

Contextualizing Tuparí grammar within the ecology of the Brazilian state of Rondônia

This talk reports on an ongoing project to produce a comprehensive reference grammar for Tuparí, a Brazilian language that has 350 to 400 fluent speakers. We discuss the rapidly changing sociolinguistic ecology within which the language is spoken. Understanding this ecology is vital if we are to make sense of the extensive innovations that distinguish Tuparí from its sister languages within the Tuparían branch of the Tupían family (Eriksen & Galucio 2014).

The area that corresponds to the Rio Branco Indigenous Land, located in the southern part of the state of Rondônia, is home to a diverse set of indigenous peoples. The local languages belong to two of the largest Brazilian language families, Tupían and Macro-Jê. Makurap (of the Tupían family's Tuparían branch) used to function as a local lingua franca. According to the ethnographic description by Caspar (1956, 1975), during the first half of the last century all adult Tuparí men spoke Makurap and often other local languages as well. The degree to which Tuparí women were multilingual is less clear, though our own fieldwork on the Rio Branco has shown that certain Tuparí matriarchs did indeed learn Makurap in their youth. There is also one elderly Tuparí woman who speaks Arikapu, an extremely endangered language which — together with its sister language, Djeoromitxí — belongs to Macro-Jê (see Ribero & van der Voort 2010).

Devastating measles epidemics, the intrusion of non-indigenous settlers, and problematic governmental policies severely disrupted the linguistic ecology of the Rio Branco region over the last seventy years. The *only* Native language that continues to be learned by children on the Rio Branco is Tuparí; and even then, shift to Portuguese is underway in multiple Tuparí-majority villages. Makurap and Djeoromitxí, meanwhile, remain in use only on a separate reserve, the Rio Guaporé Indigenous Land, to which some residents of the Rio Branco were relocated by government officials several decades ago. While there are ethnic Tuparí on the Rio Guaporé as well, they have shifted to Portuguese. This means that Tuparí is vital only on the Rio Branco.

This changing linguistic ecology has serious implications for our description and analysis of Tuparí grammar. Our research has determined that Tuparí is highly innovative when compared to its sister languages within the Tupían family's Tuparían branch. For instance, it has developed evidential and resultative suffixes that lack cognates in the sister languages (Author 2019). And whereas the sister languages use non-finite subordination strategies only, Tuparí has innovated a finite embedded clause construction that maintains all the tense, aspect and evidential contrasts found in matrix clauses (Author 2021). This talk will discuss strategies to contextualize the diachronically innovative aspects of Tuparí grammar within the linguistic ecology of the Rio Branco region. We advocate the use of detailed metadata that can highlight the different kinds of multilingualism that characterize older speakers (who tend to speak more than one indigenous language but may have only limited proficiency in Portuguese) versus younger ones (who tend to know only one indigenous language, Tuparí, plus fluent Portuguese). While such metadata annotation is typical of documentary corpora, we will argue that incorporating these metadata *into the grammatical description itself* is necessary to ensure that our reference grammar sufficiently contextualizes the dynamic linguistic ecology which characterizes southern Rondônia today and which impacts Tuparí speakers' various multilingual competence(s).

References (with our own publications excluded for the sake of anonymity)

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