

4 * *Historical Development of Nheengatu* (*Língua Geral Amazônica*)

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1. Introduction

One of the most fascinating cases of language contact, the evolution of Nheengatu, spanning five hundred years in Brazil, has received relatively little international attention. The indigenous language commonly spoken on the coast of Brazil in 1500, the precursor of Nheengatu, was widely learned in the colony in the sixteenth century, abetted by Jesuit use as an instrument of catechism and of control of native peoples and by favorable government opinion. It was called the *Brasílica* in the first two centuries, or *Tupinambá*, the name of one of the indigenous nations that spoke it, or coastal Tupi. A version of the language was prevalent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the Portuguese Amazonian colonies of Maranhão and Grão-Pará, although it declined in official favor and importance after the mid-eighteenth century. It evolved rapidly as a result of historical events and language contact. By the mid-eighteenth century, the colloquial variety was recognized as different and referred to as *Língua Geral* or, as designated by Lee (2005), the *Vulgar*. The term *Língua Geral Amazônica* (LGA) is used to distinguish the northern version from *Língua Geral Paulista*, a similar lingua franca spoken in the South for a time. In the nineteenth century the autodenomination *Nheengatu* became more common.

An overview of the historical development of this language is presented here, with an attempt to interpret its changes within the framework of the study of languages in contact, especially using the notions of borrowing versus substratum interference (Thomason and Kaufman 1988) and the replication of models (Heine and Kuteva 2005). The findings are similar to those of Moore, Facundes, and Pires (1993), whose suggestions are consistent with subsequent research. Not all the research on the language and its earlier stages can be included here.

Nheengatu has a notable charm. People delight in learning it and regard it with affection. It and its earlier versions offer a rich field for philological investigation. It is also important in Brazilian national history. The Portuguese-Tupi interaction is explored by Noll and Dietrich (2010). A certain amount of folklore has grown up around Nheengatu, in

its present and former phases, including the idea that it was invented by the Jesuits or is impure Tupi. The changes that have occurred in the evolution of Nheengatu are complex and are what one might expect given the nature of the language situations through which it passed in the often tragic history of its speakers.

A brief sketch of the modern Nheengatu of the Upper Rio Negro, based on original research, is presented in section 5, to give a specific, systematic overview of the language, however brief. There has been surprisingly little description of modern Nheengatu dialects. Fortunately, a large description of the Nheengatu spoken by the Baré, Warekena, and Baniwa, based on field research and natural texts, has recently appeared (Cruz 2011). It includes observations on the evolution of the language. Aside from various evident dialect differences, the analysis presented in that work differs in some respects from the sketch presented here. Only a couple of differences, relevant for the question of the effects of contact, will be dealt with at this time.

2. Language and the Early Settlement of the Coast of Sixteenth-Century Brazil

At the time of the first Portuguese contact in 1500, the east coast of what is now Brazil was populated by native peoples speaking a chain of dialects of a language of the Tupi-Guarani branch of the Tupi linguistic family. These tribes were at war with one another and with non-Tupian groups (referred to collectively as Tapuia) in the region. First contacts produced astonishment and wonder on both the European and the indigenous sides. They led to exchanges, in which the native peoples sought European goods, especially metal tools, and the Europeans sought brazilwood for making red dyes, as well as food. The French and the Dutch also established outposts along the coast. Portuguese dominance was not established until the middle of the seventeenth century.

European men often fathered children with native women and established close relations with indigenous groups in this manner, producing mestizo children who spoke the native language. Hemming observes, “From the outset, colonists surrounded themselves with native women, and the families descended from Caramuru and Ramalho or Jerônimo de Albuquerque were proud of their Indian blood; such families even bolstered land claims by boasting of descent from the original inhabitants of Brazil!” (1978, 179). This was true of all regions of the colony (cf. Rodrigues 1996): of these three examples of Portuguese men who married into indigenous groups, Caramuru lived in Bahia, Ramalho in São Vicente, and Jerônimo de Albuquerque in Pernambuco.

Europeans who lived for some time in the new land learned the language, which gave them influence as middlemen, especially since there was relative linguistic uniformity along the coast. According to Lee, “early colonial sources show no indication that ‘mixed’ languages played any role in inter-ethnic linguistic communication. Instead, local tongues, namely mutually comprehensible tribal and regional dialects of the Tupi-Guarani language family, came to mediate early interlingual experiences” (2005, 21).

Some clarification is perhaps in order here about the term *Tupi-Guarani language family*, which Lee (chap. 5, this volume) considers “a single entity and linguistic class that brings together smaller speech communities that reflect ethnic and regional varieties.” This definition could fit any genetic grouping of linguistic variants—a stock, family, or language. In its normal usage, the *Tupi-Guarani language family* (or the Tupi-Guarani branch of the Tupi language family) designates a large group of distinct languages and groups (including, for example, Xetá, Sirionó, Araweté, Ka’apor, Kamayurá, Guajá, and Tapirapé) who had split from each other perhaps a thousand or more years before the first Portuguese arrival in Brazil. These varied groups live in different regions with differing sociocultural systems. It would be a challenge to specify an ethos common to all of these groups and distinct from, say, Arawak or Carib groups. If the ethos of what is called the coastal Tupi were one of a tendency toward alliances with outsiders, one would expect that their expansion would have been characterized by cooperative relations with neighboring tribes, which does not seem to have been the general case.

One of the coastal tribes, the Tupinambá, were said to have descended from the interior of Bahia onto the coast and displaced the Tupinaé (Lee 2005, 79). They played a considerable role in the history of the colony of Brazil. By the end of the seventeenth century, with the Tupinambá tribe greatly diminished, the name began to be employed more generally to designate groups that were linguistically and culturally related.

The use of the native language throughout the colony continued after the Portuguese established permanent settlements beginning in the decade of the 1530s. This is similar to the spread and predominance of Maya in the colonial period (Pfeiler, chap. 8, this volume). In the 1540s sugar plantations were established, and they had a great need for labor. Before European contact, the native tribes had taken war captives to be later executed. With European presence some of these were traded as slaves to the whites. The Portuguese and their French rivals encouraged warfare, with each other and between tribes, creating more captives. Soon slave raids by Europeans, abetted by indigenous and mixed-blood allies, were directed against indigenous groups (Hemming 1978, 34–44).

Legally, indigenous slavery was outlawed by the king of Portugal in 1570. However, it continued in practice, since slaves could be seized in “just wars” against hostile indigenous tribes or could be “ransomed”—a term applied to native captives supposedly about to be executed by the tribes who were saved by colonialist forces. Natives could also sell themselves into slavery.

To neutralize hostile native populations and obtain workers, expeditions to “descend” native peoples were undertaken, often giving gifts and using mestizos to persuade tribal groups to resettle among the colonists, where many were enslaved or forced to work under harsh conditions and died from disease. Missionaries, settlers, and government officials participated in this system. Each of these three parties had its own fluctuating view of the moral questions involved. Each party pursued its own individual interests, often disputing with the other two parties to further its own purposes.

Disease and overwork greatly reduced the indigenous population in contact. One example given in Hemming states: “In the early 1560s there were over 40,000 converts in the Jesuit villages near Bahia. By 1585 Anchieta reported that, despite infusions of thousands more from the interior, these were reduced to ten thousand” (1978, 144). This enormous mortality stimulated more expeditions to capture indigenous people and also the importation of (relatively expensive) African slaves. In 1610 a French visitor in Salvador estimated that the administrative area of Bahia contained 2,000 whites, 3,000–4,000 black slaves, 7,000 Indian and black slaves on the sugar plantations, and 8,000 free natives in the missions (86).

The first Jesuits arrived in Brazil in 1549, in Bahia. The Jesuits founded mission villages for indigenous Christians, in theory for their safety, training, and moral education. They soon favored forced resettlement, since the native peoples were doubtful converts with little interest in forced labor. Hemming notes that “by the end of the century there were only 128 Jesuits in Brazil, but they controlled virtually all Indians under Portuguese rule there” (1978, 98). At that time they administered about thirty mission villages (179).

Missions were arranged on European patterns, with a church, living quarters for missionaries, and buildings for mission activities. According to Hemming, “The community was run entirely by two Jesuit fathers, a vicar and a curate, always dressed in long black habits and four-cornered caps.” These controlled indigenous subordinates: “They appointed Indians to serve for life as chiefs, and annually as magistrates, bailiffs and other ecclesiastical offices” (1978, 115). Children were separated from their parents and housed in “colleges.” The missions could be quite prosperous in their economic activities, based on indigenous labor. In this

“curious world of detribalized Indians” (109), the language spoken was the Brasília.

