradition of poetry. This history lends itself to an interdisciplinary approach to modelling the world, based in the mytho-poetical roots of the culture (Almeida and Haidar 2012). Through a case study of Quechua II in Ecuador, Almeida and Haidar (2012) argue this creates a cognitive continuity between domains not as thoroughly connected in Indo-European languages. Traditionally space and time have been conceptualized as a single spatiotemporal unit. This pattern of thinking could have implications to both epistemology and episteme itself (Almeida and Haidar 2012).

In Quechuan cosmogony, mountains and the earth play complementary roles modelling social and spiritual relations, and the related concepts are reflected in the language (Almeida and Haidar 2012). Nature terms have infused metaphorical and spiritual meanings in addition to their literal meanings, particularly entities like birds and the sun (Almeida 1979). Examples in modern Quechua are shown in (1a-b).

- (1) a. orko
 mountain
 ‘mountain/god’
 [Dative, 128]

¹Many thanks to consultant W. P. for sharing their time, language and culture; to Professor Lima for her support and guidance; and to the Field Methods class for their work and creativity.

- b. patʃa-mama
mountain-mother
'(holy core of the) earth'
[Dative, 128]

The orientation of space-time in Quechua is a point of contention in anthropological literature. Time may run in the opposite direction of metaphors in languages like English, i.e. the future is behind the speaker and the past is in front of them (Almeida and Haidar 2012). The logic is that the past is known and can be seen, while the future is unknown and unseen. A historical version of the model is repeated in Quechua orthography from Almeida and Haidar (2012) in (2) below.

- (2) a. ñaupa
'past, and forward'
- b. kay
'present, and here'
- c. k'ipa
'future, and behind'

Generally, figurative language has not been thoroughly studied in the Quechuan languages. Idioms in Quechua of the Peruvian Andes have been explored, but only in the domains of “distress and suffering” (Pederson et al. 2010). The purpose of this study was to model culturally-specific terms for better understanding mental conditions in social and historical context. Many terms studied are Spanish loanwords, or do not have figurative meanings.

1.3 Theory in metaphor

Conceptual metaphor theory proposes that metaphor is not merely present in linguistic expressions but is a result of cognitive processes that link semantic domains in the mind (Cameron and Maslen 2010). The metaphor maps between two domains, usually using a more concrete concept to describe a more abstract one, called a source and target domain respectively (Lakoff and Turner 1989). For instance, physical location can describe time as in (3). A domain is a cloud of entities, attributes, processes and relationships stored in the mind, sometimes represented by a lexical list.

- (3) metaphor: The event is here.
concept: EVENTS ARE LOCATIONS

(Lakoff and Turner 1989)

Metaphor can add structure to, distort or highlight the target domain (Cameron and Maslen 2010). Understanding metaphors may help us understand cognition and cultural

values. “Conceptual metaphors are part of the common conceptual apparatus shared by members of a culture” (Lakoff and Turner 1989). Shen and Gil created a typological questionnaire to explore figurative language cross-linguistically, and studied Indo-European and east Asian languages.

1.4 Research questions

This paper investigates what sort of metaphorical language is used in Cuzco Quechua, and how it manifests, in verbs, nouns, and adjectives; whether there are emotional metaphors, metaphors for mental states and activities, metaphors in the domain of time and space, and which orientations are used to talk about time.

The language is likely to be rich in metaphor, in all domains outlined in the typological questionnaire, with many relating to nature, reflecting the historical cosmogony. The reverse time model is recently contested, and is likely no longer present in the language. However, our class has elicited many terms for time, as shown in (4a-d), each entry all translating to “what time is it?” which suggests metaphor related to time may nonetheless be rich.

- (4) a. *duda patju*
‘dark time’
- b. *tjima puda*
‘what time’
- c. *imaj hurasda*
‘what time’
- d. *iman timpu karparin*
‘what time’
[Dative: 1230, 1625, 1626, 1223]

2. Materials and methods

The majority of the data was collected using questionnaires and translation. Specifically, “Metaphors Across Languages,” the questionnaire by Gil and Shen for work on the typology of metaphors, provided most of the structure for the elicitations. It outlines several semantic categories often rich in metaphor, which include: perception terms, sensory terms, body part terms, texture terms, travel terms, emotions, mental states/activities and time. The consultant was informed that the goal was to collect metaphors, and was given examples of metaphors in each category in English. The consultant either spoke freely, inspired by the subject, or together we went through each term in the category, looking for translations and further inspiration.

When eliciting terms for time, the figurative questionnaire was supplemented by direct questions regarding spatiotemporal phrases described in Almeida and Haidar (2012).

