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Alto Xingu

UMA SOCIEDADE MULTILÍNGUE

organizadora
BRUNA FRANCHETTO

Rio de Janeiro
Museu do Índio - Funai
2011

COORDENAÇÃO EDITORIAL, EDIÇÃO E DIAGRAMAÇÃO

André Aranha

REVISÃO

Bruna Franchetto

CAPA

Yan Molinos

IMAGEM DA CAPA

Desenho tradicional kuikuro

Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)
(Câmara Brasileira do Livro, SP, Brasil)

Alto Xingu : uma sociedade multilíngue /
organizadora Bruna Franchetto. --
Rio de Janeiro : Museu do Índio - FUNAI, 2011.

Vários autores.
ISBN 978-85-85986-34-6

1. Etnologia 2. Povos indígenas - Alto Xingu
3. Sociolinguística I. Franchetto, Bruna.

11-02880

CDD-306.44

Índices para catálogo sistemático:

1. Línguas alto-xinguanas : Sociolinguística
306.44

EDIÇÃO DIGITAL DISPONÍVEL EM
www.ppgasmuseu.etc.br/publicacoes/altoxingu.html



MUSEU DO ÍNDIO - FUNAI

PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM ANTROPOLOGIA SOCIAL DO MUSEU NACIONAL
UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO DE JANEIRO



PRAGMATIC MULTILINGUALISM IN THE UPPER XINGU SPEECH COMMUNITY

CHRISTOPHER BALL

Dartmouth College

INTRODUCTION

The Upper Xingu has been known as a multilingual culture area since initial exploration of the region by Karl von den Steinen in the 1880's (von den Steinen 1940). Yet the Upper Xingu differs in significant ways from other multilingual areas, even those within Amazonia such as the Vaupés (Franchetto 2001). Ironically, Upper Xinguans, despite close exposure to some nine languages from three major South American families, tend to be monolingual when it comes to the indigenous languages in the system. The maintenance of individual and ethnic group monolingualism combines with an intense network of ritual meetings that facilitate the circulation of material, conceptual, and sometimes, linguistic elements through the system. A full account of this multilingual system concerns linguistic relatedness and contact as well as the way in which language use and language affiliation mediate social relations between member groups.

Language is key in this social system because it is at once an emblem of group identity, as well as a problematic medium for transmission of kno-

wledge and practice between groups. However, major questions have been left unanswered regarding the genetic relatedness of languages, intensity and time depth of language contact within and across families, and the stability and pragmatic functioning of this system. I focus here on the pragmatics of the system, understood as a contribution to the larger goal of linguistic comparison in the Xingu in terms of genetic links and contact effects. My objective is to consider the Upper Xingu as a multilingual system that contains a balancing of linguistic differences in terms of code and identity, with a similar orientation to norms of interaction. By a focus on pragmatics I mean attention to the sum of meaningful social action accomplished through language use. This involves especially indexical signaling, or signs interpretable only with reference to their contexts of production, which forces analytic attention to speech acts in interaction. Pragmatics as a functioning cultural system in lived reality requires native methods of interpretation, often termed metapragmatics (Silverstein 1976), where the focus is on how actors gauge appropriateness and effectiveness of the often subtle interactional moves indexed in discourse. Pragmatics, then, is concerned with how language users succeed and fail in sending and receiving invitations to infer information that may not be denotationally coded. Accomplishing informed inference requires appeal to specific elements of context and the extrapolation of norms of interaction from instances of use. I hope to point out ways that language figures not only in defining group identity, even group difference, but also establishing social relations between individuals and groups alike.

I focus on the Wauja, speakers of an Arawak language who reside in the Western portion of the Upper Xingu. Of course it would be equally true to say that the Wauja live in the Western part of the Xingu Indigenous Park. The establishment of the Park in the middle of the twentieth century brought a measure of stability to the multilingual federation of the Upper Xingu, while at the same time affecting the spatial and social organization of the system and bringing profound changes (Menezes 1999, Garfield 2004). In fact, everything that I have so far said including the Upper Xinguan tendency to monolingualism, needs qualification when the context of the Park is taken into account. While it is true that Upper Xinguans practice and value monolingualism, contact with Portuguese, crucially mediated by the institution of the Park, has

changed this picture somewhat. Increasingly young men especially are acquiring Portuguese, and while it was difficult to say that Portuguese had become a Xinguan lingua franca three decades ago (Basso 1972), it cannot be denied that this language now affects many aspects of indigenous life inside the Park, and is the main vehicle of communication in many interactions between Upper Xinguans. This is especially interesting when one considers the pragmatic principles that guide interaction between members of different Upper Xinguan groups, because Portuguese use may be affecting those principles, and because observation of Portuguese use may make aspects of such principles and their dynamics visible in new ways. I think it is not possible to speak of an Upper Xinguan multilingual system in terms of an integrated speech community (about which more below) if one considers such an entity to include only the indigenous languages, while bracketing Portuguese as at best a novelty, and at worst an exogenous contagion. Attention to the Upper Xingu as a social system necessitates attention to the Xingu Indigenous Park as a social institution, and attention to social aspects of multilingualism in the region necessitates attention to Portuguese as a social tool and as an emerging object of cultural value.

