

Language Documentation Data and Diachronic

Investigation: a case-study in Trumai

Raquel Guirardello-Damian

Trumai Project

psrgd@bris.ac.uk

INTRODUCTION

Trumai, an endangered language spoken in the central region of Brazil, in a reserve named Xingu (where other groups also live).

The goal of this presentation:

- to discuss how language documentation can contribute useful data to diachronic studies
- how diachronic studies can be relevant for understanding a language that is undergoing changes due to external forces

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE TRUMAI LANGUAGE

- Dying, progressively replaced by Portuguese (the national language of Brazil).
- Revitalization efforts: educational activities, pedagogical books written in Trumai by their own teachers.
- Criticism by the older speakers: the teachers (who are young) would be speaking Trumai "in a different way" because of the influence of Portuguese.
- The issue:
 - is this really the case?
 - or is it rather a matter of misperception by the older speakers?

TRUMAI DOBES CORPUS

- Trumai was documented within the framework of the DoBeS program.
- In the archive that was organized, materials from three different researchers were incorporated (Aurore Monod Becquelin, Raquel Guirardello-Damian, Emmanuel de Vienne)
- We including not only data from the present stage of the language, but also recordings and materials obtained in previous years of research:
 - 1960s (when few Trumai individuals spoke Portuguese)
 - part of 1970s
 - end of 1980s and 1990s (when Portuguese became more present).
 - present days
- A first analysis of the data shows that consistent changes happened along the years at the phonological and lexical levels. What about the grammatical level?

THE PRESENT STUDY

- It will focus on the evolution of the morpheme *(i)yi*.
- The status of this morpheme seems to have altered over time.
- The question is whether this happened because of a natural development of the language (i.e., due to internal motivations) or because of the external influence of Portuguese (i.e., a contact-induced change).
- For the study, I will use diachronic data from the Trumai-DoBeS corpus. This study is preliminary.
- I will also discuss the challenges that the historical change undergone by *(i)yi* may bring toward the production of educational materials.

THE MORPHEME *(I)YI*

1. Environments of Occurrence

- This morpheme occurs as the rightmost element of a 3rd person NP.
- There are two forms:

- *yi* - occurs when there is a lexical item, pronoun, demonstrative or pluralizer in the NP.

- (1) a. *[di yi] sa ka in.*
 woman dance Foc/Tens
 'The woman is dancing.' [NOUN YI]
- b. *[di herohen yi] sa ka in.*
 woman beautiful dance Foc/Tens
 'The beautiful woman is dancing.' [NOUN ADJ YI]
- (2) *[inatl yi] sa ka in.*
 3Fem dance Foc/Tens
 'She is dancing.' [PRON YI]
- (3) a. *ha pu'dits ka in [ni'de kuaw yi]-ki.*
 1 like Foc/Tens this comb -Dat
 'I like this comb.' [DEM NOUN YI]
- b. *ha pu'dits ka in [ni'de yi]-ki.*
 1 like Foc/Tens this -Dat
 'I like this one.' [DEM YI]
- (4) a. *[di wan yi] sa ka in.*
 woman PL dance Foc/Tens
 'The women are dancing.' [NOUN PLZR YI]

b. [wan yi] sa-n ka in.
 PL dance-3Abs Foc/Tens
 'They are dancing.' [PLZR YI]

- *iyi* - occurs when there is no material in the NP (no lexical item, pronoun or pluralizer).

(5) [iyi] sa-n ka in.
 dance-3Abs Foc/Tens
 'She is dancing.'

This form occurs in cases when the noun is not mentioned due to discourse continuity:

(6) [yav] wakde t'ahmu-ki hu'tsa-n ahak t,'ahmus chike-s.
 person/guy climb high.place-Dat see-3Abs Purp airplane-Dat
 'A guy climbed into a high place in order to see the airplane.'

inis hen [iyi] wapta-n t,'ahmuka lots'.
 Disc.Connec then fall-3Abs high.place Ablat
 'Then, he fell from the high place.'

- The form *yi* occurs in an NP in any morphological case. In the case of Ergative and Dative, the case marker attaches to it:

(7) a. [axos yi] watkan.
 child cry
 'The boy cried.'

b. hai-ts [pola yi] kuhmu.
 1-Erg ball throw
 'I threw the ball.' [ABSOLUTE]

(8) [ine yi]-k ha disi.
 3Masc -Erg 1 beat
 'He beat me.' [ERGATIVE]

(9) ha hu'tsa [fe'de faxlo yi]-ki.
 1 see jaguar son -Dat
 'I saw a small jaguar.' [DATIVE]

- The form *iyi* occurs in Absolutive NPs only:

(10) a. [iyi] pech-e ka in.
 run-3Abs Foc/Tens
 'He is running.'