The Jesuits were more active learners of the native language than were the other missionary orders. They made extensive use of interpreters, called *línguas*. Their earliest interpreters “were selected from colonists of Portuguese birth living in Brazil before the arrival of the Jesuits” (Lee 2005, 152). All these earliest colonists spoke the indigenous language. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Jesuits produced language manuals for practical use in communication and religious instruction, copied by hand, since there were no printing presses in Brazil at the time. The best-known linguistic work of the sixteenth century in Portuguese Brazil, *Arte da Grammatica da Lingoa mais usada na costa do Brasil*, was written by Father José de Anchieta (1595), who visited a number of tribes and was attentive to variation. It was composed between 1555 and 1556 in six months and published in 1595 (Lee 2005, 132), consisting of sixty pages, using Latin as a descriptive model. A catechism in the native language was published by Father Antônio de Araújo in 1618. A Jesuit who learned the language of the indigenous villages of Bahia, Father Luis Figueira, published *Arte da Língua Brasília* in 1621. The author “sought out rural Indians and great missionary linguists born and raised among the Indians to consult” about the language (Lee 2005, 138). (Note that these sources exclude mestizos, possibly indicating that their speech was already considered less authentic.) The Jesuits were also active in education. Their schools included indigenous, mestizo, and white students. This study and use of the indigenous language parallels that of the Maya language “used by missionaries and plantation owners in their efforts to achieve social and religious domination” (Pfeiler, chap. 8, this volume).

3. Amazonia: The Second Colony and the Evolution of Língua Geral Amazônica

Portuguese settlement of the Amazon region began more than a century after the first contacts on the east coast of Brazil. The French abandoned Fort St. Louis (in modern São Luis, Maranhão) in 1615, and the Portuguese went on to establish a wooden fort in what is now Belém, near the mouth of the Amazon River, in 1616. This region became a new colony in 1621, separate from the colony of Brazil to the south. The new colony, the state of Maranhão, included Grão-Pará (extending west up the Amazon River) and Ceará (later ceded to Pernambuco). It was subordinated directly to Portugal, partly for ease of maritime travel. Its capital, São Luis, was transferred to Belém in 1737.

Amazonia was less attractive for settlement than Brazil, given the great

distances and difficulty in transportation and communication. Its rain-forest environment was very different from Portugal. And it was linguistically much more diverse. A Spanish Jesuit who traveled the Amazon River counted more than 150 different languages along the banks of the Amazon and the mouths of its principal tributaries (Acuña [1641] 1941, 199, cited in Freire 1983, 42). Colonization by Europeans and by African slaves was later and slower in Amazonia, impeding the spread of the Portuguese language. There were only about 150 Portuguese speakers settled in Belém in 1616. By 1720 there were still only about 1,000 Portuguese in Amazonia, in contact with about 75,000 free and enslaved natives (Freire 2004, 54). During the sixteenth century, Amazonia had received migrations of Tupinambá groups fleeing Brazil. Immigrants from settlements in Brazil increased the number of the speakers of this indigenous language: “Indians, whites, blacks, mulattos and mestizos leaving their homes in Brazil to populate the northern colony brought the Brasília with them” (Lee 2005, 165). Mestizo children learned the language from their indigenous mothers; white children learned it from their indigenous nursemaids. Given the comparative unavailability of Portuguese speakers, the Brasília was the natural choice for the colonization of Amazonia.

The practices developed in the colony of Brazil were applied in Amazonia: slave raids and “descents” of tribal groups into mission and government villages, with forced labor, disease, and immense mortality rates. For the first three decades, there was little control over the settlers. In 1665 a law dealt the Jesuits control over all indigenous villages (Hemming 1978, 324), although settlers resisted, with some success. In 1686 the Regimento das Missões gave the Jesuits complete control of the indigenous population. This legal measure also permitted more “descents” of indigenous groups. In only four years, between 1687 and 1690, the missionaries “descended” 184,040 natives for Church and king (Baena 1831, 247, cited in Freire 1983, 50). These groups spoke many different languages, of diverse language families, such as Arawak, Carib, and Tukano.

In 1689 a Carta Régia specified *Língua Geral* as the official language of Maranhão and Grão-Pará. This official support for the language continued until 1727, when another Carta Régia prohibited *Língua Geral* and promoted Portuguese. The prohibition had little effect, and in 1750 the whole colony spoke *Língua Geral Amazônica*, except for some in the colonial administration coming from Portugal.

During the first two centuries of Jesuit activity in Brazil (1549–1750) and then in Maranhão and Grão-Pará, the language that was called the Brasília, essentially Tupinambá, continued as a liturgical language with apparently little change. However, this language as it was used in daily affairs by common people seems to have changed greatly by the mid-

eighteenth century. Lee makes the strong claim that “one hundred years after the initial colonization of the State of Maranhão and Pará, the *Brasílica* had become incomprehensible” (2005, 165). Since the language was still actively used in liturgy, some classic linguistic works about the *Brasílica* were republished. For example, the 1621 grammar by Figueira reappeared in 1685 and the 1616 catechisms of Antônio de Araújo were reedited in 1686. A catechism by Bettendorff was published in 1687, but, having observed the gap between the *Brasílica* and the language commonly spoken, Bettendorff produced another version in the colloquial form of the language, *Língua Geral*. Freire observes that “Tupinambá was the language of the ritual acts, LGA the language of popular communication and, therefore, of religious instruction. The relation between Tupinambá and LGA was similar to the relation between Latin and Portuguese in Portugal and in other parts of Brazil” (2004, 118).

Durston uses the very same analogy in the Quechua case, stating that “in some respects [Standard Colonial Quechua] stood in relation to Central Quechua varieties as Latin did to Romance languages in medieval and modern Europe” (chap. 9, this volume). Pfeiler discusses a similar contemporary diglossia situation, contrasting “pure” Hach Maya with the vernacular Xe’ek’ (chap. 8, this volume).

Monserrat found the language in the documents from the eighteenth century to be very different from the language of the two earlier centuries (2003, 188). Lee discusses language manuals from the eighteenth century that describe the colloquial *Língua Geral*, in contrast to the *Brasílica* (2005, 205–208).

There seems to be general agreement that by the mid-eighteenth century *Língua Geral Amazônica* was quite different from Tupinambá, although it is hard to say whether they were truly mutually incomprehensible. Another question is whether the alterations in the *Brasílica* were not already in progress in the colony of Brazil in the century preceding the colonization of Amazonia. Lee states, “In its early Amazonian form, the *Brasílica* exhibited minor differences in pronunciation and vocabulary but remained comprehensible to its speakers in the State of Brazil” (2005, 169). Given the lack of records of colloquial speech of the sixteenth century, it is hard to estimate the degree of change during that century. If *Língua Geral Amazônica* and *Língua Geral Paulista* were spoken by distinct speech communities after the first century or two of contact, it might be possible to spot shared innovations in the two languages (not caused by parallel evolution or borrowing) that would date those changes to the time before their separation. The fact that Figueira took care to avoid the common speech of the settlements as a basis for his grammar hints at changes there. One would imagine that the borrowing

of Portuguese words for Western items and practices had begun in the sixteenth century. Any changes in the common speech in the colony of Brazil would presumably have been brought to the new colonies of Maranhão and Grão-Pará by people arriving there from Brazil.

If the principal mechanism modifying the *Brasílica* had been borrowing (as opposed to substratum interference), then the colony of Brazil would, arguably, have had more favorable conditions for this than would Amazonia, since Brazil, by the end of the sixteenth century, had a considerably higher concentration of Europeans (and Africans). But there would have been a countervailing conservative tendency because of the presence in the colony of Brazil of many speakers of Tupinambá and related dialects, providing continuous input of the relatively unaltered form of the language. Since the indigenous groups captured or “descended” in the colony of Brazil often spoke dialects close to the *Brasílica*, there would have been little substratum interference in the speech of the mestizos and detribalized peoples.

In Amazonia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the conditions for language change would have been the reverse of those in the colony of Brazil in the sixteenth century. There were relatively few speakers of Portuguese. The Tupinambá themselves were becoming nearly extinct in the eighteenth century, and their speech would no longer serve as ballast for the *Brasílica*. At the same time, relatively enormous numbers of speakers of non-Tupi-Guarani languages were brought into contact in resettlement villages, and some form of the *Brasílica* or, later, LGA, was the means of communication with each other and with authorities. According to Lee, “the Jesuit missionary João Daniel observed aldeias [villages] in which 30 to 40 groups, each speaking different languages, lived side by side” (2005, 183).