The Wauja, then, are members of the Upper Xinguan multilingual society and inhabitants of the Park. Almost all of the roughly 350 speakers of the Wauja language reside in a single circular village inside the Park. In addition to Wauja, there are languages from three major Amazonian stocks plus one language isolate spoken in the social network that defines the Upper Xingu, and many more spoken within the Park in the Middle and Lower Xingu. Languages from different families spoken by Upper Xinguan groups are mutually unintelligible, and multilingual speakers are the exception (Franchetto 2001). The Upper Xinguan ethnolinguistic groups are:

KARIB	ARAWAK	TUPI	LANGUAGE ISOLATE
KUIKURU KALAPALO NAHUKUWA	YAWALAPITI WAUJA MEHINAKU	KAMAYURÁ AWETI	TRUMAI

The predominantly endogamous pattern of marriage in the region tends to centralize residence on an ideal pattern of one ethnic group speaking one language residing in one or more autonomous settlements, though there is traffic of people through the regional system. Although many languages are found side by side in the network, multilingualism as a communicative property of individuals is downplayed by Xinguan from different groups (Basso 1973). While this is often characterized by Xinguan and their ethnographers as a language barrier, I analyze it as a monolingual speaker ideology.

A network of production and trade of local manufactures that are constantly in circulation and rapidly alienated marks Upper Xingu society. Local specializations such as Wauja ceramics, Kuikuru shell work, Kamayurá bows, etc. serve as corollary ethnic emblems in addition to language affiliation (Gregor 1973, Barcelos Neto 2002). Linguistic forms themselves may also be conceived of as a type of property. In a place where names and powerful texts are potential commodities, apprentice shamans, not to mention linguists, must “pay” for the privilege of learning certain language forms. I was frequently asked by Wauja people in all earnestness how much I was paying to study the Wauja language. It is often in intergroup ritual exchange events that Xinguan languages come into contact with one another and these contexts tend to solidify notions of distinct languages as distinct identifying possessions of groups. An important aspect of the social life of language in the Upper Xingu is its place within the set of people’s most valuable, even inalienable, property. Inalienability of individual languages and the knowledge connected to them is grammatically marked in Wauja possessive constructions. Ethnographic data suggest that this is relevant to people’s sense of personhood and group belonging, and this may extend to if not grammatically then conceptually to other Upper Xinguan groups (Ball 2007).

The dynamic of Upper Xinguan multilingualism seems to pivot on the maintenance of individual and ethnic group monolingualism, combined with an intense and long-standing network of ritual exchange meetings that provide opportunities for the circulation of linguistic, material, and conceptual elements through the system. While the central role of language in this social system has been consistently recognized (Basso

1973, Gregor 1977, Franchetto 2001), no systematic comparative studies of structural linguistic, nor sociolinguistic, commonalities and differences of member languages and their speakers have been conducted. A global vision of this multilingual system's balance of ethnolinguistic identity, monolingual ideology, and intergroup communication is called for. My thoughts here are meant to contribute to understanding of some of the interactional strategies and linguistic ideological concepts that constitute the Upper Xingu as a linguistic community, in terms of the definition of its external boundaries and also its internal divisions and connections.

1. SPEECH COMMUNITY AND LANGUAGE COMMUNITY

Linguistic communities, conceived of as communities defined in some way by communication through, and affiliations to, some aspects of language, can be approached analytically from two perspectives. The first perspective construes linguistic communities in terms of "language," yielding the analytic concept of a "language community." The second perspective sees linguistic communities in terms of "speech," giving rise to the analytic category of "speech community" (Silverstein 1996). These perspectives are not in theoretical competition with one another, but are meant to be considered as complementary and part of a complete view of the social life of language.

On the one hand, language communities can be studied as respects the ways in which they are united by a common orientation to norms of the structure of language. This attention to code is this basis for the social maintenance of what perhaps first comes to mind when thinking of linguistic community; groups of people who speak the same language. This orientation to code includes but is not limited to norms of what linguists call prescriptive grammar, or the imposition of ideal but not necessarily observed grammatical rules from positions of authority, often through specific societal institutions of power. The orientation to grammar also includes attention to and implementation of what linguists contrastively refer to as descriptive grammar, those automatic, and in the linguist's sense, truly definitional rather than superfluous, structural aspects of individual languages as abstract compu-

tational systems. Language communities are groups of people with shared orientation to grammatical norms of communication, they share a grammatical “language.”

On the other hand, speech communities can be studied as respects the ways in which they are united by a common orientation to norms of the use of language. Speech communities are groups of people who share an orientation to interactional norms of communication, they share a pragmatics. It might seem upon first glance that the notion of sharing something as grand as a language would be more important to of the kinds of allegiances that bind communities together than a shared pragmatics but this is not necessarily the case. One might even think that a language system is a larger than a pragmatic system, so there should be more potential to share in such an entity, but again this is not the case. In fact if we restrict the definition of the language that defines a language community to grammatical norms, then it is possible to define pragmatics as a superordinate set of norms, with other formal linguistic, including grammatical, ones being subordinate components of pragmatics. The point is that sharing in, contesting, and enacting pragmatic principles, the factors around which speech communities are constructed, is a widely encompassing domain of semiotic social action and communication.

