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 Nheēgatu, a Tupi-Guaraní 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 Nheẹgatu 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)

- **Speakers**: Olímpia and Lorivaldo (Baré), political representatives of Werekena Society.
- **Languages**: Bilingual Nheẽgatu / Portuguese
- **Topic of Conversation**: Revitalization of Baré and Werekena languages and other political questions.
- **Restrictions**: Only for the sake of studying the language [not allowed for other speakers, due to political sensitive issues].
- **Variety**: Nheẽgatu spoken by Baré in the Upper Rio Negro.
São Gabriel
Case 1: Nheēgatu spoken by Baré (downtown)

• Não importa que iwasu yaui yapisika ae yaputairā yariku yane identidade própria, porque poxa saşi yane pia upe ui ara. Baré ita ma tiã taukontai Baré, taukontai Nheēgatu. Poxa yaputai yane identidade! Ui ara sese waa yayureconhecei kui ma ara yauiri yapita nhaã Nheēgatu wã yuiiri tî umeerã panhê tempo yasu discriminado sese ba. [written in Nheēgatu 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 Nheēgatu … Nowadays, we want our own identity. We recognize ourselves [as Baré], we start [to speak Nheēgatu] again, we stick to Nhēegatu, but there is a lot of prejudice against us [because we don’t speak our own language].
Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

• **Lexical borrowings**: Nouns and adjectives without adaptation.

(1)

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{ya-} & \text{putai} & \text{-rã} & \text{yane} & \text{identidade} & \text{própria} \\
1pl & \text{want} & \text{finality} & 1pl.\text{poss} & \text{identity} & \text{own}
\end{array}
\]

Queremos nossa identidade própria.

We want our own identity.
Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

- **Lexical borrowing**: Feeling Expressions and Connectors from Portuguese, without adaptation:

(2)

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

because, damn, It hurts our heart
Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

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

(3)

\[
\begin{array}{lll}
yā- & yu- & rekoŋesei \\
1pl & reflexive & recognize \\
Nós nos reconhecemos & We recognize ourselves
\end{array}
\]
Case 1: Interference of Portuguese

• **Syntax**: The frequent use of pronominal agreement is very similar to Portuguese syntactical patterns.

(4)

\[
\text{iše} \quad \text{a-} \quad \text{puṛaki} \quad \text{Werekena} \quad \text{ta-} \quad .\text{irũ}
\]

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
deficit 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)

- **Speaker**: Irineu, 74 years-old, talking with students from Baré, Baniwa and Werekena communities.
- **Languages**: Bilingual Nheēgatu / Baniwa; he can understand Portuguese.
- **Topic of Conversation**: The Baniwa traditions before and after the arrival of the Catholic missionaries.
- **Variety**: Nheēgatu 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

- Nheēgatu Structures non-related with Portuguese patterns:

(7)
ti- (a)wa -re 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 ŋaá kuru ita ŋaá pa -~tu -re
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 garapa 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)
\[ u- \text{sasa} \text{ tempo } u- \quad |i \quad \text{aã} \quad \text{pa}'i \quad \text{Padre José} \]
\[ 3\text{sg} \quad \text{pass} \quad \text{tempo} \quad 3\text{sg} \quad \text{come} \quad \text{dem} \quad \text{father} \quad \text{Father José} \]
\[ \text{Passou tempo, veio aquele padre José} \]
\[ \text{Time went by... that father, Father José, came...} \]

(13)
\[ \text{ae } u- \text{ mu- } \text{jupiru } -rā \quad \text{kua} \quad \text{missão} \]
\[ 3\text{sg} \quad 3\text{sg} \quad \text{caus.} \quad \text{begin} \quad \text{final.} \quad \text{dem} \quad \text{mission} \]
\[ \text{Ele fez começar esta missão.} \]
\[ \text{He began this missionary community.} \]
\[ (\text{Or He made this missionary community start.}) \]
Case 3: Sample of data recorded in Anamuim (Werekena community)

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

**Languages:** Monolingual Nheégatu; he can understand Portuguese.

**Topic of Conversation:** The school at the community.

**Variety:** Nheégatu spoken by Werekena in the Upper Xié.
Hermínio - Anamuim
Case 3: Nheēgatu spoken by Werekena

- Peputai **professor**? Yaputai wera! Yaputai. asu yepe **professor** usika arā ape. Ape, purāga, 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:

\[(14)\]

**Vocês querem professor?**

**Do you want a teacher?**

**Queremos!**

**We want**

\[\text{pe- putai professor} \quad \text{ya- putai wera}\]

\[\text{2pl want teacher} \quad \text{1pl want asp.}\]
Case 3: Interference of Portuguese

(15)  
Eu vou dizer para um professor chegar lá
I will ask for one teacher go there

(16)  
Bom, ai cada qual aceitou
All right then everybody accepted

(17)  
Os filhos deles aceitaram
Their children accepted
DATA COMPARISON

- **Baré Sample**
  - *(downtown):*
  - Speakers are bilingual *(Portuguese /Nheēgatu)*
  - Loanwords without adaptation *(nouns, feeling expressions, adjectives)*;
  - Verbs with Nheēgatu 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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