b. hai-ts [iyi] kuhmu-n.
 1-Erg throw-3Abs
 'I threw it/him.' [ABSOLUTE]

(11) a. *[iyi]-k ha disi.
 -Erg 1 beat
 (He beat me.) [ERGATIVE]

b. *ha hu'tsa [iyi]-ki.
 1 see -Dat
 (I saw it/him.) [DATIVE]

It might be that *yi* and *iyi* are already distinct forms: *iyi* would be a pronominal form, while *yi* would be some kind of determiner. The problem is the limited behavior of *iyi*: as seen in the examples (10-11) above, *iyi* only occurs in Absolutive NPs, which is not what happens with ordinary pronouns (they occur in all kinds of NPs). Thus, if we consider *iyi* to be a pronoun, it would be an atypical one.

It is not entirely clear whether *yi* and *iyi* should be treated as different forms. For metodological reasons, I will present them separately. Let us first examine *yi*.

2. The Function of YI

- At first sight, we could imagine that *yi* is a definite article, given its occurrence in 3rd person noun phrases, and its position in the NP (i.e., the rightmost element). The problem is that this morpheme occurs with both definite and indefinite NPs. Another problem is that it co-occurs with 3rd person pronouns. Therefore, we cannot call it a definite article.

Definite:

(12) ha adifle pudits' tak [esak yi]-ki.
 1 sister like Neg hammock-Dat
 'My sister did not like the hammock.'

Indefinite:

- (13) *anewwɛ ita χī in ha χī ha ayen tam.*
 woods Allat Foc/Tens 1 Cop 1 grandfather Com
 'I went to the woods with my grandfather.'

ha hu'tsa hen [huksitukuk yi]-ki.
 I see then capibara -Dat
 'Then I saw a capibara.'

- (14) *[piɪik yi] le opata ke inak wan-ek.*
 monkey hearsay arrive.with Part 3 PL-Erg
 'They (the hunters) arrived bringing a monkey.'
- (15) *[fa'tsatkek yi] le hen de tsile...*
 disobedient.person hearsay then already hearsay
 'Then, a disobedient guy...'

- *Yi* seems rather to be a pragmatic marker. According to explanations offered by Trumai native speakers (both old and young ones), the role of *yi* is to indicate that the referent of the NP is not considered important or treated with respect by the speaker. Consider these examples:

- (16) a. *hai-ts [Hakew] midoxos.*
 1-Erg Raquel call
 'I called Raquel.'
- b. *hai-ts [Hakew yi] midoxos.*
 1-Erg Raquel call
 'I called Raquel.'
 [the speaker is treating Raquel as if she were unimportant - the speaker dislikes her]
- (17) a. *ha hu'tsa χī in [inak wan]-ki.*
 I see Foc/Tens 3 PL-Dat
 'I saw them.'
- b. *ha hu'tsa χī in [inak wan yi]-ki.*
 I see Foc/Tens 3 PL -Dat
 'I saw them.'
 [the speaker is talking about "them" in a way that is not so respectful]

3. Frequency of Use of *YI* in the Data

- *yi* was not very employed in the past. If we look at texts obtained in the 1960s, we can find a few occurrences of *yi*, but this morpheme was seldom used.

- In contrast, *yi* is frequently used nowadays. However, when we look the present data, we notice a difference between older and young speakers.

Older speakers

When we compare the speech of older speakers and texts obtained in the 60s, we see the same sort of scenario. *Yi* is used with little frequency. The absence of *yi* seems to be the usual pattern, and its use would represent a marked situation – i.e., in order to indicate less importance or little respect for a referent, one would employ *yi*.

Example: text obtained in 1991, with an older speaker (he is still alive). He talks about his trip to the city of São Paulo. In the text, the speaker uses many 3rd person NPs to refer to the places and people he saw during the trip. The speaker does not employ *yi* in these NPs. However, when the speaker talks about a friend who mistreated him, he uses *yi*:

- (18) *ha ami ke [José t'axer yi]-ki...*
 I say Part José poor/miserable/bastard -Dat
 'Thus, I said to José, the bastard...'

Younger speakers

They use (*i*)*yi* very often. It seems that they are doing the reverse of the older speakers: for the young ones, the presence of (*i*)*yi* would be the usual pattern, and its absence would represent the “marked” situation – i.e., in order to indicate more respect or importance, one would omit *yi*. This is what some examples suggest:

- (19) a. *ha hu'tsa χī in [Waura wan yi]-ki.*
 I see Foc/Tens Waura PL -Dat
 'I saw the Wauras.'
 [the speaker does not know the Wauras well, has no contact with them]
- b. *ha hu'tsa χī in [Waura wan]-ki.*
 I see Foc/Tens Waura PL-Dat
 'I saw the Wauras.'
 [the speaker became friends with the Wauras, and now likes and respects them]

Another example: in a text, a young woman talks about the fact that two health workers came to her village to bring medicine to her grandfather. When the speaker talks about the health workers (who are not particularly important to her), she employs the morpheme *yi*. When she talks about her grandfather (who she likes and respects), she does not use *yi*.

