Towards 'spontaneous data' — a case study on Amazonian
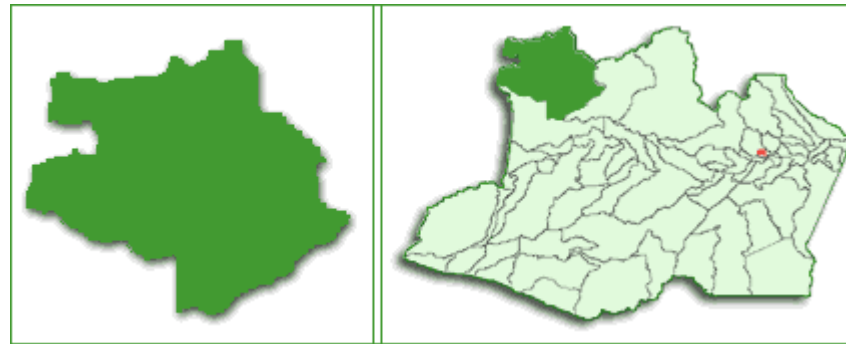
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GOALS

This paper attempts to present and compare three cases of textual documentation of Nheẽgatu, a Tupi-Guarani language spoken in the Upper Rio Negro, a river in the Amazonian region (Brazil)

Fieldwork settings

- **São Gabriel da Cachoeira – Upper Rio Negro**
- **Area**: 109,185 Km2 ("As big as Portugal")
- **Population:** 34,070
- **Manaus-SGC:** 852 Km or 1,061 Km by boat

Linguistic Situation

- Portuguese: official language
- Baniwa, **Nheẽgatu**, Tukano: co-official languages;
- More than 20 languages from Tukanoan, Arawakan and Maku-stock.

Three ethnic groups, three rivers, one language

- Since Baré, Warekena (3.2000) and some Baniwa lost their original languages, they adopted Nheẽgatu as their language.

DATA COLLECTION

- Three Samples of Nheẽgatu Texts:
- **Baré Sample**: gathered in SGC (downtown)
- **Baniwa Sample**: gathered in Assunção, river Içana (approximately 500 people);
- **Werekena Sample**: gathered in Anamuim, river Xié (206 people).
- **The three samples are gathered with Nheẽgatu native speakers.**

Case 1:*Sample of data recorded in SGC (downtown)*

- <u>Speakers</u>: Olímpia and Lorivaldo (Baré), political representatives of Werekena Society.
- <u>Languages</u>: Bilingual Nheẽgatu / Portuguese
- <u>Topic of Conversation</u>: Revitalization of Baré and Werekena languages and other political questions.
- <u>Restrictions</u>: Only for the sake of studying the language [not allowed for other speakers, due to polical sensitives issues].
- <u>Variety</u> : Nheẽgatu spoken by Baré in the Upper Rio Negro.

São Gabriel

Case 1: Nheẽgatu spoken by Baré (downtown)

- **Não importa que** iwasu yaui yapisika ae yaputaira̧ yariku yane **identidade própria, porque poxa** sasi̧ yane pia upe ui ara. Baré ita **ma** tiã **taukontai** Baré, **taukontai** Nheẽgatu. **Poxa** yaputai yane **identidade!** Ui a̧ra sese waa **yayureconhecei** kui ma ara yauiri yapita nhaã Nheẽgatu wã yiuiri ti umeerã panhȩ **tempo** yasu **discriminado** sese ba. [*written in Nheẽgatu ortography*]

- We need to make it possible [to speak Baré]. It doesn't matter how difficult it is to get it back. We want our own identity, because it hurts our heart. Nowadays, there are Baré people, but they don't speak Baré, they speak Nhẽegatu ... Nowadays, we want our own identity. We recognize ourselves [as Baré], we start [to speak Nheẽgatu] again, we stick to Nhẽegatu, but there is a lot of prejudice against us [because we don't speak our own language].

Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

- <u>Lexical borrowings</u>: Nouns and adjectives without adaptation.

(1)

ya-	putai	-rã	yane	**identidade**	**própria**
1pl	want	finality	1pl.poss	identity	own

Queremos nossa identidade própria.

We want our own identity

Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

- <u>Lexical borrowing</u>: Feeling Expressions and Connectors from Portuguese, without adaptation:

(2)

porque	**poxa**		sasi	yane	pia	upe
conector	feeling expression		hurt	1pl.poss	heart	loc

porque, poxa!, dói no nosso coração.

because, damn, It hurts our heart

Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

- <u>Lexical borrowings</u>: Verbs from Portuguese must receive a personal marker from Nheẽgatu and they may get a reflexive morpheme.

(3)

ya-   yu-   rekoŋesei

1pl   reflexive   recognize

Nós nos reconhecemos
We recognize ourselves

Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

- <u>Syntax</u>: The frequent use of pronominal agreement is very similar to Portuguese syntactical patterns.

(4)

i̥ʃe	a-	puɾ̥aki	Weɾ̥ekena	ta-	i̥ɾũ
1sg	1sg	work	Werekena	3pl	comitative

Eu trabalho com os Werekena.
I work with the Werekena [people].

Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

- SYNTAX: Use of verbal expressions from Portuguese (e.g. "Tem que" or "Não importa que").

(5)

Não	**importa**	**que**	iwasu	ja-	jui	ja-	pisika	ae
neg	matter	relative	difficult	1pl	return	1pl	take	3sg.

Não importa que seja difícil pegar isso de volta.

It's doesn't matter how difficult it is to get it back.

Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

- Code-switching

(6)

tempo	de	escravo	cada	um	u-	sikaj	s-	ape
time	prep.	slave	each	one	3sg	search	3sg.poss	there

No tempo de escravidão, cada um procurou seu caminho.

In the time of slavery, each person looked for his own way.

Case 2: *Sample of data recorded in Assunção (Baniwa community)*

- <u>Speaker</u>: Irineu, 74 years-old, talking with students from Baré, Baniwa and Werekena communities.

- <u>Languages</u>: Bilingual Nheẽgatu / Baniwa; he can understand Portuguese.

- <u>Topic of Conversation</u>: The Baniwa traditions before and after the arrival of the Catholic missionaries.

- <u>Variety</u> : Nheẽgatu spoken by Baniwa in the Low Içana.

IRINEU WITH STUDENTS

Irineu compares the community situation before and after the arrival of the Catholic missionaries.

Case 2: Nheẽgatu spoken by Baniwa

- tiware yamaã nemaã nemaã kua rupi nhaã kuru ita nhaã pantu re... tapinaitika, tãbau, tayumusarai igarapawa, yamusarai.

- There were no people yet, we still hadn't seen anything here. Nothing, nothing. Only the boys, they fished, ate, played at the port, we played.

Case 2: Before the arrival of missionaries

- Nheẽgatu Structures non-related with Portuguese patterns:

(7)

ti- (a)wa -ɾe ja- maã kua kiti

neg people asp 1pl see dem posp.

We still hadn't seen people here.

(8)

Ne-maã Ne-maã

Neg-thing Neg-thing

Nothing, nothing...

Case 2: Before the arrival of missionaries

(9)

Kua	ɾupi	ŋaã	kuɾu	ita	ŋaã	pa	-~tu	-ɾe
dem	posp	dem	boy	pl	dem	?concl	restritive	asp

Here, [there were] only that boys.

(10)

ta-	pinaitika	ta-	~bau	ta-	ju-	musarai	ta-	jasuka
3pl	fish	3pl	eat	3pl	refl	play	3pl	bathe

They fished, ate, played, bathed

(11)

ja-	jasuka	gaɾapa	upe
1pls	bathe	port	loc

We bathed at the port.

Case 2: After the arrival of missionaries

- The syntactical patterns of Portuguese arrive with the new conversational topic:

(12)

u-	sasa	**tempo**	u-	ǀi	aã	pa'i	Padre José
3sg	pass	tempo	3sg	come	dem	father	Father José

Passou tempo, veio aquele padre José
Time went by... that father, Father José, came...

(13)

ae	u-	mu-	jupiru	-ɾã	kua	**missão**
3sg	3sg	caus.	begin	final.	dem	mission

Ele fez começar esta missão.
He began this missionary community.
(Or He made this missionary community start.)

Case 3: Sample *of data recorded in Anamuim (Werekena community)*

Speaker: Hermínio, approximately 70 years old, talking with students.

Languages: Monolingual Nheẽgatu; he can understand Portuguese.

Topic of Conversation: The school at the community.

Variety : Nheẹgatu spoken by Werekena in the Upper Xié.

Hermínio - Anamuim

Case 3: Nheẽgatu spoken by Werekena

- Peputai **professor**? Yaputai wera! Yaputai. asu yepe **professor** usika arã ape. Ape, purãga, ape **cada qual uaseitai**. Taraira **tauaseitai**.

- Do you want a teacher? We do! I will ask for a teacher coming there. All right, then everybody accepted. Their children accepted.

Case 3: Interference of Portuguese

- Again some loanwords without adaptation and the syntactical patterns of Portuguese arrive when the conversational topic emphasizes the western culture:

(14)

pe-	putai	**professor**
2pl	want	teacher

Vocês querem professor?
Do you want a teacher?

ya-	putai	wera
1pl	want	asp.

Queremos!
We want

Case 3: Interference of Portuguese

(15)

a-	su	a-	kũtai	yepe	**professor**	u-	sika	aɾã	ape
1sg	aux	1sg	speak	one	teacher	3sg	arrive	final.	there

Eu vou dizer para um professor chegar lá
I will ask for one teacher go there

(16)

puɾãga	ape	**Kada**	**qual**	**u-**	**aseitai**
good	conector	every	rel	3sg	accept

Bom, ai cada qual aceitou
All right then everybody accepted

(17)

ta-	ɾaiɾa	tau-	aseitai
3pl	son of a man	3pl-	accept

Os filhos deles aceitaram
Their children accepted

DATA COMPARISON

- **Baré Sample**
- *(downtown):*
- *Speakers are bilingual (Portuguese /Nheẽgatu)*
- *Loanwords without adaptation (nouns, feeling expressions, adjectives);*
- *Verbs with Nheẽgatu morphology;*
- *Portuguese syntactical patterns;*
- *Code-switching*

- **Baniwa / Werekena Sample**
- *(community)*
- *Speakers do not speak Portuguese daily;*
- *Use of loanwords restricted to Catholic or educational vocabulary (e.g. [misão]),*
- *Use of native morphemes (evidential and aspectual markers)*
- *Portuguese syntactical patterns when talking about the relation with western culture*

DATA COMPARISON

- The further the fieldworker goes, the less prominent the interference of the dominant language (Portuguese) becomes;
- BUT that is not enough
- The preliminary textual analysis demonstrates that the topic of the conversation is also important;
- Then, the researcher should suggest conversational topics that do not emphasize the nature of the relation of the community and the dominant culture.

THANK YOU

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