Speech communities, as shown by the work of Gumperz (1968) and Hymes (1968) among others, are often multilingual, containing many codes. Whether multilingual or monolingual, speakers in a speech community share knowledge of strategies and repertoires. They know how to interpret the indexical signs of language use, where e.g. phonological, morphosyntactic, gestural, or register choices signal social information to knowing participants and observers. In multilingual speech communities, what language is being used in a given situation can itself be a social signal of identity, status, gender, etc. as studies of code-switching have shown. But often the kind of information that defines speech communities can be communicated independent of language or code choice in an interaction, as actors mobilize principles of politeness, avoidance, accommodation, insult, or generosity that may employ, but do not exclusively depend on, specific grammatical features of a given language. Members of a speech community, multilingual or otherwise, develop a

shared ability to recognize how discursive positioning and social actions are accomplished among speakers of potentially multiple languages, and they may develop ways to send similar pragmatic messages using diverse codes. The idea is that norms of use sift out to define principles of interaction, either building upon, or in spite of, recognized differences in code. Intensity of contact between speakers is an important factor in the constitution of speech communities, but this is relative, for members of a speech community may be separated from face-to-face interaction wholly or in part, instead relying upon e.g. print mediated or ritually sporadic engagements to reproduce belonging. This points to the important observation that in the construction of speech communities, orientation to shared cultural knowledge about how to conduct interactional business and the sense of community this can generate lies not only in communication and practice, but also in ideology.

I suggest we might consider Upper Xinguan ethnolinguistic units as closer to the kinds of collectives described as language communities, not because of any natural connection between ethnicity and language, but because of the rigorous and active processes of differentiation that maintain boundaries between codes in the region. The Upper Xingu as a whole may be on the way to constituting itself as a Portuguese speaking language community, as knowledge and use of Portuguese increases. I would suggest, for the time being however, that the Upper Xinguan multilingual society as a whole be considered as representative of a speech community. There is a third level that emerges when one looks at the Upper Xingu that problematizes the neat division of these two levels. Intermediate social grouping are found at the level of linguistic family. In the Upper Xinguan ceremonial calendar, specifically in formalized trading and other rituals, special prerogatives are established between groups that speak languages in the same stock. Speakers of the Arawak languages Mehinaku, Yawalapiti, and Wauja, for example, may consider themselves, in pairs or as a group, closer to one another than to Karib or Tupi speakers. I have observed Wauja and Yawalapiti express such an alliance through ritualized trading and baptism, where the ability to give names is restricted to Arawak identifying Upper Xinguans. Karib speakers, such as the Kuikuru and Kalapalo, may form allied subgroups to-

gether or with other Karib speakers such as the Nafukuwa. I observed such Karib block solidarity in an Upper Xingu wide soccer tournament held at the Park's central Leonardo Post in 2005. When competitive rivalries between teams, and arguments about penalties and expulsion of players became heated, the Karib groups were observed to stick together in the face of criticism. This was recognized by non-Karib speaking upper Xinguans such as the Wauja, indicating that this level of structure is an expectable feature of the multilingual system for local actors. Stereotypes of individual group behavior as aggressive, rude, gossipy, etc., can also cluster at the level of language family, as Gregor (1977:313-314) has shown. This level of identification is accomplished in part through the kind of affiliation defining language communities; orientation to, in this case, similar grammatical systems. But factors characteristic of speech communities also contribute to this kind of affiliation, as it can derive from (intensity of) language use; the circumstance that members of related groups may see one another more often, be inclined to interact more due to intelligibility, and for extra-linguistic reasons including exclusive ritual and kinship connections, develop a sense of intimacy that hovers in between the space of the individual autonomous named ethnolinguistic group and Upper Xinguan society writ large. This is an important observation for theorizing about language and speech communities because it reiterates that the two types are not categorical boxes, but that they instead describe tendencies social actors employ in constructing communities with relative attention to different empirical aspects of linguistic form and use. It is also an important observation for understanding the Upper Xingu as a multilingual linguistic community, because the existence of such mid-level linguistic stock based affiliations can have effects in terms of kinship, ritual structure, language contact, and even give clues as to prehistoric language change, migration, and settlement.

One more caveat about speech communities versus language communities is in order, this time specifically about assumptions often invoked by the unreflexive use of "community" as an analytic term. Irvine (2006), and Irvine and Gal (2000) have questioned if "community" is the best notion to use in discussions of linguistically defined groups. But if we understand that community is first not a

given but an accomplishment, and that community is not defined merely by self-identification but also by differentiation and ascription, then we can avoid some of the analytical pitfalls associated with the term. In fact the principle of differentiation as a counterbalance to the tendency to analyze group solidarity in terms of positive identification is particularly appropriate to Amazonia and to the Upper Xingu. Amazonian ethnologists have recognized for some time that the reproduction of sociality in much of lowland South America hinges on the management and incorporation of powerful others. Amazonian political and cosmological economies privilege alterity (Viveiros de Castro 1996). Village-level communities and their individual residents enact an array of social relationships with others including affines in the neighboring hammock, or rivals across the plaza, friends or enemies in nearby villages, non indigenous merchants in town, foreign agents of change, and dangerous spirits. These relationships are actively maintained through material, symbolic, and discursive exchange. How Amazonians differentiate themselves from others and manage the powerful effects that contact with others entails may be a more fruitful line of anthropological inquiry than how Amazonians perform something like authentic autonomous community identities, a perspective that perhaps relies too much on Western assumptions about the relationships between ethnicity, language, and culture.

