

## **Indigenous Multilingualism and Translation: The Creation of Intra- and Intersocial Hierarchies in the Communities of the Waorani People of Ecuador**

**Christina Korak**

**Abstract:** The indigenous Waorani people of Ecuador's Amazon rainforest are immersed in a tightly woven net of neocolonial forces due to the presence of oil company workers, illegal loggers, and settlers pursuing individual interests in their territory. They also face the consequences of increasing bi- and multilingualism, resulting mostly from formal schooling in Waorani communities. This article addresses the institutions and individual actors exerting an influence on language use among the Waorani, and examines how language and translation foment intra- and intersocial hierarchies in the communities. Located at the interface between translation studies and cultural anthropology and based on empirical data and participant observation in the local community of Toñampari, the study highlights how bi- and multilingualism give way to the rise of "go-between" figures (Gondecki 315). The article shows that "go-betweens" display a crucial and often ambiguous position, which enables them to exercise a gate-keeping function in interpreting and translating events. This engenders possible conflicts of loyalty and on a larger scale contributes to aggravate unified action of the Waorani against the exploitation of the resources on their land.

**Keywords:** Waorani, translation/transculturation, hierarchy-building processes, neocolonialism, Amazon rainforest

**Résumé :** Les Waorani, autochtones de l'Amazonie équatorienne, se trouvent pris dans les mailles serrées d'un filet de forces néocoloniales tissées par la présence d'employés de sociétés pétrolières, d'exploitants forestiers illégaux et de colons guidés par leur propres intérêts sur le territoire des Waorani. Ils font également face aux conséquences du bilinguisme et du multilinguisme, toujours plus présents, qui sont le résultat d'une scolarisation formelle dans les communautés Waorani. Cet article s'intéresse aux institutions et aux individus qui exercent une forme de pression sur l'utilisation de la langue chez les Waoranis et il montre de quelle manière langue et traduction fomentent des formes de hiérarchies intra- et inter-sociales dans les communautés. Située entre traductologie et anthropologie, cette étude, basée sur des données empiriques et l'observation de participants dans la communauté de Toñampari, met en évidence la façon dont le bilinguisme et le multilinguisme laissent place aux intermédiaires (Gondecki 315). Nous comprenons que la place des intermédiaires est cruciale et souvent ambiguë, ce qui leur permet de jouer un rôle de sélection lorsqu'ils interprètent et traduisent des événements. Cela peut alors engendrer des conflits de loyauté, et à plus grande échelle, peut aggraver les actions des Waorani contre l'exploitation de ressources sur leurs terres.

**Mots clés :** Waorani, traduction/transculturation, processus de construction de hiérarchies, néocolonialisme, forêt amazonienne

**Resumo:** Os Waorani, povo indígena da Amazônia equatoriana, vivem profundamente imersos e entrelaçados às forças neocoloniais pela presença de empresas petrolíferas, madeireiras ilegais e ocupantes que buscam os próprios interesses em seu território. Os Waorani também enfrentam as consequências do avanço do bilinguismo e do multilinguismo, resultante da educação formal em suas comunidades. Este artigo discute as instituições e indivíduos que exercem influência no uso da linguagem entre os Waorani, e examina como a língua e a tradução provocam hierarquias intra e inter-sociais nas comunidades. Situada na interface entre os Estudos da Tradução e a Antropologia Cultural, e a partir de dados empíricos e observação participativa na comunidade local toñampari, o estudo destaca como o bilinguismo e o multilinguismo abrem caminho para o surgimento de figuras intermediárias (Gondecki, 315). O artigo indica que figuras intermediárias se posicionam de maneira

crucial e ambígua, o que lhes permite exercitar a função de guardiãs nos eventos de interpretação e tradução. Isso engendra possíveis conflitos de lealdade e, numa escala maior, contribui para agravar a luta organizada dos Waorani contra a exploração dos recursos de sua terra.

**Palavras-chave:** Waorani, tradução/transculturación, processos de construção de hierarquia, neocolonialismo, Floresta Tropical Amazonense.

**Resumen:** Los miembros de la comunidad indígena huaorani, habitantes de la región amazónica del Ecuador, se encuentran inmersos en una densa red de fuerzas neocoloniales a causa de la presencia de empleados de petroleras, madereros ilegales y colonos, quienes llegan a su territorio guiados por intereses individuales. Los huaorani también enfrentan los efectos de un bilingüismo y multilingüismo crecientes, resultado de la educación formal en sus comunidades. Este artículo trata acerca de las instituciones y los actores individuales que ejercen una influencia en el uso de la lengua por parte de los huaorani. Se analiza la manera en que la lengua y la traducción promueven jerarquías intra e intersociales en las comunidades. A partir de la traductología y la antropología cultural y con base en investigación empírica y observación participante en la comunidad local de Toñampari, el estudio pone de relieve el hecho de que las situaciones de bilingüismo y multilingüismo en ocasiones generan figuras intermediarias (Gondecki 315). Según el artículo, estas figuras se encuentran en una posición central y a la vez ambigua, lo que les permite ejercer, en eventos de traducción e interpretación, una función de control que puede llegar a generar conflictos de lealtades. A una mayor escala esta situación puede limitar la acción unificada por parte de los huaorani para enfrentarse a la explotación de los recursos en sus territorios.

**Palabras clave:** huaorani, traducción/transculturación, procesos de jerarquización, neocolonialismo, selva amazónica

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Recent research on practices of bi- and multilingualism and translation in post- and neocolonial societies has increasingly moved away from representing sociocultural realities by means of a mere juxtaposition of an oppressing “global North” with an oppressed “global South” and is rather fostering viewpoints that digress from relying on these binary oppositions. In this respect, Walter Mignolo and Freya Schiwy perceive translation as part of transculturation processes (3). The authors draw on the concept of “transculturation” originally conceived in 1940 by anthropologist Fernando Ortíz, who used it to examine the cultural and social transformations brought forward by the nascent Afro-Cubanism in the course of the history of Cuba’s tobacco and sugar industry. Ortíz advocates the use of the term “transculturation” to express transmission processes between different cultures (260). According to the author, “transculturación” implies not only the imposition of one culture over another (what he refers to as “acculturation”) but rather entails also the loss of cultural elements (in his words, a “parcial desculturación”) as well as the subsequent creation of new cultural phenomena (“neoculturación”; 260).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the two reviewers of my manuscript. Their excellent and inspiring comments and suggestions have substantially enriched this article.

<sup>2</sup> Ortíz wrote in Spanish but made reference to the widely-used English term “acculturation” in his definition of “transculturación”, hence the two languages in my citation.

However, as Mignolo and Schiwy state, Ortíz's concept of transculturation emerges "from the perspective of coloniality" (23): While it served to demonstrate that, effectively, "cultural transformations do not go only from East to West but also from West to East or North-South and South-North" (11), Ortíz was—by default—unable to divorce himself from his own sociocultural background. By extending "transculturation" to present-day forms of translation in neocolonial societies, Mignolo and Schiwy show that a new kind of transculturation, non-dualistic and potentially revolutionary, is at work. To underscore their point, they explain that from 1500 to 1800, the omnipresent target of conversion of indigenous people to Christianity made the concept of "translation/transculturation" in Amerindian societies part of a unidirectional project of "conversion" or "assimilation" (12). From 1800 on, the autochthonous population experienced further marginalization as the main goal was to linguistically and culturally adapt them to the newly emerging national states by means of bilingual education.<sup>3</sup> Nowadays, however, new developments and ways of connecting in a globalized world make indigenous resistance surpass national boundaries and result in processes of a radically different kind of "transculturation" (17). It comes to the fore, e.g., when the Mexican Zapatistas, in a process of "double translation" (12), use the former oppressor's language to weave expressions or cultural specifics in indigenous languages into the national language Spanish. They interlace indigenous cosmovision with other worldviews, thereby breaking with dualities of hegemonic dominance over perceived subalterns: "We are no longer facing the question of 'the West and the Rest', but 'the Rest in the West' as well as 'the West in the Rest'" (8).

