

## Studying language contact in language documentation: Bora influence on Resígaro (North West Amazon)

Frank Seifart

Resígaro (Arawak) has been strongly influenced by (Witotoan) in particular in terms of inflectional and derivational morphemes and morphosyntactic structures. Relatively comprehensive grammars exist for both Resígaro (Allin 1975) and Bora (Thiesen 1996). However, an analysis of contact-induced changes in Resígaro based on these grammars alone (Aikhenvald 2001) must be incomplete and in some respects mistaken. This paper shows how such an analysis can be taken further by using materials compiled in a language documentation, especially texts.

Borrowed elements in Resígaro include some lexical items, mostly non-core items such as animal names (e.g. *bahí* ‘ray fish’) and names of culturally important objects (e.g. *hiibi7e* ‘coca’), as well as a few verb roots (e.g. *eke-* ‘grab’) and a dative case marker with restricted distribution (*-ke*). The great majority of borrowed elements are nominal derivational and inflectional suffixes that pertain to a set of closely interrelated morphosyntactic subsystems, namely nominal classification and countability and number marking. The basic structural characteristics of these systems, which have also been borrowed from Bora, are as follows: underived nouns are uncountable (i.e. cannot combine with number markers) and countable nouns (which inflect for number) are derived with the addition of one out of a couple dozen class markers, where class markers usually specify the shape of the reference object, e.g. *ókóniigi-hú-kú* (fire-class:tube-dual) ‘two rifles’. The same class markers are used on modifiers, e.g. *dZidZá-hu* (big-class:tube) ‘big (e.g. rifle)’, *sa-hu* (one-class:tube) ‘one (e.g. rifle)’, and pro-forms, e.g. *te-hu* (that-class:tube) ‘that (e.g. rifle)’. In these structures, Resígaro uses the following borrowed morphemes, among others: about 30 class markers (e.g. *-hi* ‘class:flat\_and\_round’, *-7o* ‘class:oblong’), five number markers (e.g. *-ku* ‘dual’, *-mu* ‘animate\_plural’), roots of numerals (*sa-* ‘one’, *mi-* ‘two’) and a number of nouns that can be used as class markers, for instance suffixed to numerals (e.g. *sa-kúbá* ‘one leg’). Also related to these structures are borrowed non-singular personal pronouns (e.g. *mupi* ‘third\_person\_dual\_feminine’) and the augmentative marker (*-koba*).

The main point of theoretical interest is that borrowing in Resígaro took place very selectively: no verbal grammar was borrowed (which is even richer in Bora and also structurally similar to Arawak), but exclusively nominal grammar, in particular the extensive nominal classification system in conjunction with number marking. There seems to be something particularly appealing about the principle underlying this systems (which can be stated as “specify shape for countability, modification and reference tracking”) that allowed for the diffusion of its morphosyntactic realization before other, usually more easily borrowed items, e.g. vocabulary, were borrowed.

- Aikhenvald, Alexandra Y. 2001. Areal Diffusion, Genetic Inheritance, and Problems of Subgrouping: A North Arawak Case Study. In *Areal Diffusion and Genetic Inheritance. Problems in Comparative Linguistics*, edited by A. Y. Aikhenvald and R. M. W. Dixon. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 167-194.
- Allin, Trevor Reginald. 1975. A Grammar of Resígaro. Ph.D. thesis, University of St. Andrews, Scotland.
- Thiesen, Wesley. 1996. *Gramática del idioma Bora*. Yarinacochoa, Pucallpa (Perú): Instituto Lingüístico de Verano.