Let me review. Upper Xinguan ethnolinguistic groups orient to different codes (languages) and individual speaker multilingualism is the exception not the rule in the Upper Xingu. A *lingua franca*, even if Portuguese is increasingly filling this role, has not traditionally been a stable part of the communicative economy here. So code/language does not sufficiently mediate social relations between members of groups or between groups themselves, nor does it serve as a basis of identity in terms of a language community defined in terms of a common orientation to grammatical norms. Yet groups in the Upper Xingu maintain communication in practice and an objectified notion of community. So what kind of community are they, and what constants in communication, if not code/language, underlie this cohesion? Upper Xinguans, while they do not share code, share pragmatic prin-

ciples that structure and guide interaction in everyday and ritual contexts. This common base of cultural principles about how behavior structures social roles and relationships is a part of language in the wider sense and is a crucial formative element of the multilingual organization of the region. By virtue of the shared orientation to communicative techniques of practice and the assumed categories and values these reproduce, Upper Xinguans participate in and constitute themselves as a speech community. Here we see a way to understand the integration of the Xingu in terms of satellite units. In the Upper Xingu, ritual often mediates alliance between ethnolinguistic groups. Next I consider how intergroup ritual is structured and crucially how this structure connects to shared interactional and pragmatic norms.

2. RESPECT AND COMPLAINT

In the Upper Xingu a calendar of intense inter-local ritual serves to reproduce higher order group cohesion among member ethnolinguistic units. Ritual in the Xingu is rigorously hierarchical. A powerful owner or chief sponsors all ritual events. The sponsor is responsible for the coordination of the event, including payments to performers and food and accommodations to visiting guests. This amounts to a generous display of wealth, one that puts the sponsor in a chiefly role. Along with this prerogative comes an expectation of noble demeanor, which in the Xingu centers on the conceptual cluster of shame, respect and humility. Conversely, the ritual performers who are contracted by the sponsor, along with the guests of intergroup meetings, are licensed if not expected to accuse the sponsor of inadequacy and to demand more. In so doing they display and admit their dependency upon the providing sponsor. Thus supplication is indexed by complaint, defining a complementary relation between sponsor and performer, provider and receiver. It marks the position of the supplicant no less than it recognizes the superiority of the sponsor. In a certain sense, this complementary complaint has a respectful function, in as much as it recognizes a deference entitlement due to the role position of sponsor.

Sponsors of ritual assume a chiefly position, and they are expected to give generously and to show humility, shame, and respect. In Wauja, these principles are characterized by the terms *aipitsi-ki* “shame-NOM,” and *amonapataa-ki* “respect-NOM.” Ritual performers and visitors are licensed to complain and demand more prestation from the sponsors. Often this complaint involves demeanor that the Wauja, at least, tend to read as anger. The Wauja term for complaint, *peyete-ki* “complaint/anger-NOM,” can denote an angry state of mind, though not all complaint is necessarily seen as angry. Wauja say of stereotypical chiefly behavior, *amunau aitsa peyetepei*, “Chiefs don’t get angry or complain,” rather *só peão que acusa, peão não tem vergonha*, “only peons/commoners complain, peons/commoners don’t have any shame.” Commoners complain and lack shame, but chiefs do not complain because *amunau aipitsipai inyau outsa* “chiefs are ashamed (to reply) in front of people,” and *amunau amonapaatapai inyau*, “chiefs respect people.”

I suggest that this basic dichotomy, or better dialectic, since the display of respect or shame and complaint or anger are complementary and elicit one another, applies as a pragmatic principle to the Upper Xingu as a speech community. In spite of the languages spoken, Upper Xinguans orient to this pair of stances as a guide to many kinds of interaction, ritual and quotidian. The analysis is proposed to apply to the Upper Xingu as a system, in order to describe what I think is an important pragmatic factor in the system’s integration.

Where respect is positively valued, complaint is negatively valued. Yet even complaint has a covert respect function. Respect is marked, an interactional achievement that is highly restricted in terms of speakers and contexts. Complaint is unmarked, seen as common. But as all unmarked terms, complaint can signal its opposite in certain cases. This is a hypostatic interpretation (Jakobson 1961). The fact of complaining presupposes an asymmetric interactional structure in which the complainer is below the complaine. To the extent that this speech act is seen to conform to this structure, complaining marks, in a roundabout way, respect of the complainer for the complaine, at least his implicit recognition of higher status.

3. CHIEF'S SPEECH AS AN EXAMPLE OF RESPECT

Chiefs are behaviorally characterized as those who do not complain, those who are respectful. In this sense, the genre of chief's speech embodies an ethic of leadership that is related to an ethic of interaction. Key to this is the Upper Xinguan notion expressed in Wauja as *aipitsi(-ki)*, and in Kalapalo (Karib) as *ifutisu(-nda)* (Basso 1973). Not quite humility, this concept is rendered by Basso variously as "polite, generous, peaceful," "withdrawn," or "characterized by a lack of public aggressiveness" (Basso 1973:12-20). The Wauja speak of chiefs, and chiefs speak of themselves, in these terms, and this principle is operative in the chief's speech presentation of the Wauja. Wauja metapragmatic ideals of respect and complaint clearly contrast respect and humility or shame with bravado, rudeness, and complaint. On one trip to town with highly respected Wauja elders, we were denied access to a hotel, which we presumed to be a case of the ownership's discrimination against Indians. When indigenous representatives in the city attempted to take this to the police for a formal complaint, the Wauja chief politely declined to pursue the matter further. He told me while we sat in the police station waiting room, *amunau natu, aitsa nupeyetepei*, "I am a chief, I do not complain/get angry." He quietly walked out without denouncing the white man who had turned him out into the street. This is a perfect metalinguistic reflection on the culturally appropriate linguistic behavior of chiefs.