Within the realms of the Zapatista movement, translation/transculturation thus becomes increasingly hybrid and multidirectional as it makes way for "speaking and writing Amerindian languages through Spanish, or using and appropriating Spanish as the official language of the nation" (Mignolo and Schiwy 17). Thus, translation/transculturation is no longer used for making indigenous languages understandable for a non-indigenous majority society by translating them into *Mestizo* concepts but for reshaping Western thinking along the lines of indigenous cosmovision (12).

Paul Bandia explores these issues for the African context. The author refers to the translations of oral narrations, such as elegies, myths and eulogies, or their creative prosaic transformation in European languages as "representation[s] of the Self in the language of the Other". By moving from orality to written representation, the worlds of the colonized are depicted by means of the language of the colonizing culture. This entails that it is no longer possible to conceive the relations between colonized and indigenous languages as a dualism of oppressing versus oppressed languages (*Translation as Reparation* 3).

Naturally, over the years, Ortíz's concept of "transculturation" has been further developed by numerous scientists from different disciplines, in the fields of literary studies or anthropology, among others. I wish to note especially Mary Louise Pratt's

---

<sup>3</sup> Here, Mignolo and Schiwy present a negative view on bilingual education and the spread of Spanish that goes along with it. Other scholars like Maximilian Viatori and Gloria Ushigua also stress the adverse social and cultural effects of the loss of a people's ancestral language but emphasize that "indigenous peoples can achieve self-determination even if they no longer speak their ancestral languages" (18) due to the institutionalization of Spanish through the education system or the necessity of learning Spanish to communicate their demands to the monolingual nation-state (16). In this way, learning and appropriating Spanish (also by means of bilingual education) provides them with the tools needed to carry out exactly the kind of transculturation brought forward by Mignolo and Schiwy.

efforts to conceptualize transculturation in the context of representations of the Amerindian colonies in travel writing from the 18th to the 20th centuries. She situates transculturation in contact zones, where “peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical equality, and intractable conflict” (6). Despite these difficult asymmetrical power relations between the Spanish colonizers and the indigenous colonized, she highlights, e.g., the appropriation of the Spanish chronicle form by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala (1613) to retell the history of the conquest in Quechua and rough Spanish interspersed by indigenous cosmovision (2). By analyzing a drawing of the biblical creation wherein Adam and Eve are arranged according to Andean symbolic understanding of space, Pratt fascinatingly illustrates the incorporation of indigenous cosmologies into Spanish-Christian ideology (3). Pratt thereby foregrounds an understanding of transculturation that takes place in a highly homogenous and bidirectional way and depicts indigenous people as active agents in transculturation processes rather than as passive colonized subjects. Silvia Spitta’s definition of transculturation as “complex processes of adjustment and re-creation—cultural, literary, linguistic, and personal—that allow for new, vital, and viable configurations to arise out of the clash of cultures and the violence of neocolonial appropriations” (2) offers a similar vantage point, as she also focuses on the potential of individuals in post- and neocolonial societies to actively shape their surroundings. The present paper links this hybrid understanding of transculturation and the very active agents undertaking it to interpreting and translating in the communities of the indigenous Waorani people. This connexion serves to illustrate that ultimately a much wider and not at all dichotomous concept of translation is needed to grasp the spectrum of what this activity in multilingual and globalized environments comprises:

The theories of translation/transculturation we foresee are coming from a critical reflection on the colonial difference and from seeking to overcome the national-language ideology frame in which translation was conceived, practiced and theorized in the modern/colonial world. Translation can no longer be understood as a simple question of moving from object language A to subject language B, with all the implications of the inequality of languages. Rather, translation becomes a “translanguaging”, a way of speaking, talking and thinking in between languages, as the Zapatistas have taught us. (Mignolo and Schiwy 23)

The etymology of the term “translanguaging” used here and the different ramifications of this concept cannot be dealt with in detail in this paper. García states that “translanguaging” occurs when bi- and multilinguals<sup>4</sup> make use of “different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential” (140). In this sense, the concept of “translanguaging” does not revolve around languages but on the linguistic practices<sup>5</sup> of

---

<sup>4</sup> David Gramling offers a highly interesting criticism on the imposition of the binary oppositions of mono- and multilingualism.

<sup>5</sup> In this respect, Lydia Liu’s observations on translanguing practices seem noteworthy. The author speaks of translations not in terms of a transformation of meaning in another language but rather emphasizes the inventive potential inherent to translation in multilingual environments. This implies that meanings are “invented in the local

bi- and multilinguals and, thus, in educational contexts in multilingual societies, may come to replace simple codeswitching. If embraced in a positive way, as stated by the author, translanguaging may turn into an “important educational practice—to construct understandings, to make sense of the world and of the academic material, to mediate with others, to acquire other ways of languaging” (148). We will see if this beneficial use of translanguaging also applies for the Waorani.

Taking these approaches a step further, it is vital to examine the intra- and intersocial consequences of the transculturation processes brought forward in indigenous communities and link them to interpreting and translating activities. This is based on the assumption that while bi- and multilingual school education provides some community members with the opportunity to engage in transculturation processes and consequently possibly turns them into interpreters and translators for their own people, there might be negative effects of the thereby created social and cultural split between the bi- and multilingual community members and those who are monolingual. It should therefore be analyzed how the in-between position of the bi- and multilingual individuals carrying out interpreting and translating activities gives rise to “class and power differentials within the postcolony” (Bandia, “Postcolonial Literary Heteroglossia” 420). While translation studies has discussed the consequences of social, cultural and political changes brought forward by translation processes in post- and neocolonial societies due to the relationship between bi- and multilingualism and multilayered influence factors, either a) on a conceptual basis (see, among others, Bandia, *Translation as Reparation*; on a more global level, Karpinski or—albeit not focusing exclusively on bi- and multilingualism—Marais) or b) by analyzing the effects of these shifts according to the actual practice of interpreting and translating by means of empirical data (see, among others, Fuchs), it has yet to merge these two approaches. Moreover, existing research in translation studies has examined these issues primarily with regard to acts of translating, while the present study focuses predominantly on interpreting.

### **Interpreting and Translating in Waorani Communities: Multilayered Influences**

In an interdisciplinary effort combining the abovementioned theoretical tropes with data addressing ethnological, linguistic and, above all, translation-related issues, the present contribution aims at widening Mignolo and Schiwy’s concept of transculturation by applying it to both metaphorical and actual interpreting and translating processes. This approach differs from studies carried out so far on the indigenous Waorani people of Ecuador in other disciplines, which—with the exception of the study by Antonia Carcelén-Estrada on the strategies used for the translation of the Bible into Waoterero—have predominantly revolved around anthropological, economic, sociopolitical and historical aspects without connecting these to linguistic and translation-related issues. As this paper will show, exemplified by the Waorani, the socioeconomic, cultural and political influence factors present in post- and neocolonial multilingual societies and the spread of bi- and multilingualism due to school education, among other factors, engender transculturation processes as sketched out by Mignolo and Schiwy (17-23). These developments lead to intra- and intersocial hierarchies in

---

environment” (26) of a language and culture. A thorough discussion of research on bi- and multilingualism and translanguing practices is offered by Ulrike Jessner-Schmid and Claire Kramsch.

indigenous communities and foster the emergence of “go-between” figures (Gondecki 315; see below), who play a crucial role in metaphorical and actual translation events as active agents of transculturation processes. The theoretical framework of transculturation together with the empirical data collected in the course of my fieldwork serve to examine the link between translation, multilingualism and indigenous languages and questions of status attributed to the “go-betweens” as well as the impact of the thereby further enhanced intra- and intersocial hierarchies in events where these “go-betweens” act as interpreters.