There is evidence for the lack of any preexisting trade language or *lingua franca* in the Amazonian colony. For example, the contact with the *Nheengatã* of Marajó was possible using a mestizo whose mother spoke the language; there was no shared language (Barros 2003, 95). The difficult communication with the *Aimoré* likewise indicates a lack of a *lingua franca* used between indigenous groups with different mother tongues in the colony of Brazil (Hemming 1978, 172). Durston (chap. 9, this volume) doubts a direct relationship between Standard Colonial Quechua and any precontact indigenous *lingua franca*, which has sometimes been assumed.

The scenario in which speakers of many indigenous languages had to learn the *lingua franca*, LGA, in the Amazonian resettlement villages is exactly what Thomason and Kaufman describe as “imperfect group learning during a language shift” (1988, 37). In fact, the rapid evolution

of LGA is just what would be expected, according to those authors, who state, “In fact, substratum effects are more likely to enter a TL [Target Language] rapidly than slowly: if the shift takes place over long centuries, then the shifting population is more likely to be truly bilingual in the TL” (41).

One indication of the mechanism of language change (borrowing versus substratum interference) is the amount of lexical borrowing relative to structural effects. Thomason and Kaufman observe, “The interesting point here is that in borrowing proper many words will be borrowed before any structural interference at all occurs, but in substratum interference . . . structural interference comes first” (1988, 21). Borrowings from the various languages being replaced do not appear to have been numerous, although they are not easy to detect. Moore, Facundes, and Pires regard the facts of the rapid changes in LGA at this time as highly consistent with substratum interference from indigenous groups learning the language from indigenous and mestizo speakers and less consistent with lexical or structural borrowing from Portuguese. They note, “As would be expected, borrowings from Portuguese were limited, but the grammar was altered by many new speakers” (1993, 115). In fact, even in texts from the latter half of the nineteenth century, Portuguese lexical borrowings are few, and they must have been even fewer a century earlier. For example, a Christian text 411 words long, “A Criação de todas as Cousas” (The creation of all things), transcribed by Lourenço Costa Aguiar, contains only three obvious borrowings: *santasána* (<Port: santa-?) ‘firmament’, *bençam* (<Port: benção) ‘blessing’, and *e* (<Port: e) ‘conjunction’ (Stradelli 1929, 732–736). Another text, 293 words long, transcribed by Couto de Magalhães, “O Jabuti e a Anta do Matto” (The turtle and the tapir of the forest) contains only three borrowings: *ki* (<Port: aqui) ‘here’, *será* (<Port: será) ‘will be’, and *o* (<Port: ou) ‘or’ (725–728).

A Jesuit named João Daniel, who spent fourteen years, up to 1757, in Brazilian Amazonia, stated that as the real Tupinambá were disappearing, the missionaries replaced them with diverse other groups speaking various languages, which corrupted the Tupinambá language (1976, 2:225, cited in Barros 2003, 86). Consequently, the more recent natives could not understand the catechisms, nor could those schooled in Tupinambá grammar understand the indigenous speakers, especially in Amazonia. This “corrupt” language was spoken in all Portuguese missions in Amazonia and was learned by new groups brought out of the forest and by white missionaries who learned from the natives and not from grammars. Daniel’s description of the language contact situation is a textbook case of substratum interference: “There are other nations of diverse languages, without the use of Língua Geral, brought down to the missions

where they soon learn it, but impart to it, in greater or lesser degree, corruption” (my translation) (Daniel 1976, 1:269, cited in Barros 2003, 93). Lee basically agrees with this account of the creation of LGA, that it was “developed by intra-group but interlingual efforts to communicate” (2005, 243).

However, the picture presented here, that colonial demand for indigent labor led to the forced resettlement of diverse groups and their obligatory learning of the language of their captors to communicate (as opposed to voluntary shift to a prestigious language), is different from the more cheerful view of Lee in chapter 5 of this volume, that the Brasília’s “expansion from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries serves as one more reflection of the Tupi-Guarani success in continually defining and redefining themselves as essential actors whose participation would ensure success in human endeavors.” In fact, it was mainly the Vulgar, not the Brasília, that spread in Amazonia and still survives. Since, as Lee herself observes, “By the end of the sixteenth century in the urban centers of Brazil, autonomous Tupi-Guarani Indians had been exterminated, had escaped inland, or had been absorbed” (chap. 5, this volume), the Tupinambá were largely irrelevant to the later spread of the Vulgar in Amazonia. Their “success” was being exterminated and having their language stolen.

Advocating a scenario similar to that described above, Cabral hypothesizes that Kokama/Omagua shows non-Tupian alterations because it underwent interference as a lingua franca on a Jesuit mission in the late seventeenth century (1995). However, the alterations, which include heavy lexical borrowing, do not look like those that occurred in LGA. Also, Michael points out that historical documents make it clear that the restructuring in the language took place before the colonial period (2010).

There are difficulties in determining the changes that occurred in the evolution of the Brasília to LGA. The primary data are old documents, which may not permit an unambiguous and reasonably complete analysis of a given stage of the language. For example, Schleicher questions a nasalization rule postulated for Tupinambá (1998, 59). There has been a tendency to only look to see if a particular phonological or grammatical feature of LGA is the same or different from Tupinambá or Portuguese, rather than analyzing the LGA system at any particular stage as a whole. The phonemic inventory of LGA in the eighteenth century, given by Monserrat (2003, 188) differs from that of Tupinambá in lacking *b* [β], the glottal stop, and *ũ* (table 4.1).

Cruz (2007) considers *s* and *š* to be allophones during this time period. According to Monserrat, in Tupinambá word-final segments included all vowels, glides, and the consonants *b*, *k*, *m*, *n*, *ŋ*, *r*, whereas in the eighteenth century the final consonants were basically reduced to *y*, *w*, and *ŋ*

Table 4.1. The phonemic inventory of LGA

p	t		k	i	i	u
	s	š		e		o
	r				a	
w		y		ĩ	ĩ	
m	n		ŋ	ẽ		õ
				ã		

(2003, 193). An innovation that was already occurring in the eighteenth century was the addition of final vowels, for example, *pén* > *péne* ‘break’ and *memék* > *meméka* ‘soften’.

The changes in grammar were of greater magnitude. One change was the alignment system. According to Leite, Tupinambá was typologically active, with one series of person markers for (1) objects of transitive verbs and subjects of inactive intransitive verbs (also nouns and postpositions) and another series for (2) the subjects of transitive and active intransitive verbs (2003, 18). Only one argument could be marked on a verb, and the choice was governed by a person hierarchy, 1>2>3.

By contrast, contemporary Nheengatu of the Upper Rio Negro marks only subjects, with either prefixes of the verbal series, basically (2) above, on transitive and intransitive verbs, or prefixes of the nominal series, basically (1) above, on stative verbs, as well as nouns and postpositions. These changes are rather severe modifications that would affect intelligibility. The person-marking system in modern Nheengatu could be interpreted as an approximation of a Portuguese model, in which only subjects are marked on verbs. However, it is different in that prefixes, not verb endings, are used to indicate person, as is generally the case in Amazonia. Also the nominal series is retained on stative verbs, a feature unlike anything in Portuguese. The interesting question of the evolution of the person-marking system through time, including its reduction to three persons and singular/plural, to the extent that it is known, will not be dealt with here.

Leite describes basic constituent order of Tupinambá clauses as free (2003, 20). This becomes fixed at some point as SVO. Thomason and Kaufman claim word order to be “the easiest sort of syntactic feature to borrow or to acquire through language shift” (1988, 55). This change would appear to be due to Portuguese influence. Other grammatical changes from Tupinambá to LGA include these (Rodrigues 1986, 1996):

Loss

- Reduction of contrasts in demonstratives
- Reduction of morphological case marking on nominals

- Reduction in verbal “moods”: indicative, imperative, participle (“gerúndio”), circumstantial, and subjunctive neutralize to indicative
- Loss of reflexive marking in the third person
- Lessened use of evidential particles

Creation of new structure, with indigenous morphemes

- Appearance of free adjectives from incorporated descriptive stems
- Emergence of ‘to have’
- Development of a nominal plural marker through grammaticalization of an indigenous morpheme
- Replacement of nominalizations by relative clauses

Borrowing

- Borrowing of conjunctions from Portuguese
- Borrowing of lexical items

Of the features that are lost, most could be said to be relatively difficult to learn as an adult, even for speakers of other indigenous languages, although the reflexive marking is frequent in Amazonian languages. The most interesting of the new structures are the relative clauses, which are like those of Portuguese only in a very abstract way: a head NP followed by a relative clause lacking the head argument (the relative NP), with the additional possibility of a headless relative clause. But there is no isomorphism of syntactic structure: the LGA relative clauses do not look like the Portuguese ones. This is perhaps an example of quite an abstract equivalent relation between model and replication. Heine and Kuteva state, “our notion replication is similar to Johanson’s notion copying, in that both imply that the product of the process is not identical with the model” (2005, 7). More will be said about subordinate clauses in the discussion of modern Nheengatu grammar, where the facts are more detailed and complete.