	Usual Pattern	Marked Situation
Older speakers	absence of <i>yi</i>	presence of <i>yi</i> (= referent is treated as not important - less respect in relation to the referent)
Younger speakers	presence of <i>yi</i>	absence of <i>yi</i> (= referent is treated as important - more respect in relation to the referent)

Interestingly, the younger speakers themselves notice that they employ the morpheme *yi* more often than the older speakers. For instance, when asked about the differences between his way of speaking and that of the older people, a Trumai young man stated:

(20) My way of speaking is like this:

[*pan yi*]-*ake*
 food 3Poss
 'his food'

In contrast, my mother's way of speaking is like this:

[*pan*]-*ake*.
 food 3Poss
 'his food'

4. Analysis of the Present Scenario Involving *YI*

The speakers of Trumai also speak Portuguese, with different degrees of proficiency:

- the older speaker use Trumai more than Portuguese. Their knowledge of Portuguese has certain limitations
- the younger speakers use Portuguese frequently and have a better control of the Portuguese language (very good vocabulary; good control of the grammar)

Given this scenario, one could speculate that generalized use of Portuguese by the younger people may be influencing their production in Trumai.

Analyzing the data, we could say that there is indeed influence from Portuguese, but at the same time this influence seems to be limited.

1) In Portuguese, NPs frequently have a determiner specifying the head-noun (usually the determiner is an article). It could be that the Trumai young speaker feel that they have do to something similar

when they speak Trumai, i.e., that they also have to specify the head-noun of a NP. The way to do it would be to employ *yi* more often. This could have caused the increasing in the use of *yi*.

Problem: *yi* is not a definite article, as we have seen before. Even if its use was influenced by the use of articles in Portuguese, it does not mean that *yi* also became an article. Note that *yi* can be employed with 3rd person pronouns, a fact not observed in Portuguese.

2) As the speakers claim, the use of *yi* implies in "less respect" for the referent. We could imagine that "less respect" could also imply in "less social distance, more closeness".

In Portuguese, the definite article is primarily used to indicate definiteness, but it can also convey the idea of "more closeness / more intimacy" when used with proper names. For example, if one is talking about St. Mary (the mother of Jesus Christ), one would say:

(i) [*Maria*] *era uma pessoa virtuosa.*
 Mary be.3sg.Impf a person virtuous
 'Mary was a virtuous person.'

However, if one is talking about a close friend named Maria, one can say:

(ii) [*A Maria*] *era uma pessoa virtuosa.*
 the Mary be.3sg.Impf a person virtuous
 'Mary was a virtuous person.'

Another example:

(iii) [*Jesus*] *irá me ajudar.*
 Jesus go.3sg.Fut me help
 'Jesus (Christ) will help me.'

(iv) [*O Jesus*] *irá me ajudar.*
 the Jesus go.3sg.Fut me help
 'Jesus (my friend) will help me.'

What is interesting here is that if one is talking about a respected figure like Jesus Christ, one does not use the definite article:

- the use of the article would sound a little awkward, because it would imply some intimacy with Jesus Christ
- the presence of the definite article changes the tone of the sentence. It sounds a little more informal (which would not be the right tone to use when talking about somebody like Jesus Christ, whom you should respect).

Thus, in Portuguese, if one wants to shows less intimacy and more respect/more formality towards the referent, ones does not to employ the definite article:

[o Jesus] more intimacy, informal tone, thus less "respect"
 [Jesus] less intimacy, more formal tone, thus more "respect"

It could be that this Portuguese pattern is influencing the speech of the Trumai young speakers, who would apply the same principle: if one wants to show more respect, one drops the morpheme *yi*. Thus:

[*Hakew yi*] less respectful
 [*Hakew*] more respectful

Problem: the presence of *yi* indicates "less respect", but it is not clear if it also implies in "more closeness/more intimacy". Recalling example (19):

- (19) a. *ha hu'tsa chī in [Waura wan yi]-ki.*
 I see Foc/Tens Waura PL -Dat
 'I saw the Wauras.'
 [the speaker does not know the Wauras well, has no contact with them]
- b. *ha hu'tsa chī in [Waura wan]-ki.*
 I see Foc/Tens Waura PL-Dat
 'I saw the Wauras.'
 [the speaker became friends with the Wauras, and now likes and respects them]

In (a), *yi* is employed, but note that the speaker has no intimacy with the referent.