Throughout the history of the Waorani, there have been intrusions in their territory by the surrounding majority society. In the 1930s<sup>6</sup>, e.g., the Royal Dutch Shell Company carried out oil exploration projects on Waorani land, causing the deadly spearing of several workers by the belligerent Waorani people. From 1958 on, the first ongoing contact with the Waorani people took place, as missionaries of the evangelic Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) forced contact with the seminomadic hunters and gatherers, who roamed an area of about two million hectares. The subsequent move to a reserve was accompanied by deep-rooted acculturation mechanisms: The missionaries tried to unite ten feuding family clans, prohibited cultural practices and traditions like polygamy/polyandry or celebrations, declared nudity a sin and propagated a new sedentary lifestyle. When the Waorani left the reserve to settle in villages (local communities) in the 1980s, they encountered oil companies on their land that, due to the “pacification” of the indigenous people, had been able to set up oil blocks in their territory to carry out oil exploration and oil exploitation projects (Rivas and Lara 25-26, 29-34).

Today, the approximately 3,500 Waorani live in forty-nine local communities. They are dispersed in an area of about one million hectares—half the size of the original Waorani territory. Some of these communities are situated on the access roads to the oil blocks. Others can only be reached by a time-consuming canoe journey, by walking or in small aircrafts (see also Gondecki<sup>7</sup> 141-42). This is the case for the community of Toñampari, where the research presented in this paper was carried out. The presence of people working in oil companies, religious institutions, state-run institutions, non-governmental organizations or the tourism industry, illegal loggers, settlers as well as other indigenous groups has triggered complex tensions and influence factors in the Waorani communities. Consequently, the different interests behind these forces shape the Waorani’s communication with outsiders (Carcelén-Estrada 68-69). As Philip Gondecki points out, external actors have an especially large influence on internal ruptures in the Waorani community, as their relationships to the Waorani normally focus on only a few individuals (315). These individual actors, who Gondecki calls “go-betweens”, consequently assume the function of intercultural mediators in the local communities. They act as official representatives of the Waorani, but, as Gondecki highlights, have no definite legitimation by the community, do not represent their community in all its heterogeneity and—given the vast dimensions of the territory and the high level of autonomy inherent to traditional Waorani culture—have no far-reaching impact on the actions and decisions taken by the different Waorani communities

---

<sup>6</sup> See Cabodevilla for an extensive overview of both the origins of the Waorani and the history of Ecuador’s Amazon region from about 11000 BC onwards.

<sup>7</sup> Gondecki can also be recommended for a thorough and well-researched analysis of contemporary Waorani culture and the role of violence in it.

(Gondecki 315). Albeit their influence remaining a local one, these central contact persons are treated in a special way and are often the target of manipulations by external agents to pursue individual interests. The “go-betweens”, who benefit from their good relations with the outside world, receive money or material goods or are invited on prestigious journeys or to events, mostly distribute their wealth among their closest relatives. This creates internal conflicts between local groups but also between different local communities and hinders unified action within the local communities or the Waorani as a whole against external pressure factors like oil exploitation or logging in their territory (Gondecki 315). Here, the link between bi- and multilingualism, which enables these individuals to foster alliances with the outside Spanish-speaking world, and the thereby generated intrasocial hierarchies in the Waorani communities becomes evident. Furthermore, the “go-betweens” become metaphorical translators in the sense of active promoters of transculturation (Mignolo and Schiwy 17-23) as they move between the inside and outside worlds.

Of course, there is an abundance of different “go-between” figures (even if they sometimes do not receive this name), who occupy a crucial position “in between” the demands of the outside world and their own people, in the ethnographic literature on other Amazonian people (see, e.g., Conklin 704). The question arises of why is it then of such importance to examine the sociocultural, political and economic impacts of “go-betweens” as interpreters and the consequences of transculturation especially for the Waorani. The answer is inseparably linked to human rights issues: There are families of the Waorani (known in Ecuador under the umbrella term Tagaeri-Taromenane) who resist contact with the majority society and live in isolation (Pichilingue 68). They are frequently afflicted by oil exploration, killing raids and attempts of forced contact. As language and interpreting/translating were key elements of the Waorani’s forced contact with the Western world in the 1950s and these gruesome episodes of the past are likely to repeat themselves with the Tagaeri-Taromenane, investigating the crucial influence of “go-betweens” and transculturation processes becomes a pressing need. Furthermore, the Waorani represent a special case within Ecuador Amazonian indigenous people, not only linguistically, as scientists have yet to establish a connection between Waoterero and other indigenous languages (Zerries 180), but also culturally. In stark contrast to other Ecuadorian indigenous Amazonian groups, like the Kichwa, who have been in contact with the majority society for several centuries, the Waorani are a recently contacted indigenous people (see, e.g., ONWO), which makes their language and culture possibly more vulnerable to outside violations.

Moreover, contrary to the other Amazonian cultures in Ecuador, until their forced contact with the Western world, the Waorani had been living exclusively in interfluvial surroundings and had constituted a seminomadic culture of hunters and gatherers engaging in fierce warfare against other Waorani family clans and outside intruders. Anthropologists like Laura Rival (“Los indígenas Huaorani” 288) point out that due to their constant warfare in the past, the Waorani’s reality is based on a dynamic hostility between different interrelated family clans and not on a common identity as one indigenous people with a common stance on what type of society they desire. In the course of their history, the Waorani have learned that the oil industry brings them advantages and disadvantages, which makes their position all the more unsteady and hinders common decision-making processes. For these reasons, the alliances the Waorani forge rather correspond to regional interests of certain local communities than to the strengthening of their people as a whole. While this absence of one “unified voice”

of course also holds true for other indigenous people, analyzing the possible impacts of “go-between” figures interpreting and translating for their own people constitutes an imperative in the case of the Waorani, especially due to their very recent and very violent history of contact, its aftermath and the preoccupying perspectives for the Tagaeri-Taromenane’s future.

Against this backdrop, it is essential to reflect on how the decision of using one or another language gives rise to multilayered intra- and intersocial hierarchies in the Waorani communities and how these unravel in interpreting and translating activities. Which language is used by the Waorani in which situations and what are the effects that language use has on the intra- and intersocial structures of the community? Which people with which attributed status and which interests can influence the decision of which language is to be used? How do they in consequence influence the decision of when and what to interpret or not to interpret for monolingual indigenous community members? How does the concept of transculturation unfold in metaphorical and actual interpreting and translation processes in view of existing and further developing community-internal hierarchies?

Data from a questionnaire, one interview with a key person and field notes from participant observation in the local community of Toñampari in the Waorani territory help to shed light on these questions. In total, I carried out a survey with 121 community members (of which 49 were school students aged between 12 and 30 years, and 72 did not or no longer go to school and were between 11 and 77 years of age) in October and November 2012 in order to gather general data on bi- and multilingualism and to investigate the influence of school education on language use in detail.

When I introduced myself to the local community as a teacher and researcher, the interpreter Bai<sup>8</sup> self-confidently prompted the young students to interpret for the elderly monolingual community members present, a task which—contrary to other interpreting events I later observed—no one wanted to take up, which is why he then reluctantly started to interpret the conversation himself, adding and leaving out information and telling jokes to bring the community’s attention to what I was saying. This display of Bai’s apparent key position, his potential power in the local community, which he seemed very much aware of, and my assumption of underlying community-internal hierarchies revolving around his person led me to interview him twice, focusing both on the effects of language use on the community’s internal structures and his status in the community. Insights from participant observation of the Waorani’s daily life from October and November 2012 serve to further illustrate the creation of hierarchies related to the advance of bi- and multilingualism in the community and to explore their possible effects on interpreting and translating activities.

A questionnaire survey in a traditionally oral culture, which only a few decades ago started to incorporate writing into its cultural repertoire, bears several difficulties. A thorough reflection on the help of previously briefed students, who interpreted for the other community members and filled in the questionnaires in my fieldwork, is beyond the bounds of this paper. However, it should include an analysis of the particularities of relying on interpreters in ethnological fieldwork<sup>9</sup> (see also Kruse, Bethmann, Eckert,

---

<sup>8</sup> I decided to change the name of the Waorani involved in my study to safeguard their privacy. However, as the Waorani comprise fairly few people, identifying the main sources of my research is still possible.