Wauja Chief's speech is performed in the open central patio ringed with longhouses by an elite elderly male speaking in what Wauja describe as an archaic register. Grounded in this quintessentially public space (Gregor 1977), chief's speech articulates the top and center of traditional society, berating younger Wauja generations for having lost the traditions of the ancestors. While any isolated event of chief's speech might appear as monologic oratory, it may best be analyzed as a reply in a series of mediated exchanges between collectivities of different sizes. To reiterate a point made convincingly by Franchetto (2000:484) in her discussion of Kuikuru chief's speech or, as she renders it, "chiefly conversation," Upper Xinguan chief's speech is thoroughly dialogic.

Chief's speech is sometimes performed by a community leader at dawn to an exclusively Wauja audience, as a means to curtail laziness and inspire collective activity. Chief's speech is also performed at specific ritual junctures in Upper Xinguan intergroup ceremony. While fundamentally grounded in, and creative of, the local, chief's speech is an outward looking speech genre that functions to delimit and negotiate boundaries between ethnolinguistic units in the Upper Xingu. Chief's speech intersects with political relationships that cross several spatial and temporal boundaries. The speech can be read as an attempt to respond to and resolve the risks inherent in the high stakes of ritual relation making in the Upper Xingu. Chiefs in the Xingu are seen as those individuals who possess the qualities of reserve and non-confrontation. They are expected to mediate ethnic group encounters and ritual connections between humans and the spirit world by organizing, directing, and enacting ritual. Chiefs bring people together for collective action.

Consider this short snippet of a longer speech delivered to a group of Kuikurun visitors who had come to officially invite the Wauja to attend a Kwaryp festival along with other Upper Xinguan ethnic groups.

<i>tsalaaaaaaaaaaaaa...</i> <i>nana autepenei aitsuhã tsalaaaaaaaa...</i>	Junior..... they come seeking us junior....
<i>autamalupenei aitsuwa</i>	They are seeking us in vain
<i>aitsaya aixapapalatai ojopaiyu numa</i>	"We do not have our thing nowadays" I said
<i>kata wanaka ipitsihã numa</i>	I told this messenger
<i>sekunyanauneke kapapalatai sekunyiuhã numa</i>	"The people of long ago still had their things long ago" I said
<i>napaneneke tumapaa kebotopo sekunyiuhã numa</i>	"They still worked clay long ago" I said

<i>ojopaxcei aitsu aitsa aitsumapai kebotopo katiunohã numa</i>	“Nowadays we do not work clay” I said
<i>awasixatapai yamuranau</i>	“We have lost the ancestors’
<i>onapapaala katiunohã yamukunau numa</i>	“things children” I said

The chief addresses the Wauja as his “children,” and he claims that the Wauja of today have lost the cultural property that distinguished their ancestors. Throughout the performance, as the speaker approaches the center of the village he also approaches the waiting visitors. The speech sets up a dialogue between Wauja chief and Wauja commoner and between Wauja living and Wauja dead. It also projects a frame within which the relation between Wauja and visiting Kuikuru is figured. Children are to their chief and contemporaries are to their ancestors as the Wauja people are to their ritual hosts. The Wauja are humbling themselves to a certain extent here. This is fictional and proleptic, for now at least the Wauja are hosts, but the whole act of receiving the messengers is treated as though they were the Kuikuru chiefs and the Wauja were already in the Kuikuru village. That is to say, the Wauja present themselves (or rather the chief presents a collective version of himself) to the Kuikuru as a chiefly counterpart should, by assuming a respectful, non-boastful, and humbling demeanor. This is a model of how they expect to be received as future guests. The chief is licensed here to admonish his children from a disapproving ancestral perspective of cultural plenty, while at the same time he models chiefly demeanor in his self-disparaging acceptance of the noble invitation to honor the ancestors of his inviting hosts.

4. KURI SONGS AS AN EXAMPLE OF COMPLAINT

Every year in October Wauja men get together in their circular village’s central men’s house to carve bull-roarers and to sing. This is one in an ongoing series of celebrations of different monstrous spirits in the Wauja ritual calendar. They carve the image of Matapu, a fish spirit, invoking the spirit by

making and spinning bull-roarers. Matapu is what we might consider the esoteric main event, but another prominent spirit-monster also participates in this ritual. The men channel the bird Kuri through song in a sort of exoteric sideshow as accompaniment to their carving.

The Kuri songs that are sung during the Matapu *pequi* ritual cycle are emblematic of anger and complaint. Through the songs Wauja men aggressively accuse Wauja women of having sexual relations with other Upper Xinguan men. Inherently a scandalous presence, Kuri's persona is sometimes lustful for old ladies or remorseful for long lost lovers, often he is angry at all women for their deceit. Wauja men voice Kuri's anger, and they boisterously accuse Wauja women of having had sexual relations with lovers from other ethnolinguistic groups. They curse and yell and very publicly expose what is otherwise privately circulating gossip.

p-upusuka-te-benei

Hurry up and take it off

p-upusuka-te-benei

Hurry up and take it off

p-upusuka-te-benei

Hurry up and take it off

Foreign name.MASC.-*jata*

Foreign lover's thong (lit. "shell")

Wauja name.FEM

Wauja woman

The men implore a named Wauja woman to remove her pubic thong, the distinctive female garment of the Upper Xingu otherwise known as *uluri*. They refer to a specific male lover as the owner of the thong, suggesting that as long as she wears "his" thong, she will remain corrupted by contact with the foreigner. The accused lover is always a member of another Upper Xinguan ethnic group. The use of proper names, often popular nicknames for the non-Wauja lovers, allows for community members who are listening to easily identify who is being scandalized (I have elided actual names in this example). The possessive form in this verse adds the classifier *-jata* "shell" to the masculine foreign name, referring metonymically to the thong's convex triangle of gourd shell.