Further investigation of time expressions used the first half of “Time and space questionnaire” by Levinson et al. (1970), specifically for periods, measurement and passage of time.

Some metaphors were found in folktales and poetry, and on the student database. S. Hong elicited a folktale, and her work was later analyzed for metaphors. Poetry, both online and print, was translated. Some translations to Spanish and English were provided by G. Dumais. Specific examples and translations used for comparison were found on the student database, Dative.

The collected metaphors were grouped and compared to metaphors analyzed in studies of conceptual metaphor, such as Pérez (2008) investigating metaphors of the heart.

3. Results

The results are formatted according to Shen and Gil’s typology questionnaire with an additional nature category at the end. Common semantic threads are presented throughout the examples and are compared to attested conceptual metaphors in other languages.

3.1 Perception terms

The perception category includes words such as see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. The first metaphor involving sight, (5) connects attention with vision.

- (5) kawa-x jawsa
 see-x blind
 ‘not paying attention, to see blindly’

A frequently recurring metaphor involves sight as a form of feeling, as in (6), where sight is used as introspection, and as in (7) where sight is used to express feeling emotion. (7) is particularly notable as a heart metaphor that conceptualizes THE HEART FOR THE PERSON (Pérez 2008).

- (6) kawa-j soŋko-j kita
 look-INF heart-POSS 2.SG.POSS
 ‘to look at your own heart (introspect)’

- (7) tʃaska-ŋ panta hamoxtiŋ q’axtʃa-ka riku-kun
 Chaska-ŋ Panta coming fear-ka see-kun
 ‘when Panta was coming Chaska feels scared’

Additionally, smell was used in a similar way to the English expression “nosey,” as in (8).

- (8) mɨʃki-pakox
 smell-pakox
 ‘nosey; trying to know everything’

Taste was generally a productive sense, explored further in section 3.2. In (9) taste is used as a metaphor for experience.

- (9) ɲoka-n maʎi-ni kelkan-ta
 1.SG-NOM taste-ni letter-ACC
 ‘I know the book; I read the book’

3.2 Sensory terms

The sensory terms elicited primarily described people and their character. The sense of taste seems to be particularly productive, as (10-13) all focus on taste. Note in (13) “stinging” is meant like the sensation of a hot pepper.

- (10) warmi sumax-mi
 woman delicious-mi
 ‘nice woman, inside and outside’
- (11) q’alma
 unseasoned
 ‘boring person, someone you don’t like’
- (12) a. mɨʃki simi
 sweet mouth
 ‘person who speaks with beautiful words’
- b. mɨʃki taki
 sweet song
 ‘beautiful song’
- (13) k’arax simi-wan
 stinging mouth-wan
 ‘using very bad words, angry’

In (14) we see a metaphor for a “loveless person” referring to the quality of their heart being sour or spicy, implying Quechua also may also have the metaphorical concept that THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE (Pérez 2008).

- (14) *haja soŋko*
sour heart
'loveless person'

3.3 Body part terms

Many metaphors elicited revolved around the heart. Not only does love exist in the heart, but it appears that the physical qualities of the heart are relevant for one's character and emotional state, as in (15a-b), where the stone comparison implies a hardened or selfish person, showing perhaps that THE HEART IS A MATERIAL (Pérez 2008).

- (15) a. *rumi soŋko*
stone heart
'selfish person; hardened heart'
- b. *kaka soŋko*
boulder heart
'selfish person; hardened heart'

The heart can also be an object to be broken, as in (16) where "open" can be used to mean "break a heart." Thus, THE HEART IS A BREAKABLE OBJECT (Pérez 2008).

- (16) a. *liki*
open
'to open, break'
- b. *kiri*
wound
'to wound'

One can also refer to a heart as "empty," perhaps showing THE HEART IS A CONTAINER FOR EMOTIONS, as in (17) (Pérez 2008). The heart may be a locus of love and emotion, as in (18) where one literally asks someone to "sit on my chest" as a plea for love.

- (17) *tʃosax soŋko*
empty heart
'loveless person'
- (18) *kasko-j-man tija-jemuj*
chest-j-ALL sit-jemuj
'come to me and love me'

Found in a folktale, (19) shows control through being under someone's foot.

- (19) tʃakipampa-mpi purenka
sole.of.foot-mpi walk
'to be controlled by someone'

(S. Hong 2019)

Artistic skill is compared to the value of the materials silver and gold in (20a-b).

- (20) a. kolka-maki
silver-hand
'artistic person'
- b. kori-maki
gold-hand
'very artistic person'

3.4 Texture terms

Texture metaphors can also describe people's character. In (21) is another example where the quality of the heart is described, again showing THE HEART IS A MATERIAL.