<sup>9</sup> The anthropologist Utz Jeggle (31-35) offers an interesting account on ethnographic fieldwork with interpreters. He relates the political confrontation experienced with his interpreter during an investigation in the year 1983 on Greek forced labour in Nazi Germany. Jeggle describes a feeling of antipathy from the interpreter against

Niermann and Schmieder), especially with regard to the interpreters and intermediaries acting as “go-between figures” as sketched by Gondecki (315).

Other important reflections, which cannot be taken into consideration in detail in the present contribution but are given considerable space in my future research, refer to the impact of my own position as a “go-between” in the community. It would also be important to address the question of which transculturation and translanguaging processes were sparked by my stay in the community along with the issues of how the Waorani perceived my role, what their expectations of me were and how these contrast with the motivation of raising political awareness through scientific research for the socioenvironmental issues underlying my ethnographic fieldwork. The feelings of futility accompanying this goal and the moral dilemmas arising from the fact that staying in the communities also possibly turned me into “yet another Western intruder”, with which I tried to achieve a compromise by offering to work as a teacher in the community in the hope of doing something of use for the community, frequently materialize in my field notes and diaries. It is impossible to examine the implications of the challenging topic of self-referentiality linked to my (often problematic) multiple roles as teacher, researcher and political activist in the community in detail. In this article, special consideration is given to the fact that my stance as both researcher and political activist, who aims at raising awareness for the difficult socioeconomic, political and cultural conditions in which the Waorani live and of the threats of oil exploitation, logging and settlement to the Amazon forest that is their basis of existence, exerts an influence on how I try to represent the Waorani in my research.

### **Hunters, Gatherers and Bi- and Multilingual Students**

Apart from the abovementioned influence factors, community-internal language use is affected by the institutionalization of Spanish, in the context of school education, which has been established in the local communities since the 1980s. A common project of the governments of Ecuador and Germany introduced intercultural bilingual education in Ecuador in 1986. After first experiences in the Andean highlands, these education efforts were extended to all indigenous communities supported by the CONAIE (the umbrella organization of Ecuador’s indigenous people), the Ministry of Education and the DINEIB (National Bureau for Intercultural Bilingual Education) in the 1990s (MOSEIB 3-6; Krainer 38-39). An in-depth analysis of the assets and drawbacks of intercultural bilingual education in the Waorani communities lies outside the scope of this paper. It should, however, include references to the concepts of “interculturality”, “plurinationality” and the “sumak kawsay” (“The Good Life”) enshrined in the Constitution of Ecuador (Title 1, Chapter 1, Article 3/5 Asamblea Constituyente 17) as well as a critical assessment of their actual implementation.<sup>10</sup>

When comparing the questionnaire data on the languages used by the students at home to the languages used in school, the consolidation of Spanish in the community

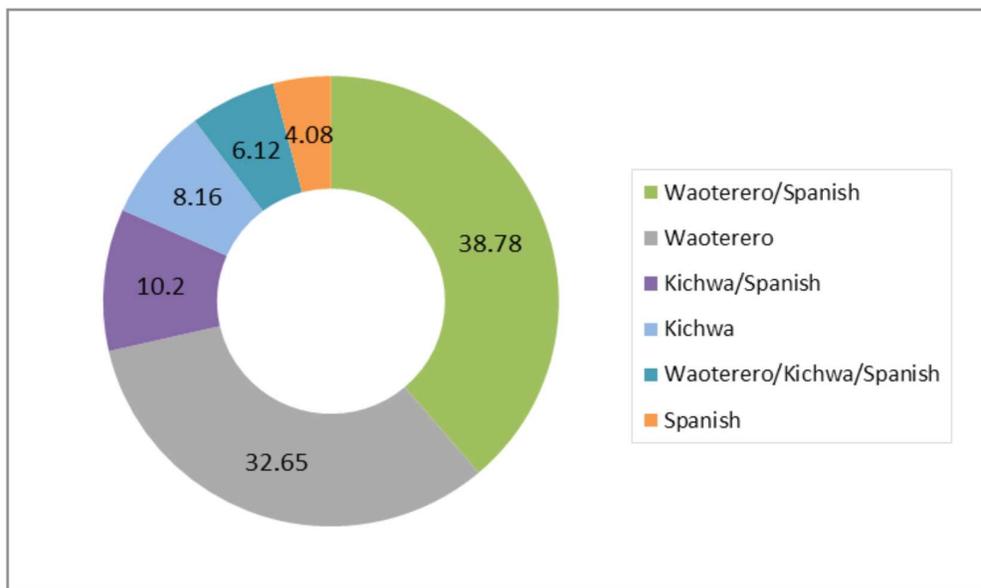
---

him, and it seemed to him that she tried to push him out of the communication and only offered a summary of what was being said.

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed analysis of the concept of the “sumak kawsay”, see Acosta. See also the reflections of cultural anthropologist Laura Rival (*Hijos del Sol* 276-318) for a thorough examination of change mechanisms in the Waorani culture associated with schooling. See García (145-51) for a historical overview—with references to bilingual education in Syria dating 4,000 to 5,000 years back—and a discussion of bilingual education and language revitalization programmes, e.g., for Quechua, worldwide.

through school education becomes visible (see fig. 1 and fig. 2). While the students essentially communicate in their indigenous language Waoterero and in Spanish or only in Waoterero at home, communication with teachers is clearly dominated by the Spanish language. This is on the one hand due to the fact that there are few Waorani teachers and more Mestizo and indigenous Kichwa/Shuar teachers in the communities. However, this is likely to change in the foreseeable future as more and more Waorani are completing a degree in teaching offered by the University of Cuenca's distance study programme. Even so, it was observed that even Waorani teachers taught in Spanish, which might be rooted in the assumption that the ability to speak Spanish is a necessity to increase the chances of participating in the majority society and that despite the efforts of indigenous movements, state-run intercultural education programmes in Ecuador still fail to guarantee equality of languages and cultures.

The figures also show that there is a strong tendency towards bi- and multilingualism at home, as many students speak Waoterero/Spanish, Kichwa/Spanish or Waoterero/Kichwa/Spanish with their families. Moreover, the growing numbers of Kichwa speakers in the community illustrate the considerable impact that the Kichwa<sup>11</sup> people have on the Waorani culture, especially in the local community of Toñampari—an influence noticeable, e.g., in the adoption of Kichwa eating habits or the construction of huts.



<sup>11</sup> Kichwa is the indigenous language with the highest number of speakers in Ecuador. A variety of Kichwa is spoken in the Andean highlands and another one in the Amazon region. There are also several regional dialects of Kichwa (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos 17, 33). The historical origins of Kichwa impact on the Waorani in this area are not outlined in detail in this contribution. One of the main sources of influence, though, is that in the past Kichwa-Waorani marriages were encouraged by the SIL missionaries and a female Waorani leader.

Fig. 1: Language use of students at home (figures in percent relative to the total number of 49 persons surveyed)

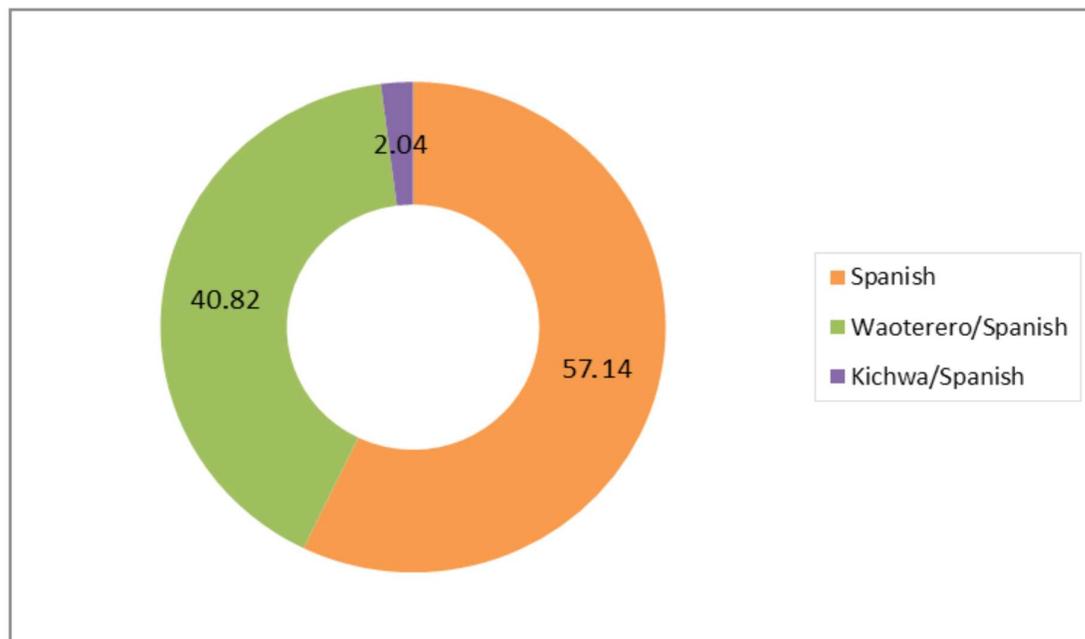


Fig. 2: Language use of students in school (figures in percent relative to the total number of 49 persons surveyed)