Throughout the men's performance of the Kuri songs over three days, one or two voices can be heard singing a different melody off key. Chiefs and elder ritual leaders, by force of chiefs' decorum do not voice

Kuri but sing along with Fox spirit instead. Respectable elders, those who possess shame, do not deign to accuse, this is the purview of those men who are young or inconsequential enough to still have no shame. Chiefs cannot sing Kuri songs, they cannot voice the spirit, because his words are a prototype of complaint and angry accusation. The Wauja lexical item used to describe the stance of the actor committed to the words spoken in these songs, their principal, is *peyetepei*, “to be angry, to accuse, to complain.” Whether the principal is Kuri or the men singing or both is purposefully left ambiguous. This exoteric text is described as shameless, and as *apai juto* “a worthless song,” a mockery of worthless speech. Reflecting upon the ritual, Wauja interpret it as hurtful trash talk and as a real source of interethnic discord if other Xinguan groups were to hear it. But people also insist it is merely joking around, and others even take pride in the ritual because other groups do not perform it. The point to take away is that this is a ritualized picture of how complaint can work as a balance to respect in the formation of community. Its aggressive stance is recognized as genuine and therefore it is inappropriate for chiefs to participate fully in the accusations. It is considered common, but there is a general sense among the Wauja that it has its place, should be tolerated, and that it may even be a valuable part of Wauja tradition.

Complaint and accusation in the Upper Xingu, as modeled by this and other ritual performances, is an expectable part of daily and ceremonial life. Countless quotidian exchanges are modeled on the expectation that the receiver of a gift may claim insufficiency. I recall one relatively young Wauja man who had decided to begin his adult career as a sponsor of ritual. He co-opted the novel occasion of celebrating Christmas by purchasing cookies and juice, rice and beans, and arranging for slaughter of a cow for distribution to the community in a grand feast. Even in this apparently non-Upper Xinguan tradition involving a Christian holiday, beef, and highly esteemed sweet delicacies, etc. the eager sponsor confided in me that he was afraid that the recipients would complain. He expended considerable time and resources, but seemed resigned to the fact that the natural complement to his generosity would be accusations of restraint, of not having provided generously enough. The success of his casting himself as sponsor, however, required that he take such criti-

cism in stride and maintain an appropriately reserved demeanor. In fact the man's expectation of complaint can be seen as anticipation of having his novel chiefly position valorized, for he can only hope to assume more power and respect if he is first treated as a chief is supposed to be treated, thus given the opportunity to respond in character. We see that the pragmatic dynamic of complaint and respect is transposed into relatively new contexts, where a Wauja Christmas feast can be structured as other Upper Xinguan exchanges. This dynamic is also transported into Portuguese language interactions with non Xinguans, and it is interesting to consider how it may be undergoing transformations in this context.

5. COMPLAINT AND RESPECT IN INTERACTIONS WITH OUTSIDERS

I now move on to examine negotiations that Upper Xinguans enact with outsiders, specifically representatives of environmental NGOs, and representatives of FUNASA who coordinate government health care in the Park. Portuguese is the default language of such interactions, as determined by the power and prestige of the outsiders. Even where Upper Xinguan participants may speak in an indigenous language instead of Portuguese, translation is always required. In the interactions I consider briefly here, complaint by Upper Xinguans that the NGO or Ministry is failing to be generous seems to be used with the secondary indexical respect function I have identified for the pragmatics of Upper Xinguan complaint. This is clearly missed by Western interlocutors, however, generating considerable interactional tension and serious consequences for the execution of joint development and health care initiatives.

I identify three strategies that guide Wauja and Upper Xinguan orientations to the discursive construction of exchange relations with outsiders. The first model, "superiority," figures the indigenous term in the relation as a sponsor to the dependant role of the NGO or government actor. The second model, "supplication," figures the inverse relation, with the NGO or government organization in the role of sponsor and the indigenous partners in the role of receiver. Both of these models describe complementary relations, and are based in the basic dynamic of regional politics, economy, and ritual. The third model, "unity,"

attempts to establish a symmetrical relation between indigenous groups and NGOs and governmental organizations. This model is innovative, and I argue that it derives from specific requirements of the project and tropes of pan indigenous political discourse. Let me show how each model works in action.

When Upper Xinguans enact the superiority frame vis-à-vis project partners, they often claim that they want to be in direct conversation with foreign sources of aid, rather than the intermediary NGO. To the extent that the NGO is seen as a middleman between more powerful external sources and Indians, chiefly role inhabitation puts the NGO in a complementarily subordinate position to the true power players, the Upper Xinguans and foreign granting agencies. I observed many discussions of and attempts to cut out the NGO middlemen, to go right to the European or American source of cash in developing projects. One enterprising Kamayurá man, when he discovered that an American environmental NGO received funding from USAID, said to the NGO representatives in an open meeting that their job shouldn't be to relegate and distribute these funds to Indians, it should be to put Indians in touch with those bosses in Washington so they can negotiate their own terms for their own projects.