By the mid-eighteenth century, much of the indigenous population in contact with national society had been destroyed through wars of subjugation, disease, and harsh labor. The many villages along the banks of the Amazon River no longer existed. In 1757 the *Regimento das Missões* was replaced by a new law aimed at promoting Portuguese and eliminating LGA. One reason for this was to claim more territory by showing the presence of Portuguese speakers there. The Jesuits were expelled and indigenous settlements were declared to be secular villages, like any other. This did little to improve the conditions of the native population, among whom education in Portuguese had little success.

In 1822 the colony of Brazil declared independence from Portugal,

Table 4.2. The phonemic inventory of LGA in the nineteenth century

p	t		k	kw	ʔ	i	ĩ	u
(b)						e		o
	s	ʃ					a	
w	r	y				ĩ	ĩ	ũ
m	n		ng			ẽ		õ
							ã	

and Maranhão and Pará declared independence and joined themselves to Brazil in 1823. After independence there was a large-scale revolt, called the Cabanagem, by indigenous people, caboclos, and blacks against the Europeans, which in five years (1835–40) cost forty thousand lives. The language of the Cabanos was LGA. Before independence the cities of Belém and Manaus were predominantly bilingual in LGA and Portuguese. By midcentury, urbanization had increased and steamship travel on the sea and on the Amazon River accelerated immigration into Amazonia. By the end of the century, LGA, or Nheengatu, was mostly spoken in western Amazonia, in the less accessible regions. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was interest in Nheengatu on the part of various authors, who gathered texts and assembled dictionaries, for example, José Vieira Couto de Magalhães, Charles Frederick Hartt, João Barbosa Rodrigues, Conde Ermano Stradelli, and Antônio Brandão de Amorim.

In a study of regional variants of LGA in the nineteenth century, Felix presented a table of the surface phonemes of the LGA varieties transcribed by Couto de Magalhães (2002, 20). This table, rearranged as table 4.2 for comparison with the phonemic inventory displayed in table 4.1, shows a few differences from the phonemes of the eighteenth century: the appearance of *kw* and *ʔ* and the postoralization of the velar nasal. For some varieties of LGA, for example that of the Upper Rio Negro, Felix (2002, 55) claims only two final consonants, the bilabial and palatal glides. Others, such as the Mawé variety, also contain the nasals, the voiceless stops, and *r*. This seems at odds with Monserrat's claim (2003, 193) that only the two glides and the velar nasal occurred finally in the eighteenth century, since it is doubtful that the others were added.

4. Contemporary Nheengatu

During the twentieth century Nheengatu continued evolving rapidly. There were major economic and political events in the regions where it was still spoken, for example, the two Rubber Booms, which, once again, involved the entrance of Portuguese speakers into Amazonia, the reloca-

tion of indigenous peoples, and intensive, even forced, labor. The degree of difference between modern Nheengatu and the Nheengatu described in the nineteenth century is often overlooked, as is the presence of divergent dialects in different regions.

Nheengatu is now spoken by some thousands of people in the region of the Upper Rio Negro. A similar variety is spoken on the Middle Rio Negro (Simeon Floyd, pers. comm., 2006). Recent efforts by an experienced fieldworker, Ana Carla Bruno, of the Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas sobre Amazônia, to locate speakers of dialects of Nheengatu on the Madeira River and among the Mura, have not been successful. There are reports of a variety of Nheengatu spoken on the Solimões River. Reports of a Mundurucu variety of Nheengatu have not been confirmed.

Recently a recording of the Nheengatu dialect still spoken by a small number of Mawé was obtained, in difficult circumstances, by Ana Carla Bruno. The Mawé refer to this dialect as “Tupi” and consider it to be an endangered language needing documentation. This dialect appears to be much more conservative than that of the Upper Rio Negro in that it seems to have six vowels and at least one word-final nasal, the velar. Table 4.3 offers a brief comparison of lexical items in the Nheengatu dialect of the Upper Rio Negro, retranscribed from Grenand and Ferreira (1989), with

Table 4.3. Some lexical items in the Nheengatu dialect of Upper Rio Negro and Mawé

English	Upper Rio Negro	Mawé
my liver	<i>se-kuʔá</i>	<i>se-piʔá</i>
shoulder	<i>kupé</i>	<i>upé</i>
blood	<i>tui</i>	<i>tué</i>
my grandfather	<i>se-ramū</i>	<i>se-múyā</i>
sky	<i>iwaka</i>	<i>oáka</i>
ashes	<i>tanimbuka</i>	<i>tamēmóka</i>
fruit	<i>iwá</i>	<i>ifá</i>
fumaça	<i>tata-tinga</i>	<i>tata-čĩŋ</i>
moon	<i>yasí</i>	<i>yasí</i>
earth	<i>iwí</i>	<i>ifí</i>
yellow	<i>tawá</i>	<i>taβá</i>
fly (insect)	<i>merú</i>	<i>merú</i>
parrot	<i>parawá</i>	<i>parawá</i>
rat	<i>wawirú</i>	<i>moβarirú</i>
tobacco	<i>barurí</i>	<i>petíma</i>
flea	<i>tumbira</i>	<i>tumíra</i>
deer	<i>suasú</i>	<i>suasú</i>
knife	<i>kisé</i>	<i>kisé</i>
hammock	<i>makira</i>	<i>kisáu</i>

those same items in the dialect of the Mawé, in my precarious transcription from the tape recorded by Bruno.

5. Sketch of Modern Nheengatu of the Upper Rio Negro

A sketch of the contemporary Nheengatu of the Upper Rio Negro is presented in this section.¹ It is based principally on the speech of one speaker, Lenir da Silva, a woman about thirty years old at the time of the study, which was a continuing, intermittent workshop in linguistic field methods in the Museu Goeldi, in Belém, Pará.² The speaker was raised on a small river near the Colombian border and worked as a domestic servant in Belém. A total of ten original texts were recorded and analyzed.

The present variety of Nheengatu of the Upper Rio Negro is quite different from that documented in the nineteenth century (Felix 2002). Leaving aside borrowings from Portuguese, there are only four contrasting vowel positions instead of six. There is contrast between nasals and postoralized nasals. A number of affixes listed by Stradelli (1929) are no longer in use. Lexical borrowing from Portuguese, for many speakers, is a productive process, perhaps rather similar to the English relexification of Chinook Jargon in its late phase (Silverstein 1996, 129). Syntactic items, such as *ki* (<Port: *que* ‘complementizer’) occur. What is especially interesting is the complexity of the effects of contact with Portuguese and other languages. It is not the case that the syntax is basically Portuguese and the lexicon indigenous. There are constructions that do not exist in Portuguese and probably did not exist in Tupinambá. There is no borrowing whatsoever of Portuguese affixes. For a number of constructions there does seem to be a replication of Portuguese patterns at some level of abstraction, using indigenous morphemes.

5.1. PHONOLOGY

There are some modern treatments of the phonology of Nheengatu, especially the sketches in Taylor (1985, 1988) and the thesis of Borges (1991). Some observations are offered by Grenand and Ferreira (1989, xiv–xvii). Cruz (2011) offers a more abstract analysis. However, aspects of the phonology are still debatable. We will limit ourselves to a brief, tentative characterization of the surface phonology of Nheengatu, using these sources as a point of departure and indicating the details that are unresolved.

One complication is the existence of dialect differences. These are not yet mapped and it is not always evident whether different descriptions are due to different analyses or to different data. Another is the problem of separating vocabulary items according to their origins, since there are

at least two phonological patterns present: words descended from Tupi-nambá and words borrowed, more or less recently, from Portuguese. It is difficult to recognize examples from other indigenous languages, for example, *dakirú* ‘violin’, said by Grenand and Ferreira (1989, xi) to be of Tukanoan origin. The phonological analysis will, of course, change greatly as a function of which vocabulary items it covers.

There are some old borrowings from Portuguese that follow indigenous phonological patterns:

Nheengatu	Portuguese	English
<i>sorára</i>	soldado	soldier
<i>kamišá</i>	camisa	shirt

At least for bilingual speakers, recent Portuguese borrowings seem to follow the phonological patterns of Portuguese, with all the consonants and the seven vowels of that language.

The surface phonemes of what appear to be nonborrowed words form a more restricted inventory. None of the authors cited immediately above agree on the details of this inventory, although they do agree on its basic components. The analysis adopted here (see table 4.4) also differs in its details from the others. Marginal or debatable phonemes are enclosed in parentheses in the table.