The great majority of Spanish-speaking community members, who no longer go to school and are therefore on average older than the school students, had started to learn Spanish only in school (see fig. 3a). In comparison, most of the students are now starting to learn Spanish in school as well as at home (see fig. 3b), which reveals that due to school education, children learn Spanish at an ever-earlier age and that over time the use of Spanish in the Waorani's everyday life is predicted to rise. Sixteen out of 121 community members surveyed (13.23%) do not speak Spanish. The Waorani are already now facing a vast majority of Spanish-speaking members in the community, a trend which is likely to increase in the future.

The strong dominance of Spanish in school also shows that “translanguaging” in the positively sketched sense, as by García (148; see introduction), is superseded by a growing Spanish monolingualism within the sphere of education. While the ability to communicate in Spanish and Waoterero/Kichwa theoretically provides the Waorani with tools to move culturally and linguistically between worlds and turns them into hybrid bi- and multilinguals, this growing hybridization also bears the threat of becoming an acculturation in the sense of a slow assimilation through education. On the long run, these developments possibly bear far-reaching consequences on the survival of Waoterero and Waorani cosmovision. Nevertheless, the abovementioned soon-to-be

Waorani teachers and the fact that Waoterero is still widely spoken at home provide a strong base for combating the loss of Waoterero and the Waorani cosmivision adhering to it.

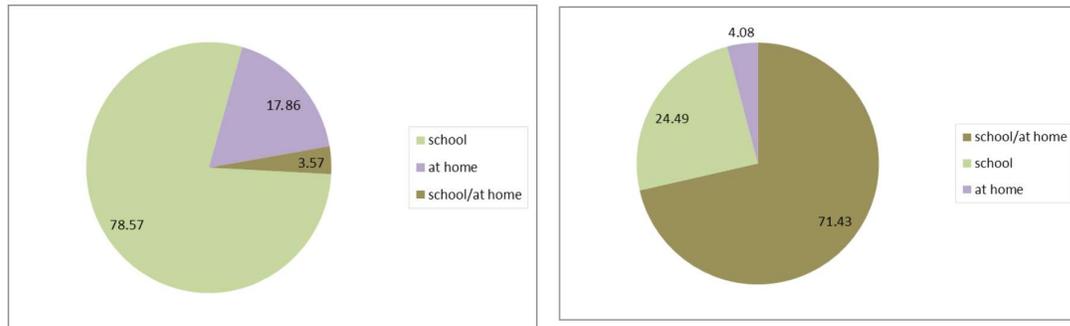


Fig. 3a (left): Where the non-students had started to learn Spanish; Fig. 3b (right): Where the students had started to learn Spanish (figures in percent relative to the total number of 72 non-students and 49 school students surveyed)

### When “Go-betweeners” Become Interpreters

After examining the strong influence of school education on language use and the advance of bi- and multilingualism in the Waorani communities, it will be demonstrated how this spread and the multilayered post- and neocolonial influence factors outlined for the Waorani communities foster the emergence of “go-between” (Gondecki 315) figures and how they act as agents of transculturation (Mignolo and Schiwy 17-23). By linking the data evidenced by the survey to excerpts from an interview with such a “go-between” and insights from participant observation, it will be shown that “go-betweeners” who act as interpreters occupy both a gate-keeping function and a conflicting position situating them “in between” different actors with different individual interests.

Since the 1980s, the schools as social entities have served as a means to adapting the behaviour and cultural patterns of the Waorani hunters and gatherers to the worldviews of the Ecuadorian majority society (Rival, *Hijos del Sol* 311). The cultural impact of the previously mentioned actors in the territory, such as oil company workers, settlers or loggers, needs to be added to this as well as the cultural hybridization processes triggered by the fact that nowadays a large number of Waorani live in the small towns of Puyo, Tena or Coca in the Amazon lowlands, that there are also Waorani university students and other Waorani living in the capital Quito in the Andean highlands and that the younger Waorani frequently use the internet for worldwide communication. They are protagonists of change and cannot be regarded as inhabiting the dense tropical jungle isolated from the “outside” world. Rather, they go in and out of their local communities, bringing and taking with them articles and goods, cultural knowledge and patterns. Adding to the sociocultural impact caused by school education and the spread of bi- and multilingualism as outlined in my survey, the occurring shifts and changes represent transculturation processes as described by Mignolo and Schiwy, in the sense

of a metaphorical translation when moving between the inside and outside worlds, with their added values, customs and habits. These processes cause an especially stark contrast between the mono- or (in two indigenous languages) bilingual Pikenani—the elders of the community—and the younger Spanish-speaking community members.<sup>12</sup> The following excerpts from interviews with the interpreter Bai serve to illustrate how the spread of bi- and multilingualism outlined in the findings of my survey generate intra- and intersocial hierarchies in the Waorani communities and consequently bring about “go-between” (Gondecki 315) figures. It will then be analyzed how these influential “go-between” figures act as agents of transculturation and interpreters.

In the first interview, Bai referred to the Pikenani as the community’s highest authorities. One of their most important functions is assessing the others, e.g., during community-internal disputes. Furthermore, as Bai put it<sup>13</sup>, they are seen as bearers of the cultural heritage and knowledge of the Waorani as well as guardians and defenders of the territory against external influences:

Pikenani mantenemos a dar el consejo a los niños y mantener nuestra cultura de los guerreros como mantenía las y cacería y pesca y como mantenía a trabajar y [*emphasizes*] defender el territorio nuestros vigilando a todo los territorio lo que pertenece. (Bai 1b, 02:15-02:42)

We keep the Pikenani to give advice to the children and to maintain our culture of warriors like they did and the hunting and fishing and how they maintained working and [*emphasizes*] defending our territory and all that our territory comprises. (my translation, C.K.)

The spread of Spanish and with it the rapid expansion of new cultural patterns accelerates the rupture between the Pikenani and the younger community members, who, according to my informant, no longer understand the meaning of the elders’ songs or do not know the animals of the forest, who no longer hunt or do not know how to plant the manioc (*yuca*) (Bai 2, 0:01-0:07, 05:33-05:54, 07:29-07:32). On a linguistic and political level, this has led to the younger Spanish-speaking community members now becoming the main decision-makers of the community (see also Rival, *Hijos del Sol* 421; High 43-44; Gondecki 385-86). In general, the Waorani have been and still are a largely egalitarian society, assigning autonomy to each community member. Nonetheless, the implementation of new offices, such as the local *presidentes* or a position in the school of the Waorani, cause cultural impacts and social stratification processes within the Waorani communities (High 42; Gondecki 313-14). The effects of these shifts are especially visible in communication acts during collective community gatherings, several of which I observed in the course of the fieldwork.

A computer-typed and printed invitation in Spanish had been hung up on several communal buildings, inviting the community members to an assembly. As not all village dwellers are able to read and write and not all of them speak Spanish, already this

---

<sup>12</sup> The findings presented relate to Toñampari, the largest local community. It needs to be noted that the local communities are very heterogeneous and that it is also not possible to speak of the elders as one unified block. Whereas in some communities the elders’ opinions are appreciated and taken into consideration, this is not the case for other communities. In general, though, the generational and political conflicts of interests due to the transculturation processes described here are present to different extents in all communities and are likely to increase in the future.

