

Watjuho ja'a: language description supeditated to revitalization

This presentation discusses the author's ongoing work with the Manoki community, speakers of M̃ky (Meader 1967, Monserrat 2010), an isolate language from southern Brazilian Amazonia. Also known as Iranxe, they suffered a lengthy contact history with national Brazilian society during which they were settled in the Jesuit-run mission at Utiariti. During the decades spent there, the mission and its boarding school forbid the indigenous languages and the traditional religion and oral history. As a result of that, today there are only 6 members of the Manoki community that speak the language fluently.

In 2019 an initiative to revitalize the Manoki language gained motion among the community. The creation of the Watjuho Ja'a (Together for Language) collective crystalized a series of activities, among which are week-long language schools, shorter language study meetings, and the production of language-learning materials.

This talk addresses the efforts of the Watjuho Ja'a collective and the work by the author to undertake language description tasks that ultimately feed the needs to revitalize the language. The entire process is designed so that specific language revitalization needs drive the different fronts of language description and analysis, with a double goal to reinforce the knowledge of Manoki among a group of young language learners while at the same time producing scientifically sound materials on the language.

References

- Meader, Robert. 1967. *Iranxe: notas gramaticais e lista vocabular*. Rio de Janeiro: Museu Nacional.
- Monserrat, Ruth. 2010. *A língua do povo M̃ky*. Campinas: Editora Curt Nimuendaju.