- (21) ʌampu sonko
soft heart
'gentle person'

In (22-24) the textural adjective is compared directly to the person's character.

- (22) k'antʃu
rough
'person who talks too much, isn't careful about what they say'
- (23) ʃuʃka runa
slippery person
'person who is always trying to insert themselves'
- (24) mantʃa paku
mantʃa prickly
'prickly person'

3.5 Travel terms

The only metaphors elicited in this domain are for saying goodbye, either as one is leaving, or as a goodbye to the dead. (25) shows different conjugations of this verb, literally meaning "drop."

- (25) a. katʃar-pari
drop-pari
'(to say) goodbye'
- b. katʃar-pare-ska
drop-pare-PST
'said goodbye'

3.6 Emotions

Emotion was the most productive domain, with even more metaphors revolving around the heart, and some involving the eyes. (26a-b) show how feelings or quality of the heart can stand in for the emotions the person is feeling. In (27) one is able to describe a hateful person via their heart. (26) and (27) may indicate THE HEART IS THE SEAT OF LOVE.

- (26) a. soŋko-mi kara-ʃan
heart-mi sting-PROG
'I am upset/angry'
- b. soŋko rawrari-ʃan
heart burn-PROG
'upset/angry'
- (27) awka soŋko
hate heart
'person who hates everyone'

Eyes are also salient for describing emotion, with different substances emerging from them depending on the emotional state. (28-30) show an array of eye and tear metaphors.

- (28) tʃaj runa-xka ɲawiŋ-kuna-manta-raxmi nina pawa-ʃan
that people-xka eyes-PL-ABL-raxmi flames fly-PROG
'that person is very upset (flames are flying out of this person's eyes)'
- (29) ɲawi-mi jawarta wakan
eyes-my bleeding tears
'severely sad (crying blood)'
- (30) weka-ki majun apaj-uwa-ʃan
tears-ki river take.way-uwa-PROG
'severely sad, despondent (the river of tears are taking me away)'

Emotion is also discussed as a physical object or response, as in (31) with a “wall of sadness” and (32) where fear is fully embodied. Happiness, however, can be felt in the heart, as in (33), where love inspires happiness.

- (31) λ aki-kakan nit'u-wa- λ an
sadness-huge press-wa-PROG
'a huge wall of sadness pressing on me'
- (32) λ apan kurkuj-mi q'axt λ a-ska (k^hatatatan)
all body-mi fear-PST (shaking)
'all of my body was (shaking) with fear'
- (33) kanti-ku λ uspan so η koj-kusikun
you-love heart-gets.happy
'your heart gets happy from love'

3.7 Mental states and activities

Many metaphors were provided for mental states and activities. Light seems to have a connection to understanding or intelligence, seen in (34).

- (34) k'ant λ a uma
light head
'bright person (learns quickly)'

Memory can be used to describe elderly people, as in (35), because they have so much they remember. It can be combined with thinking to mean worrying as in (36). Understanding can be expressed with different non-literal expressions in (37a-b).

- (35) λ uja-x
remember-x
'elderly people'
- (36) λ uja-j mana-j
remember-INF think-INF
'worrying/thinking'
- (37) a. ujari-ki
hear-2.SG
'I hear you; I understand you'
- b. qapari-n-tax
yell-PRES-tax
'I hear you; I understand'

Meaning both “clear” and “learning,” *tʃʷuʎa* can be used to describe someone enlightened or educated, as in (38).

- (38) *tʃʷuʎa-nina ʎuʎe warmi*
 clear-nina thinking woman
 ‘woman with clear thinking, enlightened’

Ideas can be “grasped” as in (39) and they can “go into” someone’s head as in (40), much like in English. The similarity to English metaphors raises the issue that these may be calques. However, the consultant consistently avoided giving Spanish loan words or any phrase they did not believe was true to traditional Quechua.

- (39) *tʃaj erke-ka manan hapin-tʃu ʎatʃe-ta*
 that child-ka NEG grasp-tʃu learn-ACC
 ‘the child didn’t grasp the idea (didn’t learn)’
- (40) *ʎatʃa-tʃi-fani kampak itʃaka manan uma-n-man hajku-ntʃu*
 learn-CAUS-PROG.1.SG even.though but NEG head-n-ALL go-ntʃu
 ‘even though I’m teaching him, it doesn’t go into his head’

3.8 Time

Many expressions for time include non-literal meaning. Time is measured with “ties” for years and the word for clock literally means “to tie the sun,” as in (41a-b). This may be related to the traditional record keeping system of *kipus*, complex knot systems. Other culturally specific time expressions include the word for “month,” which also means “moon,” as in (42).