<sup>13</sup> Bai’s statements are rendered in a way that makes them more explicit while at the same time preserves the Waorani’s typical use of Spanish to represent their way of speaking.

invitation can be considered a very exclusive one. The assembly then started with a welcoming by the head of the local community (*presidente*) and a teacher reading out this invitation to the community members who had responded to it. Later on, this (Spanish-speaking) community head searched for people willing to work at the new construction site. This information was not provided to the Pikenani in their language or interpreted (field notes, C.K.). The *presidente* of Toñampari is also the school's deputy headmaster. The few community members who work in the school and who are employed by the state frequently fly out of the territory to the small town of Puyo and represent the local community in front of the regional politicians from the province of Pastaza, which Toñampari is part of. Due to their relations with a variety of actors from outside and due to them earning regular wages, they possess goods that are not always available to other families and are brought into the local communities from "outside": The headmaster's hut, e.g., is equipped with electricity, a TV, a stove and a fridge (Korak, "10 November 2012" 131). It needs to be noted that at the time of my research, most Waorani families also received a monthly support of \$50 US from the Ecuadorian government called the *Bono Social*. Personal involvement with oil companies represented another possible source of income for some families, which they might use for buying the abovementioned goods. Even though Toñampari was not affected by an oil block operating nearby at the time of my research, related Waorani from other communities might have earned money from oil companies and sent it to their relatives in Toñampari.

From these observations, we may deduce that people who hold a state office and/or are associated with the school and entertain functioning alliances with the outside world may influence the language spoken in assemblies. They carry a special status within the community due to their power of representing the community to the *outside* world. Likewise, the economic capital at their disposal and the thereby further increased community-internal status may bestow on them the power of representing the outside world to the *inside* world of the community. As the survey shows, their Spanish skills stemming from school education and their frequent contact with the majority society also enhance their political sphere of influence. All these characteristics turn them into powerful agents of the transculturation processes highlighted by Mignolo and Schiwy. We will now take a look at how the position of a "go-between" and the attributed status and intra- and intersocial hierarchies unravel in actual and metaphorical translation and interpreting situations.

The interviews with Bai underlined his position as a "go-between" and the possibilities for exerting an influence on the language used related to his status. Bai presented himself as "dirigencia de la comunidad" ("community leader"; my translation, C.K.) (Bai 1a, 01:08-01:10), thereby accentuating his important role within the community. Without waiting for an initial question,<sup>14</sup> he started the interview by emphasizing that he was well-known and that his point of view was much sought after for investigating Waorani culture. He also related his journeys to foreign countries financed by an oil company. As he stressed, the fact that he was one of the first who went to school in Toñampari led to his eventual appointment by the community in an

---

<sup>14</sup> The fact that Bai did not wait for a question to start the interview may also be attributed to the special characteristics of how indigenous people hold conversations. In this respect, a more detailed analysis than the one that can be provided in this paper should raise the initial question of what speaking means for indigenous people, a topic also covered in a revealing way by Todorov (98-99, 108).

assembly to defend the territory. Apart from this, Bai was the first *presidente* of Toñampari and was also elected to become an important member of the Waorani's political organization (formerly: ONHAE, nowadays: NAWE). "Yo he criado la comunidad Toñampari" ("I have raised the community of Toñampari"; my translation, C.K.)<sup>15</sup> (Bai 1a, 06:44-06:46), he said when describing his role in the founding of the local community, which he explained in detail along with his deeply entrenched desire to preserve the traditional Waorani lifestyle and culture.

In the second interview, he referred to himself directly as "jefe local" ("local chief"; my translation, C.K.) and related that the elders called him whenever there were problems (Bai 2, 18:51-19:45). In the past, he claimed, the Waorani did not have contact with other people, which is why now it would be even more important to speak Spanish, even though, as he added, some Waorani would be ashamed of their Spanish skills and cultural background when they went outside their territory and had to use Spanish to communicate with others (Bai 1a, 52:00-54:28). Whenever he leaves the community, Bai went on to tell me, the Pikenani would inquire when he would be back and ask him to bring bread and soft drinks. He would also deliver each contract with local politicians, with whom he negotiates as the community's "outside" representative, back to the Pikenani and interpret its content for them (Bai 1b, 16:10-16:51).

If we think back to Bai's reaction when I presented myself to the community and to his statements in the interviews, it becomes obvious that one's status in the community is of utmost importance in influencing the language used by the community as well as the underlying interests of the communication act. In this respect, Bai seems to combine two status functions: As a person who maintains the old customs and practices the indigenous language of Waoterero, he is respected by the Pikenani and the community in general. At the same time, the several offices he has been elected for and his ability to speak the Spanish language, make him eligible to represent the Waorani in front of the outside world as a "go-between". Bai's statements in the interview reveal another important aspect to be taken into account: On the one hand, go-between figures like Bai in a metaphorical way of translation contribute to the creation of community-internal shifts by facilitating the introduction of external cultural elements to the village, like the bread and soft drinks Bai referred to in the interview. On the other hand, while doing so, they employ a clear gate-keeping function: They can decide which elements, knowledge or cultural particularities they want to introduce and how much of them they want to introduce.

This gate-keeping function in the actual linguistic and cultural mediation and the metaphorical acts of transculturation between the outside and the inside world undertaken by Bai became even more clear when he retold the story of the construction of a new playground in the local community. This event left the Pikenani wondering about the purpose of the playground, a new transcultural element for them. In order to explain the use of this construction for the Waorani children, Bai chose to relate to the Pikenani's environment in their role as hunters and gatherers—i.e., to the forest and the activities they carry out in the Amazonian woods: The playground, he told them, serves the purpose of providing possibilities for physical exercise for the students who now go to school and are no longer able to move as much as children in ancient times. When they use the playground's climbing frame for climbing, he explained to the Pikenani,

---

<sup>15</sup> It is not clear whether or not Bai had wanted to say "creado" (create) instead of "criado" (raise).

they are as exhausted as the Pikenani used to be in the past when they went hunting (Bai 2, 20:24-21:20).

This is a clear example of how Bai acts as an active agent of transculturation and engages in a metaphorical translation process relying on his position as a “go-between”. To reflect on why this translation procedure proves to be effective, a short ethnological contextualization is needed: Rival (*Hijos del Sol* 356-58) discusses the cultural changes that the assignation of the category of “school children” to the Waorani children brings about and that also come to the fore in Bai’s mediation. According to the author, the duties of going to school and studying imply that the Waorani children are no longer able to participate in the maintenance of the Waorani family to the same extent as they did in the past, e.g., by engaging in hunting and planting, and that their families often need to pay for their school materials and clothes. Bai’s relating the playground to activities the children traditionally carried out and the metaphorical translation of these activities to fit contemporary reality in the community enhances the Pikenani’s understanding of them and probably also their acceptance of the playground as a useful tool to keep the Waorani children physically active.

This example underscores the power inherent in Bai’s position as a “go-between”, as he uses it to smoothen the impact of the new cultural element of the playground on the community’s elders by including it in a frame of reference familiar to them. However, his position in general also leads him to act in an ambiguous way as he is an inseparable part of neocolonial developments and influence factors. This ambiguity, as it was pointed out before, means that he may choose how much and which new cultural elements he wants to implement and how to reach acceptance or refusal of these elements.

I want to take these reflections a step further and link them to actual acts of interpreting: When I asked Bai how he felt in general when he was interpreting during political events or official assemblies with people from the outside world, he answered that he would put on his feather crown when interpreting. The question if he was important to the community was answered affirmatively by Bai and he went on to explain the crown’s significance: “Esa corona significa [...] vos eres un hijo de guerreros” (“This crown means that you are a warrior’s<sup>16</sup> son”; my translation, C.K.) (Bai 1b, 07:10-07:14). If the person wearing the crown was to die, a war could break out. This is why he would be so important and this is why everybody would visit him to talk to him.