The NGO may become offended at these suggestions of its uselessness. In this meeting, the white representative of the organization replied indignantly that if indigenous representatives say that the NGO is doing nothing when everybody knows that they are doing something, then they might as well do nothing since that is what people will claim in any case. The NGO representative was visibly frustrated in this moment. This connects to NGO characterizations of Upper Xinguans as demanding and presumptuous “rock stars,” who do not know how good they have it.

From an indigenous perspective desirable relations with NGOs are to be either furthered to the extent possible in order to maximize generosity and the iteration of projects as ritual events, or social relations with NGOs are to be superseded entirely in the aim of making new relations farther afield and higher up. One problem is that if challenges to supersede the NGO as middle man generate ill will on the NGO side, Upper Xinguan's attempts to treat NGOs as sponsors create a similar effect. This happens in part because supplication involves a plea to not end the

exchange relation, often interpreted as a refusal to finish the job at hand, and a continual demand for more resources, often interpreted as greedy and taking advantage. When Upper Xinguans assume a complementary subordinate position to the NGO as distributor of wealth they have the right to expect generosity in the distribution of resources destined for the ritual project being performed. They are prone to complain that there is never enough, no matter how much may be lavishly given.

In one meeting held at the Post inside the Park to evaluate the progress of a health care program involving FUNASA and IPEAX, a pan-Xinguan indigenous association, two Wauja men gave public speeches in Portuguese addressed to Brazilian representatives. The first speaker oriented his speech around the Portuguese term *melhorar* “improve.” He said that in meetings people always say *melhorar, melhorar*, “improve, improve” but *na minha aldeia nada melhorou* “in my village nothing has improved.” He raises the point that instead of *melhorar*, the discussion should be about *equipar* “supplying.” He indicts the ministry and the association for failing to supply enough medical equipment to workers on the ground in the Park. He states in a particularly eloquent parallelistic passage:

Será que FUNASA está vendo prioridade das aldeias? Não está vendo.

Is it the case that FUNASA is seeing the priorities of the villages? It is not.

Será que IPEAX está vendo prioridade das aldeias? Não está vendo.

Is it the case that IPEAX is seeing the priorities of the villages? It is not.

Está escutando só. Está ouvindo onde está precisando equipamento.

It is only listening. It is (merely) hearing where equipment is needed.

Isso eu acho muito errado de vocês.

I think this is very wrong of you.

This speech, precisely because it denies progress and demands more expenditures, is an example of an Upper Xinguan pragmatics of complaint, an appeal to the ritual sponsor to display his generosity. As such it clearly marks the superiority of the addressee. Yet the Brazilian national interlocutors here replied by saying that they were demoralized.

zed by the Indian's complaining. This was an interactional dead end for them. Instead, they responded much more positively in this context to the following Wauja speaker.

The second speaker did not say that nothing had been accomplished. Instead he emphasized the Portuguese term *união* "unity."

Então, única forma que a gente pode fazer unir, união

So the only thing we can do is unite, unity

União é muito importante

Unity is very important

Diss-fala a verdade que a união

It is true to say that

Mais importante para o homem branco

The most important thing for the white-man

É isso

Is unity

Sem união, a gente não vão conseguir nada

Without unity, we will not achieve anything

This speaker adopts a pan-indigenous political discourse and this is characteristic of the range of his repertoire and the command of this genre that he has gained in his extensive experience in urban Brazil in his work with the Wauja indigenous association. Notice that such NGO-speak, voiced in terms of symmetrical unity between indigenous groups and between the indigenous block and Western agents, challenges the Upper Xinguan ritual, political, and economic system of complementary exchange between sponsors and receivers. There is much tension in Wauja and other communities as typically younger indigenous association members usurp power and resources from their elder chiefs. This is an important pragmatic aspect of the emergence of alternative political structures throughout the Amazon that are displacing traditional regimes of community leadership in many places. Contact with Portuguese, and the adoption of explicit pragmatic strategies such as symmetrical pan-

indigenous discourses of unity, can be seen to transform the balance of multilingualism, ritual prerogative and politics in the Upper Xingu. With these changes, we may see a continued reorganization of the pragmatic bases for the Upper Xinguan multilingual speech community.

CONCLUSION

This paper is offered as a contribution to the comparative view of the role of language in the Upper Xinguan multilingual system, with the aim of complementing increased focus on historical relatedness and structural linguistic effects of contact between groups. I have focused on pragmatic aspects of how language mediates relations within the Wauja village and with outside groups. By looking at interactional principles involved in quotidian and ritual scenes conducted in the Wauja language in the Wauja community, and at Wauja social interaction with members of other Upper Xinguan groups and with Brazilian and foreign agents in multilingual contexts, I hope to have sketched some of the connections between ethnolinguistic identity, linguistic form, and social relations.

One interesting finding of my own research has been that Wauja actors take the basic interactional strategies of deference and complaint that are key to managing successful exchange relations locally, and export them to interlocal, interethnic, and international spaces. Other Upper Xinguan groups successfully reciprocate in interlocal meetings, evidence that the Upper Xingu constitutes a truly integrated speech community, where speakers, although they speak different languages, share similar orientations to pragmatics, to principles of politeness, and comportment in general. Analysis of interactions with non-Xinguans, however, shows interesting contrasts, and indicates that Wauja and other Upper Xinguans are transforming pragmatic tactics in the face of interactional failures with outsiders.