Another problem: the use/absence of *yi* with the sense of "respect" occurs not only with proper names, but also with common nouns and pronouns. Recalling example (17):

- (17) a. *ha hu'tsa chī in [inak wan]-ki.*
 I see Foc/Tens 3 PL-Dat
 'I saw them.'
- b. *ha hu'tsa chī in [inak wan yi]-ki.*
 I see Foc/Tens 3 PL -Dat
 'I saw them.'
 [the speaker is talking about "them" in a way that is not so respectful]

Conclusion: it seems that the Trumai young speakers are doing something parallel to what happens in Portuguese, but it does not mean that they are doing exactly the same. The morpheme *yi* is being used in a way that is similar to the Portuguese definite article, but at the same time it has its own meaning and peculiarities.

Rather than a simple transfer of meaning from one language to another, what we have here is some kind of equivalence relation that is transferred.

This type of contact-induced change is attested in other languages of the world, according to Heine & Kuteva (2005).

The Portuguese article provided the initial "kick" for the change that is happening with *yi*, but the evolution of this morpheme is still happening according to the internal parameters of the language.

5. The Form *IYI*

- This form represents a more complex case. Like *yi*, the form *iyi* seems to indicate pragmatic information. According to one consultant:

- (21) a. [] *ami-n hai-tl.*
 say/speak-3Abs 1-Dat
 'She talked to me.'
- b. [*iyi*] *ami-n hai-tl.*
 say/speak-3Abs 1-Dat
 'She talked to me.'
 [according to the consultant, here the speaker expresses less respect for the person who is the subject of the talk – perhaps a more casual speech]

However, the use of *iyi* in texts is not as transparent as in the examples above. It is not clear if the function of *iyi* is really the same as *yi*.

- Like *yi*, *iyi* was not very used in the past, but nowadays it is frequently employed by the younger speakers.
- Again, Portuguese could be the factor influencing the increase in the use of *iyi*. The question is to determine what element of Portuguese is the trigger of the change:
 - o what is happening with *iyi* could be a mere extension of what happened to *yi*.
 - o however, as mentioned previously, it might be that *yi* and *iyi* may already be distinct forms. Thus, it is possible that the increase in the use of *iyi* is being influenced by other factors. One possibility would be influence from the use of 3rd person pronouns in Portuguese.

In Portuguese:

- Pron V-3rd marking**
 (i) a. *Ele morr-eu.*
 he die-3past
 'He died'

- V-3rd marking**
 b. *Morr-eu.*
 die-3past
 'He died.'

In Trumai:

- Pron V**
 (22) a. [*ine*] *fakdits.*
 3Masc die
 'He died.'

- V-3rd marking**
 b. *fakdits-e.*
 die-3Abs
 'He died.'

- Pron V-3rd marking**
 c. * [*inyi*] *fakdits-e.*
 3Masc die-3Abs
 (He died)
 (23) [*inyi*] *fakdits-e.*
 die-3Abs
 'He died.'

As already mentioned, the pattern in example (23) was not very used in the sixties (and it is still not very used by older speakers), but the present younger speakers use it frequently. It could it be that the increase in this use has the Portuguese pattern as the model:

Portuguese:	pron	V-3rd marking
Trumai:	a pronominal form	V-3rd marking

Problem: in Portuguese, the pronoun and the marking on the verb are redundant. In the case of *inyi*, it is not clear if this is the case.

This point needs further investigation.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

- Which issues and challenges the historical change undergone by (*inyi*) may bring for the production of educational materials?
- Older speakers notice that the young people employ the morpheme (*inyi*) more than they do, and they criticize this fact.
- They also criticize the writing of the young people, claiming that they are writing and speaking Trumai "in a Portuguese way".
- This criticism unfortunately generates a certain stigma against the educational activities (the teachers are all young). Thus, it needs to be addressed.
- One particular old speaker (who is an influential person in the community) suggested that the young people should change their way of speaking, trying to be more in accordance with the older folks. However, this request is unfeasible.
- One possibility of dealing with the problem:
 - explain to the older speakers that the use of (*inyi*) is not the same that happens in Portuguese.
 - even if the use of Portuguese is influencing the new generation, it does not mean that Trumai is becoming exactly like Portuguese. The influence has limits, and Trumai is not turning into Portuguese.
 - in the educational books, we could have texts produced both by older and younger speakers, so that the students can see that there are variations in the use of the language.

REFERENCES

- Guirardello, Raquel (1999). A Reference Grammar of Trumai. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rice University, U.S.A.
- Heine, Bernd & Tania Kuteva (2005). Language Contact and Grammatical Change. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Monod-Becquelin, Aurore (1975). La pratique linguistique des Indiens Trumai. Paris: Selaf.