The display of the feather crown, apart from its possible use as an exotic body image often employed by indigenous people to guarantee their authenticity and supposed cultural integrity in front of a Western public (Conklin 711), is a demonstration of the power ascribed to Bai as an interpreter, an agent of transculturation and a “go-between” with a high community-internal status. It underscores that he is able to exert considerable influence both in metaphorical translation events like the abovementioned explanation of the playground’s purpose and in actual interpreting events where possible far-reaching political decisions are being made.

---

<sup>16</sup> This reference to warfare cannot be examined in this paper; however, according to Iván Narváez, the Waorani need to be understood as “pueblo libre, itinerante y guerrero” (“a free, moving and belligerent people”; my translation, C.K.) (273). A detailed cultural analysis of the Waorani needs to include, therefore, the importance and implications of warfare and vengeance for their culture.

## Conclusion and Outlook

The data from the questionnaire survey, the participant observation in the Waorani community of Toñampari and the interviews with Bai illustrate that the growing dominance of the use of Spanish in the local communities of the indigenous Waorani is fostered, among other factors, by school education. As was observed in the course of my fieldwork, bi- and multilingual education programmes in Ecuador often turn out to be a double-edged sword: On the one hand, the spread of bi- and multilingualism through formal schooling facilitates access to the language of the majority society and may enhance indigenous peoples' participation in it. On the other hand, it also potentially contributes to the aggravation and acceleration of the loss of ancestral languages if not enough attention is given to foregrounding the intrinsic value of the cultural traditions and practices linked to indigenous languages as well as fomenting the use of indigenous languages per se.

School education has been shown to provoke a cultural rift between the young community members and the elders (Pikenani). As can be observed also in other indigenous communities in Latin America, widespread school education entails that nowadays teachers take the elders' place as bearers of knowledge. Thus, they become agents of transculturation processes as outlined by Mignolo and Schiwy (17-23); however, teachers hardly transmit knowledge inherent to traditional indigenous culture and cosmovision. The rapidly expanding acculturation processes, the aging and dying of the elders and the question of how to preserve Waorani language and cosmovision turn the transmission of the elders' knowledge into a pressing necessity. Language use and interpreting may accelerate or slow down these acculturation processes, as they influence the way indigenous people like the Waorani choose to shape their communities.

It has been shown that the rise of Spanish and the frequent contact with agents of the outside world turn some Waorani into "go-between" figures (Gondecki 315). In an increasingly bi- and multilingual society like the Waorani's, where school education becomes language and cultural education, every bi- and multilingual person has the potential of becoming such a "go-between". Above all, those "go-betweens" who have a good knowledge of Spanish and enjoy good relations with the outside world are frequently targeted by actors from the political or economic sphere interested in the resources on Waorani land. They are often assigned state offices like a position in the local school and hold an especially crucial and influential position as active agents of transculturation. Correspondingly, the power of representing the local community in front of the outside world and of representing the outside world in front of the local community is attributed to them, which further enhances their intra- and intersocial status. This leads to the "go-betweens" being able to determine which language is used, e.g., in Waorani community assemblies, and to exert an influence on the question of whether or not interpreting is provided, which consequently enables them to influence in part the decision-making processes of the community, as was observed in a community assembly where the invitation to the event had been written in Spanish and no interpreting was provided for the elders attending the assembly.

In this respect, an important question demands further investigation: As Rival (*Hijos del Sol* 421) points out, the majority of adults of the local communities with schools visited in the course of her research are of the opinion that political power should lie in the hands of literate men. In fact, I observed clearly more male "go-

betweens” than female “go-betweens” and—some twenty years after Rival’s study—a very strong dominance of men holding political positions. This was frequently criticized by one of the few female Waorani political activists I had the pleasure to spend much time with. My further research will therefore deal extensively not only with the abovementioned rift between younger and older community members created by the increase of Spanish through school education but will also examine the male/female split and its political consequences as well as the differences in how Waorani women and men conceive of and undertake interpreting and translating activities.

The key figure of Bai, who acted as an interpreter, was scrutinized as a “go-between” and an agent of transculturation in this article. Two tendencies for the influence of “go-betweens” on language use and interpreting can be derived from this analysis: On the one hand, strong “go-betweens” like Bai accelerate acculturation processes as they see for the implementation of new cultural elements and practices in the Waorani communities by means of metaphorical translation of, e.g., foreign goods, thereby promoting the processes of transculturation delineated by Mignolo and Schiwy. On the other hand, as was illustrated with the example of the playground, because “go-betweens” like Bai possess great knowledge of and appreciation for the elders’ culture, they ensure through interpreting and translating that the acculturation and transculturation processes run smoothly without inflicting great damage on their people—an ambition that, of course, might not hold true for each and every “go-between”. Thus, the position of the “go-betweens” acting as interpreters turns out to be a highly ambiguous one, as they simultaneously also form part of the post- and neocolonial societies and their pressure factors, so that it cannot always be assumed that as indigenous people they will automatically side with their own people and defend their belief and value systems.

The “go-betweens” own hybrid “in-between” position becomes decisive as they develop into key players in two (and possibly multiple) ways: They are expected to represent the inside world and their people and to represent the outside world and its actors simultaneously, while each of these sides pursues individual and not necessarily collective and unified interests. Due to their interactions with institutions and agents from the outside world, “go-betweens” like Bai acquire points of views that influence their acts. We can also suppose that this engenders conflicts of loyalty and that their “in-between” position makes it difficult to clearly distinguish between the perspectives of representatives of the majority society and representatives of “their” people in actual interpreting events. Conklin’s observations on Brazilian indigenous activists serve as a comparison here: “They can forge alliances with outsiders only by framing their cause in terms that appeal to Western values, but this foreign framework does not necessarily encompass indigenous communities’ own worldviews and priorities” (704). Because of the “go-betweens” own highly complex cultural hybridity, it becomes very difficult to make clear-cut distinctions of which “go-between” is on which side. Moreover, the dense hybridization might signify that “go-betweens” do not always consciously interpret or translate for one or the other side. Especially due to the tightly-woven net of influence factors and manipulations closing in on the Waorani, it may be difficult for them to foresee which way of linguistic and cultural mediation benefits which side and which not.

The interviews with Bai give evidence of this complexity of the position of “go-betweens” as interpreters: On the one hand, they help to implement and stage power, as was proved by Bai’s use of the feather crown while interpreting. On the other hand,

only the actions of “go-betweens” make it possible to open up spaces for processes of translating and interpreting in a metaphorical and practical sense, while, at the same time, “go-betweens” may choose to encourage or mitigate acculturation processes. They are shown to employ a strong gate-keeping function as they decide through interpreting which cultural elements or patterns they let flow into their communities and how much of them and which they do not want to introduce. In this respect, the Spanish language serves as a hinge of the door through which they exercise their gate-keeping function as they actively (but, as mentioned above, not always consciously) decide if they want to further open or close that door. This dynamic “in-between” position ultimately also suggests that there is no danger of the Waorani becoming culturally extinct, even if they might lose their language at some point, but hints at them undergoing even more radical changes in the future. However, the specific exertion of influence from outside actors on the “go-betweens”, together with other factors, severely obstructs unified action by the Waorani as one people against the raiding of their territory by oil companies, loggers and settlers.

The developments around bi- and multilingualism and interpreting/translating brought forward in my study are exemplary of many contemporary indigenous communities in Latin America and can thus serve to foreground a wide concept of what translation may comprise, as resulting from the application of the metaphorical concept of transculturation to the practices of interpreting and translating in the communities of the indigenous Waorani people from Ecuador’s Amazon region. In view of further developing this ample conceptual framework of translation and in relation to the findings from my study, it is important to analyze individual communication and interpreting acts in order to shed light on the effects that community-internal hierarchies, which emerge due to language use, have on the decision of in- or excluding the Pikenani by interpreting or not interpreting for them. It should therefore be examined in more detail for which topics interpreting is provided or not provided, who acts as an interpreter in which communicative event and which underlying interests of the actors involved inform the situation at hand, and these issues should be related to the insights and questions foregrounded in this paper.