Most occurrences of the palatal affricate *č* precede *i*, but a few examples that appear to be of indigenous origin do not:

<i>čá</i> ‘no more’	<i>č-áku-mā?á</i> ‘don’t know . . .’
	not-know-what

While some *č* can alternate with *t* before *i*, suggesting the application of a palatalization rule, as in many dialects of Portuguese (e.g., *kičĩ*

Table 4.4. Phonemic inventory of modern Nheengatu (‘ for stress, ~ for vowel nasalization)

p	t	(č)	k	(kw)	(?)	i	u
(b)			(g)				
	s	š				e	
w	r	y					a
		ỹ					
mb	nd		ng				
m	n						

Note: Marginal or debatable phonemes are enclosed in parentheses.

~ *kití* ‘toward’), others cannot (e.g., *čĩ*, **tĩ* ‘nose’). There are also some cases where *t* cannot be palatalized before *i* (e.g., *ratíwa*, **račíwa* ‘uncle’). So, provisionally, *č* will be considered a phoneme, with some alternation with *t* before *i*, at the surface level.

The prenasalized voiced stops, *mb*, *nd*, *ng*, are common and are recognized by all authors as phonemes. They occur initially and intervocally, nasalizing the immediately preceding vowel, even across morpheme boundaries. They appear to occur only before oral vowels:

<i>mbíra</i>	‘offspring’	<i>sẽ-mbíra</i>	‘my offspring’
<i>ã-mbaʔú</i>	‘1SG-eat’	<i>u-sẽndú</i>	‘3-hears’

One would guess that the nasals and the postoralized nasals became contrastive when a conditioning environment was lost. Interestingly, the principal informant prefers *yané-* as the first person plural prefix of the nominal series and *yãndé* as the free pronoun ‘we’.

Oral voiced stops, *b* and *g*, are relatively scarce and are not recognized as phonemes by Taylor (1985) or Borges (1991). However, they do occur in words that are not obvious borrowings, before oral or nasal vowels:

<i>búya</i>	‘snake’	<i>se-búya</i>	‘my snake’
<i>bũmbáka</i>	‘a palm species’ (Grenand and Ferreira 1989, 26)		
<i>tibíyara</i>	‘a bird species’ (Grenand and Ferreira 1989, 66)		
<i>garapé</i>	‘creek’		
<i>apigáwa</i>	‘man’		

The nasals *m* and *n* occur before or after oral or nasal vowels.

<i>míra</i>	‘person’	<i>se-míra</i>	‘my person’
<i>nãmbí</i>	‘ear’		
<i>amãna</i>	‘rain’		

The palatal nasal is analyzed here as (the typically Tupian) *ỹ* instead of a palatal nasal because (1) it is usually a glide phonetically and (2) the vowels on either side are obligatorily nasalized, unlike the case of the nasals *m* and *n*. It occurs intervocally and (rarely) initially.

<i>ỹú</i>	‘alone’	<i>ãỹú</i>	‘only’
<i>ỹãʔá</i>	‘that’	<i>kũỹá</i>	‘woman’

Unlike *ỹ*, the nasal labiovelar glide is rare. Whereas the Tupi-Guaranian languages generally have notable nasalization spreading, this is very

marginal in Nheengatu. For example, in *yāndé* ‘we’, the initial glide is oral, and in *aētá* ‘they’, an oral vowel precedes a nasal vowel within the same syllable, at least on the surface.

Two oral glides are generally recognized for Nheengatu, *y* and *w*. As analyzed here, these are only slightly reduced high vowels that occur syllable initially and do not carry stress. Examples:

<i>yaučtí</i>	‘turtle’	<i>waimí</i>	‘old woman’
<i>íwa</i>	‘tree’	<i>iwá</i>	‘fruit’

Unlike Portuguese, Nheengatu, following a common indigenous pattern, permits syllables containing two vowels. Note ‘turtle’ and ‘old woman’ above and also the following examples:

<i>aētá</i>	‘they’	<i>pakúa</i>	‘banana’	<i>múčiu</i>	‘belly button’
<i>u-ikú</i>	‘he is’ (normal pronunciation, secondary stress on the first vowel)				

To avoid sequences of three vowels in one syllable in the example *apukwái* ‘tie’, we tentatively recognize a labiovelar stop, *kw*, which is probably derived from underlying *ku*. Some examples of *kw* (e.g., *aikwé* ‘there is’) cannot be pronounced *ku*, although this sequence also exists (e.g., *iku?éma* ‘light-colored’).

There are only four vowel phonemes in modern Nheengatu, at least in the dialect studied.

Each Nheengatu morpheme has one primary stress. Within the word, the rightmost stress is maintained and the preceding stresses are successively reduced. Word boundaries can be determined on this basis. Example:

<i>”u-”mu-’kiri</i>	<i>u-mu-kíri</i>	‘he causes to sleep’
	3-transitivizer-sleep	

In our transcription we indicate the stress of each root morpheme with an acute accent mark, although only the rightmost is unreduced. Affixes, except the diminutive, the augmentative, and the plural, are stressed on the syllable adjacent to the stem. Affix stress is not marked here.

The status of the glottal stop is not yet clear. Frequently it can occur optionally at morpheme boundaries intervocalically, even before an unstressed vowel, e.g., *se-?iwá* ‘my fruit’. It also occurs morpheme internally before stressed vowels, e.g., *ka?á* ‘forest’. It may be fully predictable in this position, but for the time being, it will be transcribed when it is possible morpheme medially.

The (C)V(V) syllable pattern in Nheengatu does not allow final consonants.

5.2 MORPHOLOGY

5.2.1 Word Classes

Nheengatu words fall into eight word classes: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, postpositions, pronouns, demonstratives, and particles. Most words in modern Nheengatu texts are of native origin, though there are many borrowings. Almost all borrowings from Portuguese are nouns, verbs, or particles, but there are some adjectives and adverbs; the other categories seem to be essentially of indigenous origin.

Nouns can be distinguished from adjectives in that the former accept prefixes of the nominal series and the latter do not. Also, adjectives, but not nouns, can modify nouns that precede them. Both simple nouns and derived nouns take the same person prefixes, e.g., *se-pú* ‘my hand’, *se-yasí-wéra* ‘my cry-baby’.

In a pattern that is more Tupian than Portuguese, Nheengatu verbs fall into three mutually exclusive subclasses: intransitive, transitive, and stative. All verbs are obligatorily prefixed for subject. Only verbs can constitute complete one-word sentences:

intransitive:	<i>a-purakí</i>	‘I work.’
transitive:	<i>a-mūyá</i> (OBJECT)	‘I make (OBJECT).’
stative:	<i>se-rurí</i>	‘I am happy.’

Note that the stative verbs use prefixes of the nominal series, while the intransitive and transitive verbs use prefixes of the verbal series (which occur with no other class). Borrowings from Portuguese seem to enter only the intransitive and transitive subclasses, not the stative subclass.

Adjectives can be either attributive (*maniáka akíra* ‘green manioc’) or predicative (*maniáka i-akíra* ‘the manioc is green’). Some predicate adjectives occur with the invariant prefix *i-*, which is homophonous with the third person of the nominal series. By contrast, stative verbs occur with all the prefixes of the nominal series, showing concordance with the (optional) subject. Adjectives, but not nouns or adverbs, accept the suffix *-to* ‘semi’ (e.g., *purángá-to* ‘almost good’ versus **uká-to* ‘almost a house’). Adjectives, unlike transitive and intransitive verbs, cannot accept the prefixes of the verbal series. Cruz denies the existence of a class of adjectives (2011, 194). However, her own data show attributive adjectives, e.g.,

her examples (809) ‘deceased grandfathers’, (910) ‘her dirty hammock’, (959) ‘that big snake’, and (995) ‘that red mitu bird’.

Adverbs can be distinguished from nouns and verbs by their lack of person prefixes. They differ from adjectives in that they cannot modify preceding nouns. The free movement of adverbs also distinguishes them from particles and other word classes.

The pronouns, all of Tupinambá origin, are either personal or interrogative. The same set of personal pronouns is used as subject or as object of a verb, as in Tupinambá. Most of the Tupinambá pronouns survived into Nheengatu, but the pronominal system was reanalyzed (Rodrigues 1990, 402).

<i>išé</i>	1 SG	<i>yāndé</i>	1 PL
<i>īndé</i>	2 SG	<i>pēyē</i>	2 PL
<i>aʔé</i>	3 SG	<i>aētá</i>	3 PL

Nheengatu also has two interrogative pronouns.