In addition to the conclusion that the Upper Xingu versus elsewhere constitutes a culturally definable speech community, I have identified a mid-level organizational principle of ethnolinguistic group organization and interaction in the Upper Xingu. Members of the same linguistic family, in the case of the Wauja, sister Arawak groups speaking Mehinku and Yawalapiti, share privileged communication networks and ritual prerogatives,

leading Wauja to identify more closely with these groups than with other non-Arawak speaking groups in the system. This raises questions about the connections between genetic linguistic groups and subsystem social structures in multilingual societies. The goal here is to deepen our understanding of the temporal dynamic of the system of social relations and language mediated interaction that is undergoing rapid transformation under colonial culture and language contact pressures today.

The focus of much research on pragmatics in the Upper Xingu has been on respect and shame as they are manifest in language use and interaction (see e.g. Basso 2007). Native theory indeed values respect and humility while it downplays complaint and expressions of anger as negative. I suggest we take a lesson from Durkheim (1982 [1895]), in his organic metaphor for society, even if the implied homeostatic equilibrium of the theory is an abstraction. Durkheim reminds us that supposedly pathological elements may in fact be necessary, even beneficial, components of the society as organism. That is to say, what are seen as damaging elements such as crime, or in the case of the Xingu, witchcraft and the corollary stances implied in it, may actually be integral to the functioning of the system. While sociologists and would-be social planners may see criminal behavior as pathological and the absence of crime as normal or ideal, were crime to be completely eliminated from society – and it arguably never has been anywhere – the resulting society could only be considered to be itself pathological. Durkheim does not mean to say that the natural or psychological tendencies to vice in mankind make this so, far from it. Rather he means to point out that criminal behavior is a necessary sociological complement to law and order. He is concerned with structural balance in systems. Complaint fills a similar role in my analysis of its complementary position *vis-à-vis* respect in the Upper Xinguan pragmatic system. Precisely because complaint is devalued in the regional view, we should pay attention to its place in the system.

I have argued first that some common pragmatic principles in common hold the bulk of the communicative workload in the Xingu given the traditional noncongruence of competence and practice in code. Because Xinguans speak different languages, some other aspects of communication besides code must account for cohesion in the sys-

tem. As previous ethnographers have argued, intergroup ritual is a prime site of this contact and the reproduction of Upper Xinguan sociality (Basso 1973, Gregor 1977). I would simply add that ritual serves a dual purpose here, one is to project existent sociocultural principles in a schematic representation for regional actors, and the other is to refine the form and function of such principles. So ritual is not just a locus of the reproduction of Upper Xinguan society, but it is also a site of its creation and modification. Ritual informs other domains of social interaction for Upper Xinguans, from intravillage relationships to relationships with actors outside the Park. My point has been that pragmatic principles pick up where strictly speaking denotational communication leaves off, providing the basis for the identification of Upper Xinguans as a community that is not, and cannot claim to be, united by allegiance to the same language. Much to the contrary, Upper Xinguans celebrate their linguistic diversity.

But where the Upper Xingu makes for a poor example of a united language community, it is a good example of a (multilingual) speech community. My second point has been that the particular dynamic of the pragmatic system in this place hinges on a dichotomy between complaint and respect. Further research may complicate this view if other, and possibly more important, elements are uncovered. In particular it may be beneficial to see how the principles of shame, respect, and complaint move from political phenomena to map onto kinship relations and especially religious activity. The moral divide between shamanism and witchcraft, for example, may in fact be an overriding organizational principle from which quotidian interactional etiquette is derived logically and historically. The possibilities for future research on the interactional dynamic of complaint and respect in the Upper Xingu can profitably lead to contributions, on the one hand, to our knowledge about the linguistic make-up and history of the region in terms of genetic relatedness and contact between languages, and on the other hand, to our understanding of how particularly Xinguan cultural inflections of wider values such as good and evil, power and solidarity, self and other, harmony and discord, stasis and change, etc. articulate with and become manifest in linguistic practice.

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RESUMO

O multilinguismo no Alto Xingu é discutido a partir de duas perspectivas analíticas sobre comunidades lingüísticas. Contrasto “comunidade de fala” e “comunidade lingüística” e argumento que os grupos alto-xinguanos estão vinculados por princípios de fala pragmáticos comuns e não por uma linguagem denotativa comum. Sugiro que a pragmática alto-xinguana gira em torno dos conceitos de respeito e queixa. A hierarquia social, assim como a interação entre grupos e os rituais, pressupõe e reforça esta dinâmica pragmática. O uso da língua portuguesa no Alto Xingu, e além deste, torna mais complexo o quadro multilíngue, na medida em que os atores empregam e modificam os princípios pragmáticos de respeito e queixa em novos contextos ao interagir com estrangeiros.

Palavras-Chaves: Alto Xingu; Multilinguismo; Pragmática; Comunidade de Fala; Queixa; Respeito.

ABSTRACT

Multilingualism in the Upper Xingu is discussed in terms of two analytic perspectives on linguistic communities. I contrast “speech community” from “language community,” and argue that Upper Xinguan groups are bound by common pragmatic principles of speech rather than a shared denotational language. I suggest that Upper Xinguan pragmatics turns on the relationship between the concepts of respect and complaint. Social hierarchy, as well as intergroup interaction and ritual presuppose and reinforce this pragmatic dynamic. Portuguese language use in the Upper Xingu and beyond complicates the Upper Xinguan multilingual picture, as actors employ and modify the pragmatic principles of complaint and respect in new venues in interaction with outsiders.

Key-words: Upper Xingu; Multilingualism; Pragmatics; Speech Community; Complaint; Respect.