### Works Cited

- Acosta, Alberto. “Policy Paper 9. El Buen Vivir en el camino del post-desarrollo. Una lectura desde la Constitución de Montecristi.” Quito: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.
- Asamblea Constituyente. *Constitución del Ecuador*. Quito: Asamblea Constituyente, 2008. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.
- Bai 1a. Personal interview. 28 October 2012.
- Bai 1b. Personal interview. 28 October 2012.
- Bai 2. Personal interview. 29 October 2012.
- Bandia, Paul. *Translation as Reparation: Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa*. Manchester and Kinderhook: Saint Jerome Publishing, 2008. Print.
- - -. “Postcolonial Literary Heteroglossia: A Challenge for Homogenizing Translation.” *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 20.4 (2012): 419-43. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.

- Cabodevilla, Miguel Ángel. *Los Huaorani en la historia de los pueblos del oriente*. Coca: CICAME, 1994. Print.
- Carcelén-Estrada, Antonia. "Covert and Overt Ideologies in the Translation of the Bible into Huaoterero." *Translation, Resistance, Activism*. Ed. Maria Tymoczko. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010. 65-89. Print.
- Conklin, Beth A. "Body Paint, Feathers and VCRs: Aesthetics and Authenticity in Amazonian Activism." *American Ethnologist* 24.4 (1997): 711-37. Print.
- Fuchs, Anna. "Die Bedeutung des Dolmetschens für indigene Sprachen in Guatemala. Entwicklung seit den Friedensverträgen von 1996." MA Thesis. Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, 2005. Print.
- García, Ofelia. "Education, Multilingualism and Translanguaging in the 21st Century." *Multilingual Education for Social Justice: Globalising the Local*. Eds. Ajit Mohanty, Minati Panda, Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009. 128-45. Print.
- Gondecki, Philip. *Wir verteidigen unseren Wald. Vom lokalen Widerstand zum globalen Medienaktivismus der Waorani im Konflikt zwischen Erdölförderung und Umweltschutz im Yasuni im ecuadorianischen Amazonastiefland*. Diss. Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 2015. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.
- Gramling, David. "Getting up onto Monolingualism: Barthes, Kafka, Myth." *Thamyris/Intersecting* 28 (2014): 15-38. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.
- High, Casey. "Oil Development, Indigenous Organisations, and the Politics of Egalitarianism." *Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 26. 2 (2007): 34-46. Print.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos. *Las Cifras del Pueblo INDÍGENA. Una Mirada desde el Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010*. Quito: INEC/CODENPE/CODAE/CODEPMOC/CONEPIA, 2012. Print.
- Jeggle, Utz. "Verständigungsschwierigkeiten im Feld." *Das Fremde im Eigenen. Beiträge zur Anthropologie des Alltags*. Eds. Bernhard Tschofen, Monique Scheer and Thomas Thiemeyer. Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 2014. 17-37. Print.
- Jessner-Schmid, Ulrike, and Claire Kramersch. "Introduction: The Multilingual Challenge." *The Multilingual Challenge*. Eds. Ulrike Jessner-Schmid and Claire Kramersch. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter, 2015. 1-21. Print.
- Karpinski, Eva. "Invisible Borders: Translation and Multilingualism in an Unequal World." *Tusaaji: A Translation Review* 3.3 (2014): 21-34.
- Korak, Christina. "10 November 2012." *Diary 2*. Diary entry. 2012. 126-131.
- Korak, Christina. "07 November 2012." *Notebook 1*. Field notes. 2012. 17-22.
- Krainer, Anita. "La educación intercultural en Ecuador: Logros, desafíos y situación actual." *Fortalecimiento de organizaciones indígenas en América Latina: Construyendo interculturalidad: Pueblos indígenas, educación y políticas de identidad en América Latina. Grupo de investigación: E pluribus unum? Ethnic Identities in Transnational Integration Processes in the Americas*. Universität Bielefeld. Eds. Juliana Gregor-Ströbele, Olaf Kaltmeier and Cornelia Giebeler. Frankfurt: GTZ-ZIF, 2010. 38-44. Print.
- Kruse, Jan, Stephanie Bethmann, Judith Eckert, Debora Niermann and Christian Schmieder. "In und mit fremden Sprachen forschen. Eine empirische Bestandsaufnahme zu Erfahrungs- und Handlungswissen von Forschenden." *Qualitative Interviewforschung in und mit fremden Sprachen. Eine Einführung in*

- Theorie und Praxis*. Eds. Jan Kruse, Stephanie Bethmann, Debora Niermann and Christian Schmieder. Weinheim and Basel: Beltz Juventa, 2012. 27-69. Print.
- Liu, Lydia. *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity in China 1900–1937*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Print.
- Marais, Kobus. *Translation Theory and Development Studies*. New York and London: Routledge, 2014. Print.
- Mignolo, Walter D., and Freya Schiwy. "Double Translation: Transculturation and the Colonial Difference." *Translation and Ethnography. The Anthropological Challenge of Intercultural Understanding*. Eds. Tullio Maranhão and Bernhard Streck. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003. 3-30. Print.
- MOSEIB. *Modelo del sistema de educación intercultural bilingüe. Ecuador mama llakta shimi rimaykunamanta, kawsaykunamanta yachay*. Quito: Ministerio de Educación/DINEIB, 1988. Print.
- Narváez, Iván. "Huaorani: Mundos paralelos, mundos superpuestos y submundos." *La guerra del fuego. Políticas petroleras y crisis energética en América Latina*. Eds. Guillermo Fontaine and Alicia Puyana. Quito: FLACSO Ecuador/Ministerio de Cultura, 2008. 257-82. Print.
- ONWO. "Comunicado oficial del ONWO por incidente con aislados." *Observatorio de Derechos Colectivos del Ecuador*. CDES, 2013. Web. 17 Mar. 2016.
- Ortiz, Fernando. *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2002. Print.
- Pichilingue, Eduardo. "El plan de medidas cautelares como parte de la política específica de protección a los pueblos indígenas aislados en Ecuador." *Pueblos indígenas aislados en la Amazonía y el Gran Chaco Diciembre 2008. Ponencias del encuentro regional sobre indígenas aislados. Un aporte de Ecuador a la construcción de una política regional*. Eds. Poema Carrión, Alejandro Aguirre and Alejandra Adoum. Quito: Ministerio del Ambiente de Ecuador/Plan de Medidas Cautelares para la Protección de los Pueblos Indígenas Aislados/Programa para la Conservación y Manejo Sostenible del Patrimonio Natural y Cultural de la Reserva de la Biósfera Yasuní, 2010. 68-78. Print.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Rival, Laura. "Los indígenas Huaorani en la conciencia nacional. Alteridad representada y significada." *Imágenes e imagineros: Representaciones de los indígenas ecuatorianos, siglos XIX. y XX*. Ed. Blanca Muratorio. Quito: FLACSO, 1994. 253-92. Print.
- - -. *Hijos del sol. Padres del jaguar. Los Huaorani de ayer y hoy*. Quito: Abya-Yala, 1996. Print.
- Rivas, Toledo Alex, and Ponce, Rommel Lara. *Conservación y petróleo en la Amazonía ecuatoriana. Un acercamiento al caso huaorani*. Quito: EcoCiencia - Abya Yala, 2001. Print.
- Spitta, Silvia. *Between Two Waters: Narratives of Transculturation in Latin America*. Houston: Rice University Press, 1995. Print.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *Die Eroberung Amerikas. Das Problem des Anderen*. Trans. Wilfried Böhringer. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985. Print.

- Viatori, Maximilian Stefan, and Gloria Ushigua. "Speaking Sovereignty: Indigenous Languages and Self-Determination." *Wicazo Sa Review* 22:2 (2007): 7-21. Print.
- Zerries, Otto. "Nachwort. Die kulturgeschichtliche Stellung der Auka unter den Urwaldindianern Südamerikas." *Menschen im Regenwald. Expeditionen zu den Auka im wilden Osten Ecuadors*. Eds. Peter Baumann and Erwin Patzelt. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin and Wien: Safari bei Ullstein, 1983. 179-85. Print.