<i>māʔá</i>	‘what, who, whom’
<i>awá</i>	‘who, whom’

All the postpositions are of Tupian origin. Postpositions (but not locative particles, e.g., *upé* ‘in’) accept prefixes of the nominal series (e.g., *se-irú* ‘with me’) but cannot occur with a free pronoun (e.g., **išé irú* ‘with me’). Some of these postpositions are the following:

<i>rupí</i>	‘through, by’	<i>irú</i>	‘with’
<i>suʔí</i>	‘from’	<i>resé</i>	‘in’

The Portuguese numerals can be used in modern Nheengatu, although at least the lower numerals still exist: *yepé* ‘one’, *mukúú* ‘two’, and *musapíri* ‘three’. Unlike Portuguese numbers, Nheengatu numbers, even borrowed ones, can precede a noun (e.g., *dózi akayú* ‘twelve years’) or follow it (e.g., *akayú dózi*).

There are two demonstratives (*kwá* ‘this’ and *yāʔá* ‘that’), which can precede or be the head element in a noun phrase. They cannot occur with pronominal prefixes but can occur with the plural clitic (e.g., *kwá-itá* ‘these’).

Particles do not accept inflectional or derivational affixes, although some can form constructions with another free element. Some of the particles are borrowed, such as *presízo* ‘it’s necessary’ and *néi* ~ *nē* ‘nor’, *sá* ‘if’ and *ki* ‘that’. Examples:

<i>ramé</i>	‘when’
<i>čí</i>	NEGATIVE
<i>néi ~ né</i>	‘nor’
<i>aráma ~ ará</i>	‘for’
<i>wa?á</i>	RELATIVIZER
<i>aikwé</i>	‘there is’
<i>ãyú</i>	‘just/only’
<i>sá</i>	‘if’
<i>kí</i>	‘that (COMPLEMENTIZER)’
<i>presízo</i>	‘It’s necessary’

5.2.2 Compounds

Tupinambá was morphologically complex, with an ample system of incorporation, as illustrated by the following example from Rodrigues (1990, 398–399):

ya-y-namí-?ók-ukár
 3-RELATIONAL-ear-take.off-CAUSATIVE
 ‘cut the ear off of’

Compounding is no longer a very productive process, but a variety of compounds do exist, as shown below:

N + N > N	<i>pt-puãpé</i> foot-nail	‘toenail’
N + N > Adj	<i>sasí-ára</i> pain-day	‘sad’
N + Adj > N	<i>maniákā-mbéka</i> manioc-soft	‘soft manioc’
V + Adv > V	<i>kwá-katú</i> know-well	‘think, believe’
N + N > N	<i>námbi-púra</i> ear-part.inside	‘earring’
Ptc + Ptc > Ptc	<i>čí-aráma</i> not-to	‘to not’

5.2.3 Inflection and Derivation

The inflectional and derivational affixes of modern Nheengatu are all Tupian. Even recent Portuguese borrowings can accept person prefixes. Verb infinitives can accept indigenous affixes, rather like the Spanish

Table 4.5. Inflectional and derivational affixes in modern Nheengatu

Inflection		Derivation	
Verbal Series			
<i>a-</i>	1 SG	<i>mu-</i> <i>yu-</i>	TRANSITIVIZER INTRANSITIVIZER/ REFLEXIVIZER
<i>re-</i>	2 SG	<i>~to</i>	'semi, almost'
<i>u-</i>	3	<i>-mãyã</i>	'someone with tendency for . . .'
<i>ya-</i>	1 PL	<i>-sára ~ -gára</i>	AGENT
<i>pe-</i>	2 PL	<i>-éra ~ -wéra</i>	'habitual doer of . . .'
<i>(aẽta-)u-</i>	3 PL	<i>-wára</i> <i>-íma</i>	'characterized by' 'without'
Nominal Series			
<i>se-</i>	1 SG	<i>-mirí</i>	DIMINUTIVE
<i>ne-</i>	2 SG	<i>-así</i>	AUGMENTATIVE
<i>i-</i>	3 UNSPECIFIED		
<i>yané-</i>	1 PL		
<i>pe-</i>	2 PL		
<i>aẽtá-</i>	3 PL		
<i>-itá</i>	PL		
<i>-ána ~ -wána</i>	PERFECTIVE		
<i>-ré</i>	IMPERFECTIVE		

infinitives borrowed into Maya (Pfeiler, chap. 8, this volume). Some modern affixes seem to be the result of grammaticalization of what were formerly lexical items. For examples of modern affixes, see table 4.5.

Reduplication to indicate repetitive action has been retained as a morphological process in Nheengatu, for example, *ya-yapí* 'throw or shoot repeatedly', *pi-píka* 'drizzle'. Reduplication was present in Tupinambá, as in most Tupian languages.

5.3 SYNTAX

5.3.1 Matrix Clause Composition

The matrix clauses are in some respects similar to Portuguese and in other respects similar to Tupian languages. The morphemes associated with syntactic operations are mostly indigenous.

There are three sentence types in Nheengatu, in embedded as well as matrix clauses. Verbal sentences consist of an optional subject followed by one or more VPs containing verbs carrying a subject prefix. Multiple VPs are characteristic of Tupian languages (Moore 1994). These verbs

may be intransitive, transitive, or stative. Transitive verbs are optionally followed by an object, as in Portuguese. In the examples below, embedded rather than matrix clauses are given as illustrations if the text examples of the latter are lacking or unclear:

- (1) [ya-mũyṹ]_{VTrans} čĩmbiʔú [ya-pinačĩka]_{VIntr} [ya-mũyṹ]_{VTrans} kašĩrĩ
 1 PL-make food 1 PL-fish 1 PL-make chicha
 ‘We make food, we fish, we make chicha.’ (Note three VPs.)
- (2) [yã-mbũrĩ]_{VTrans} manĩaka paraná upé [i-mẽmbéka]_{VStat} aráama
 1 PL-put manioc river in 3-be.soft in.order.to
 ‘We put the manioc in the river to become soft.’

There are two verbs that might be considered auxiliaries; they occur after the main verb, contrary to the order in Portuguese: *putái* ‘want’ and *ikú* ‘be’. The former can occur without a subject prefix, forming a complex verb. The latter can be preceded by a verb, an adjective, or a postpositional phrase, as illustrated below:

- (3) [a-yuwĩrĩ putái]_V se-retáama kitĩ
 1 SG-return want 1 SG-land to
 ‘I want to return to my land.’
- (4) yãndé [[ya-purĩngitá]_V [ya-ikú]_{Aux} yeʔəngatú]_{VP}
 we 1 PL-speak 1 PL-be Nheengatu
 ‘We are talking Nheengatu.’
- (5) išé [se-rúka upé]_{pp} a-ikú
 I 1 SG-house in 1 SG-be
 ‘I’m in my house.’

The copula sentence type consists of an obligatory subject followed by a predicate noun phrase or adjective phrase. Unlike Portuguese, Nheengatu has no overt copula, as in the following example, in which the subject-predicate order is inverted:

- (6) rē-mbeʔú aēta-supé [puránga išé]_{S’Cop}
 2 SG -tell 3 PL-for good I
 ‘Tell them that I’m fine.’

The third sentence type consists of a predicate with no subject. The predicate is composed of a predicative particle followed by an NP or by a

clause with an overt subject. These are perhaps replicating Portuguese impersonal constructions, except that the predicative particle shows no verbal characteristics. However, first and second position particles are common in Amazonian languages. Cruz considers the predicative particles as first position (2011, 358), although they do not necessarily occur initially in the sentence, e.g., her example (905). At least one of the predicative particles, *presízu* ‘it is necessary . . .’, is borrowed from Portuguese *É preciso*; and the first syllable of *aikwé* ‘there is’ looks like Portuguese *ai* ‘there’:

- (7) [aikwé]_{Ptc} kašuéira
 there.be waterfall
 ‘There are waterfalls.’
- (8) [presízo]_{Ptc} aětá u-ištudái pohtugěš upé
 is.necessary they 3-study Portuguese in
 ‘It’s necessary that they study Portuguese.’

5.3.2 Syntactic Processes in Matrix Clauses

The major syntactic processes affecting matrix clauses look more indigenous than European.

Negation: Verb phrases can be individually negated with the particle *čí*:

- (9) *čí* [a-pitá]_{Vp} [a-iwír kwá-kití]_{Vp}
 not 1SG-stay 1SG-return this-toward
 ‘I don’t stay, I come back to Belém.’

The negative particle can occur in the beginning of the clause, negating all of it. It can also form a negative focus construction with a fronted NP:

- (10) [*čí tapir?*]_{Focus} apigáwa u-yuká
 not tapir man 3-kill
 ‘It was not the tapir that the man killed.’ (elicited)

Topicalization: Noun phrases can be topicalized, leaving behind third person copies:

- (11) [y-á?á yawára,]_{Topic} a?é u-su?ú apigáwa
 that dog it 3-bite man
 ‘That dog, it bit the man.’ (elicited)

Questions: Polar questions can be formed by intonation.