- (41) a. *ti-wata*
 ti-tie
 ‘clock’
- b. *inti-wata-na*
 sun-tie-NOM
 ‘solar clock’
- (42) *nintʃa kiʎa*
 next moon
 ‘next month’

In expressions of the future, such as (43), times moves toward the speaker, possibly showing the metaphor TIME MOVES (Lakoff and Turner 1989).

- (43) hamo-x wata
 come-x year
 ‘coming year’

The time model has the future in front and the past behind, contrary to Almeida and Haidar (2012)’s record. However, there are still some potential semantic connections, which may suggest diachronic change or borrowing. The past can be described with *nawpa*, like in the expression in (44a). While the consultant denied a possible connotation of “forward,” *nawpa* can also be used to mean “ahead” or “forward” in (44b).

- (44) a. *nawpa kawsa-j*
 before live-INF
 ‘old times’
- b. *nawpa-j*
 go.ahead-INF
 ‘go ahead’

The present is described with a separate word than for “here,” each shown in (45), showing that these are in fact distinct concepts.

- (45) a. *kuna*
 now
 ‘now’
- b. *kaj*
 here
 ‘here’

The future (46a) is described with a separate word from “behind,” and is not *k’ipa*, which is used only as a term for potato crops, as in (46b). However, (46b) can also be used as a derogatory term for step-children. The consultant explained that *k’ipa* is when potatoes are harvested and the leftover roots re-sprout the next season, implying a cyclicity within the word.

- (46) a. *pakariŋ*
 tomorrow
 ‘tomorrow; future’
- b. *k’ipa*
 potato.crop
 ‘new potato crop’

Space and time do not seem to be any more “unidual” than in other languages. Time can be referred to with distance and space expressions, as in (47-49). This suggests the metaphor EVENTS ARE LOCATIONS. In (47) *nawpa* can be used to mean “forward”, or in the future, rather than “behind,” or in the past. Which spatiotemporal frames of reference are used in this language is unclear.

(47) *naŋ nawpa-ri wantʃiʃna*
 already ahead-ri wantʃiʃna
 ‘(The event is) already in front of us/ahead of us’

(48) *kaj ʌaʌpiŋa kaʃan*
 here event is
 ‘the event is close’

(49) *tʃaj-ka karu-piŋan kaʃan*
 that-ka far-piŋan is
 ‘the event is far away’

3.9 Nature

Relatively few metaphors related to nature. Some describe, and somewhat anthropomorphize, water in (50a-b).

(50) a. *maju-n waka-ʃan*
 river-NOM cry-PROG
 ‘the river is making so much noise’

b. *maju-n qapari-ʃan*
 river-NOM yell-PROG
 ‘the river is noisy’

A relatively common comparison is between people and birds. Perhaps there is a cultural metaphor, PEOPLE ARE BIRDS, which may arise from the plethora of birds in the mythology. An endearing term for daughter in law implies “beautiful, nice, fragile girl,” while just referring to her as a bird, as in (51). “Dove” can also be used as a term of endearment as in (52).

(51) *katʃu-n urpi*
 daughter-n bird
 ‘daughter in law’

- (52) may-pi-punitaq kankiri urpi-llay
 where-who-EMPH be urpi-mine
 ‘My dove where are you?’
 [Pacheo Alvarez, 2015, tr: Dumais, 2019]

4. Discussion

The most productive domains in this study were emotions, and specifically metaphors related to the heart, with many underlying concepts common to other languages. Further research is needed to determine if other body part terms yield more metaphors. Additionally, it may investigate the cultural relation between people and birds, or nature terms in general. There may be many metaphors relating to death, as is common cross-linguistically, but only one was found in this study.

It is currently unclear which frames of reference are used in space-time metaphors. The word *nawpa* may function like “before” in English, with two possible meanings: in front of the speaker and earlier than an event in question. Looking at the use of gestures may clarify the speaker’s perception of the flow of time.

Further research should include corpus studies, particularly of poetry and mythology. An interaction between metaphor and evidentiality markers may be revealed within narratives. A corpus study may also help illuminate the significance of the sense of taste, and the distribution of space and time terms.

5. Conclusion

Metaphors were found in all surveyed semantic domains in Cuzco Quechua, with a notable number of metaphors taking description from the sense and perception of taste. Many metaphors relate to the heart, which can express a wide range of emotions and states. There seems to be much potential for metaphor within mental states and activities. Time and space are comparable, and thus seem to be separate domains, contrary to predictions of Almeida and Haidar (2012) regarding Ecuadorian Quechua.

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