- (12) *ĩndé re-murái apektú kwá-suʔí tetáma suʔ?*
 you 2SG-live far this-from city from
 ‘Do you live far from here from this city?’

Interrogative word questions are formed using indigenous interrogative words and the particle *taʔá*.

- (13) *māʔá taʔá re-wasému pušúera?*
 what Q 2SG-find ugly
 ‘What do you find ugly?’

As in Portuguese, the interrogative word need not be fronted and can remain in situ.

- (14) *taína u-māʔá māʔá?*
 child 3-see what
 ‘The child saw what?’

Adverbial movement: Sentence-level adverbials can be fronted or placed between phrases.

- (15) [*kušĩĩma*]_{Adv} *aikwé yepé feičiséiru a-koñeséi waʔá*
 formerly there.be a shaman 1SG-know RELZ
 ‘Formerly, there was a shaman whom I knew.’

Some common syntactic processes in Portuguese, such as passives or clefts, do not occur in Nheengatu.

5.3.3 Embedded Clauses

Nheengatu embedded clauses are especially noteworthy in that they show three different patterns:

- (i) Subordinate clauses formed on an abstract model, perhaps Portuguese, using indigenous morphemes
- (ii) Subordinate clauses formed on a specific Portuguese model, but using indigenous morphemes
- (iii) Frank borrowings from Portuguese, with accompanying Portuguese grammatical morphemes

In the first pattern, the clause contains a subordinating particle immediately after the head of the predicate, that is, after the main verb, after the predicate nominal or predicate adjectival, or after the predicating particle, according to the type of the predicate. That is, a paradigm for subordination has been created, not just a collection of individual cases of subordination. These particles include *waʔá* RELATIVIZER, *ramé* TIME, *aráma* PURPOSE, and *čt-aráma* NEGATIVE PURPOSE. (This last particle occurs clause initially). The relative clauses can have an external head and a corresponding empty internal extraction site:

- (16) *a-yururé se-mǎyǎ u-pitá aráma yane-rëndá upé*
 1SG-ask 1SG-mother 3-stay PURPOSE 1PL-farm in
*[se-ratíwa u-šári waʔá yǎndé arǎ́]*_{SRel}
 1SG-grandpa 3-leave RELZ us PURPOSE
 ‘I asked my mother to stay in our farm that my grandfather left for us.’

In that example, note that the relative clause modifying ‘farm’ has been extraposed from inside the postpositional phrase to the end of the sentence. Extraction and backing of NPs is common in Nheengatu and appears to be an innovation, not occurring in Portuguese and not generally reported for Tupi-Guarani languages.

Alternatively, the relative clauses may be headless, with one missing argument:

- (17) *aētá u-kótái [∅ u-akōteséi waʔá garapé apíra kití]*_{SRel}
 they 3-tell ∅ 3-happened RELZ stream headwaters toward
 ‘They would tell us what happened on the headwaters of the stream.’

The time, purpose, and negative purpose clauses formed by *ramé*, *aráma*, and *čt-aráma*, respectively, distribute like adverbials or adjectivals:

- (18) *aētá u-pisíka paʔá yǎndé [ya-ú ramé č ĩmbiʔú irusánga]*_{SAdv}
 they 3-catch they.say us 1PL-eat TIME food cold
 ‘They would catch us when we ate cold food.’

- (19) *yǎ-mbúri maníaka paraná upé [i-měmbéka aráma]*_{SAdv}
 1PL-put manioc river in 3-be.soft PURPOSE
 ‘We put the manioc in the river in order for it to become soft.’

- (20) *ya-ú čĩmbiʔú, sakú, [čt-aráma kurupira-itá u-rasú yǎndé]*_{SAdv}
 1PL-eat food hot NEG-PURPOSE Kurupira-PL 3-take us
 ‘We would eat hot food for the Kurupira not to take us away.’

- (21) *ya-mãỹǎ* *čĩmbi?ú* [*apigáwa* *u-ú* *aráma*]_{S'Adj}
 1PL-see food man 3-eat PURPOSE
 ‘We saw the food for the man to eat.’

In the second pattern, a subset of the Nheengatu WH words (MA words in Nheengatu) are used in embedded clauses in a manner similar to that of Portuguese. The MA words are *awá* ‘who(m)’, *mã?ǎ* ‘which, what, that’, *mairamé* ‘when’, *maráma* ‘because’, *mamé* ‘where’, and *mayé* ‘how’. The relative clauses with *awá* and *mã?ǎ* cannot have external heads, unlike their Portuguese counterparts:

- (22) [*mã?ǎ* *u-yururé* *i-tupána* *u-yĩmbu?é* *tupána* *supé* . . .]_{S'Rel}
 what 3-asked 3-god 3-pray god to
 ‘What he asked (from) his god, praying to his god . . .’
- (23) **apigáwa* [*mã?ǎ* *u-yururé* *i-tupána* . . .]_{S'Rel}
 man who 3-asked 3-god
 ‘The man who/that asked his god . . .’

These are strikingly similar to Tariana relative clauses with an indigenous interrogative pronoun head, also formed on a Portuguese model, reported by Aikhenvald (2002, 181).

The clauses formed by the other MA words distribute as adverbials or adjectivals:

- (24) *aětá* *u-mã?ǎ* *úka* [*mamé* *a-murái*]_{S'Adj}
 they 3-see house where 1SG-live
 ‘They saw the house where I live.’
- (25) *išé* *čí* *a-sasá* *i-puší* [*mayé* *aětá* *ũ-mbe?ú*]_{S'Adv}
 I not 1SG-pass 3-bad how they 3-say
 ‘I’m not having a bad time like they say.’

Embedded questions also follow the Portuguese pattern, but using indigenous MA words:

- (26) . . . *čí* *aětá* *u-kwá* [*mã?ǎ* *kurupíra-itá* *u-mũỹú* *yane-irú*]_{S'Q}
 not they 3-know what Kurupira-PL 3-do 1PL-with
 ‘. . . they didn’t know what the Kurupira would do to us.’

Some transitive verbs can take unmarked sentential complements:

Table 4.6. Portuguese markers of subordination and coordination in modern Nheengatu

Function	Nheengatu	Portuguese	English
complementizer	<i>kí</i>	<i>que</i>	that
conjunction	<i>i</i>	<i>e</i>	and
disjunction	<i>u</i>	<i>ou</i>	or
negative disjunction	<i>ně́</i>	<i>nem</i>	neither/nor
conditional	<i>sá</i>	<i>se</i>	if

- (27) . . . *ně́* *išé* *a-māndu?ái* [*a-mā?á* *ĩndé*]_{S'Comp}
 nor I 1SG-think 1SG-see you
 ‘. . . nor I think of seeing you.’

In the third pattern listed above, subordination is marked. Obvious borrowings from Portuguese for subordination and coordination are listed in table 4.6.

- (28) . . . [*re-murái* *iké*]_{VP} *u* [*re-murái* *ĩterió* *kičí* . . .]_{VP}
 2SG-live here or 2SG-live interior toward
 ‘. . . you live here or in the interior . . .’

5.3.4 Phrases

The structure of phrases is rather conservative. Two major changes from the indigenous pattern are the order Verb Object in the VP and the greater elaboration of adjectival and adverbial phrases as incorporation within the verb declined. Noun phrases retain the order Genitive Noun:

- [*yane-ye?énga*]_{NP} ‘our language’
 1 PL-language
 [*kariwa* *ye?énga*]_{NP} ‘white man’s language’
 white.man language

Also attested is the order Noun Adjective when the latter is attributive:

- (29) [*čí* *ya-pudéi* [[*ya-ú* [*čĩmbi?ú* *irusánga*]_{NP}]_{VP}]_{S'Comp}]_{VP}
 not 1PL-can 1PL-eat food cold
 We cannot eat cold food . . .’

And Demonstrative NP:

- (30) [[*kuʔá* [*se-awá-itá puránga . . .*]_{NP}]_{NP}]
 this 1SG-hair-PL pretty
 ‘This pretty hair of mine . . .’

There is a position after the head of the predicate that contains aspectual suffixes, subordinating particles, and auxiliaries:

- (31) *a-mũyá pãyê mãʔá mamé* [*a-purakí waʔá a-ikú*]_{VP}
 1SG-do all what where 1SG-work RELZ 1SG-be
 ‘I do everything where I am working.’
- (32) [[*a-ska ramé*]_{VP}]_{SAdv} *se-mbira-itá* [*u-kíri-ána u-ikú*]_{VP}
 1SG-arrive TIME 1SG-child-PL 3-sleep-already 3-be
 ‘When I arrive, my children are already sleeping.’

Nheengatu retains postpositions (common in Amazonia), in contrast to the prepositions of Portuguese. As is characteristic of Tupian languages, postpositional phrases have a strictly adverbial distribution, never modifying nouns.

- (33) *a-morái ramé* [[*se-páya*]_{NP} *irú . . .*]_{PP}
 1SG-live TIME 1SG-father with
 ‘When I lived with my father . . .’

5.4 TEXT FRAGMENT OF MODERN NHEENGATU FROM THE UPPER RIO NEGRO

This is the beginning of a text, “Conversation in Belém between Two People from the Upper Rio Negro,” which was recorded and transcribed in 1988, in the Museu Goeldi in Belém. The two speakers are Lenir da Silva, a young woman in her thirties from the region of the Upper Rio Negro, trilingual in Nheengatu, Portuguese, and Spanish, and Gerson, a somewhat younger man from a Baniwa community who is bilingual in Nheengatu and Portuguese and who lives in the city of San Gabriel da Cachoeira. In this small text fragment, seventy-six words long, there are seven loan words from Portuguese: ‘live’, ‘here’, ‘city’, ‘nine’, ‘until’, ‘family’, and ‘or’.

Gerson:

- (34) *ĩndé muʔí akayú taʔá re-morái iké kwá sidádi upé*
 you how.many years Q 2SG-live here this city in
 ‘For how long have you lived here in this city?’

Lenir:

- (35) *išé akayú nóvi akayú-āna a-yuwíri se-retáma suʔí*
 I year nine year-already 1SG-return 1SG-city from
 ‘It has been nine years that I live in the city.’
- (36) *išé a-yupukwá iké*
 I 1SG-accustom here
 ‘I got used to this place.’
- (37) *išé čí a-mānduʔái a-yuwíri se-família-itá rúka kití*
 I not 1SG-think 1SG-return 1SG-family-PL house to
 ‘I don’t think of returning to my family’s house.’
- (38) *a-kwakatú išé čí a-yupukwá a-kití*
 1SG-believe I not 1SG-accustom there-to
 ‘I think I cannot accustom myself to that place anymore.’
- (39) *a-pitá kurí iké até kumairamé Tupána-itá kurí u-kwá*
 1SG-stay future here until when God-PL future 3-know
 ‘Only God knows how long I’m going to stay here.’ (Literally, ‘(I) will stay here until when God will know.’)
- (40) *mayé taʔá a-sú āyú a-watá se-retáma kití*
 how Q 1SG-go only 1SG-walk 1SG-city to
a-māʔá ará se-anáma-itá
 1SG-see PURPOSE 1SG-family-PL
 ‘How can I go back to that city only to see my family?’
- (41) *išé čá a-mānduʔá a-yuwíri a-kití*
 I not 1SG-think 1SG-return there-to
 ‘I don’t think of going back there.’
- (42) *a-yuwíri kurí āyú a-māʔá ará se-anáma-itá*
 1SG-return future only 1SG-see for 1SG-family-PL
 ‘I will go back there just to visit my family.’

Gerson:

- (43) *kušíʔíma re-yúwi ramé kwá-kití mayé-ta re-yúwi ará*
 formerly 2SG-come TIME that-to how-Q 2SG-come PURPOSE
 ‘Formerly, when you came here, how did you come?’

- (44) *aikwé awá u-rúí ãndé u re-yúwi putái te ne-rupí*
 there.be who 3-bring you or 2SG-come want real 2SG-by
 ‘Was there anybody to bring you or did you yourself want to come?’

6. Conclusion and Prospects for the Indigenous Languages in Brazil

What I have presented in this chapter is only an outline of the historical development of Nheengatu up to the present, which has been driven by economics, politics, religious expansionism, demography, geography, and technological change. There are various parallelisms to the cases of Quechua and Yucatán Maya. It is clear that the evolution of the language has been complex; each generation of learners has modified it using the patterns available to them. Nheengatu has been more an alternative to Portuguese than an imitation of Portuguese. It was always the native language of some speakers, with continuity of transmission, though strongly influenced by historical events and language contact. It was never a pidgin or a creole. This language provides an excellent opportunity for studies of languages in contact, since there are documents from each century. I have given here a sketch of the present form of the language in one region, with special attention to the effects of language contact on its structure.

Some suggestions in terms of borrowing, substratum interference, and model replication have been offered. Substratum influence from indigenous peoples learning the language seems to have been the principal mechanism of the rapid change in LGA as diverse groups were abruptly and often brutally assimilated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition, some model replication and structural diffusion from Portuguese took place along the centuries of contact. Lexical and grammatical borrowing from Portuguese increased in the past century, with increased bilingualism and more dislocation and mixing of native groups for economic reasons, especially during the two rubber booms.

At present the priority for research is the location and documentation of the modern dialects of Nheengatu. This is urgent, given the threat of their extinction, which already appears to have happened to some of the varieties. Studies of the historical stages of the language need to be systematic and informed by modern knowledge of diachronic linguistics and of the effects of languages in contact; lists of changes since Tupinambá are not sufficient. Nheengatu was declared one of the official languages of the municipality of São Gabriel da Cachoeira in 2002, but that measure has not been implemented.

From the history of Nheengatu we can imagine that the same causal factors will determine the fate of the native languages of Brazil. Some of these factors continue as in the past. The insistent missionary drive to eliminate native religion (and the music, narratives, and other verbal art associated with it) continues in full force, though with fundamentalist Protestant sects now as the principal agents, often using language study as a means of control and indoctrination. One recent brute example of this drive, well known in Brazil, is the pseudodocumentary video *Hakani* created and distributed by JOCUM (Youth with a Mission) missionaries. The video portrays the Suruwahá shaman as causing suicides and the live burial of children. It has been denounced by Survival International (www.survivalinternational.org/about/hakani). Even the Xingu Park, conceived as an area where indigenous culture would be protected (Ball, chap. 10, this volume) is now actively targeted by missionary forces.

Economics continues to be a primary determining factor, and it is urgent to develop appropriate economic alternatives on the indigenous reserves, which potentially offer good opportunities for extractivist activities, although this potential is seldom realized. Politically, contemporary Brazilian government policies are increasingly enlightened. Protection for recently contacted indigenous groups is much improved. Bilingual education is required, although such requirements are often of limited success in practice. International documentation programs, especially the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme and the DOBES (Documentation bedrohter Sprachen) program, have sponsored many projects in Brazil, conducted by Brazilian linguists or linguists residing in Brazil. Partly through the influence of these programs, a government program, ProDocLin (Projeto de Documentação de Línguas Indígenas), administered by the Museu do Índio and coordinated by an experienced field linguist, Bruna Franchetto, is documenting thirteen languages and stimulating language maintenance. The movement in favor of language documentation using recent methods is more advanced in Brazil than in the rest of South America.

A first step in language preservation is knowledge of the situation of the individual languages. Earlier language surveys (for example, Rodrigues 1986) confused languages and ethnic groups and also confused population figures with speaker numbers. As a result of this last confusion, the degree of language endangerment was seriously underestimated for years. Recent surveys, while still deficient, give a more accurate picture, for example the UNESCO *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* (www.unesco.org/culture/languages-atlas), Moore (2006), and Moore, Galucio, and Gabas (2008). A large-scale survey of all the languages of Brazil, the *Inventário Nacional de Diversidade Linguística*, is in the initial stages of

implementation. It potentially will gather enormous amounts of useful data, if designed and implemented in an intelligent manner. The 2010 Brazilian national census contained a question about the indigenous language spoken. However the census had the limitations inherent in auto-declaration, aside from some confusion about what a “language” is. Part of Brazilian linguistic folklore is that there are 180 indigenous languages in Brazil, although no one repeating this number can say what it means—what the criteria are for grouping variants into languages.

Given the current interest by native groups in language documentation and maintenance and given the progressive government policies, it is too early to be defeatist about the prospects of survival of at least the more vital languages. Reading colonial history, we distinguish between those figures whose action was favorable to the native peoples and those whose action was unfavorable. Someday the history of our own epoch will be written, and it will be seen who was useful to the indigenous peoples (and their languages), who was harmful, and who just sat there talking.

Notes

1. Americanist phonetic symbols are commonly used for Nheengatu. Nonobvious symbols used are PL (plural), Q (question), S'Rel (relative clause), S'Comp (sentential complement), RELZ (relativizer), PP (postpositional phrase), S'Adv (adverbial clause), S'Cop (copula complement clause), V' (complex verb), and Ptc (particle).

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