HOW TO INTEGRATE ETHNOGRAPHICAL DATA INTO LINGUISTIC DOCUMENTATION: SOME REMARKS FROM THE KUIKURO PROJECT (DOBES, BRAZIL)

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ABSTRACT

Ethnographical information is an important component of the endangered languages documentation. If the wider goal of such a documentation is not only to collect texts and a lexicon, but also to present and preserve the cultural heritages of the documented languages, one must associate proper ethnographical information with the annotation of linguistic data and with lexical databases. The integration of linguistic and ethnographic data in a comprehensive archive is certainly not an easy task. Moreover, the participation of the indigenous community and individuals as active producers of the documentation work should be a condition *sine qua non* to achieve satisfactory results of the whole enterprise. Drawing on the experience of the Kuikuro Project/DOBES Program, we will address in this article the following topics: (1) the necessity of the inclusion of a good sketch ethnography in the archive ; (2) the problem of the glossing and definition of cultural traditional categories as kinship terms and key abstract and almost intranslatable notions; (3) the multiple links that should be constructed across the components of the archive in order to assure to the users a satisfactory understanding of the cultural significance of the linguistic data.

Ethnographical information must be considered as a crucial component of every endangered language documentation; it is a crucial component of the projects included in the DOBES Program. Among them, the Kuikuro Project aims at documenting a Carib language spoken in the Upper Xingu region, Brazil[1]. If the wider goal of such a documentation is not only to collect texts and a lexicon, but also to present and preserve the cultural heritages of the documented languages, one must associate proper ethnographical information with the annotation of linguistic data. The integration of linguistic and ethnographic data in a comprehensive archive is certainly not an easy task. Firstly, the data must be collected in a multidisciplinary basis and, whenever possible, by a multidisciplinary team in order to guarantee the quality and comparability of the data. Secondly, one must face the question of how to treat essential social and cultural information associated to lexical entries and textual units, as well as how to incorporate the ethnographical information on genre meanings, verbal performances and interactions into the metadescriptions. One must explore as far as possible the field of meanings of a word or of a text. Finally, the participation of the indigenous community and individuals as active producers of the documentation work should be a condition *sine qua non* to achieve satisfactory results of the whole enterprise. Drawing on the experience of the Kuikuro Project, we will address here only few topics.

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[1] The Kuikuro speak one of the three varieties of a language pertaining to the southern branch of the Carib family. The Kuikuro were 476 individuals in April 2000 living in three villages along the Culuene river, north of the State of Mato Grosso, Brazil, in the easternmost part of the Xingu river basin (Upper Xingu). Around of 50 Kuikuro speakers are living in the Yawalapiti (aruak) village, near the mouth of the Tuatuari river. Kalapalo, Matipú and Nahukwá, the communities speaking the other varieties of the Upper Xingu carib language, live also along the Culuene river in five villages totalizing a population of around 400. The Upper Xingu is an intertribal and multilingual system, where different local groups, speaking genetically distinct languages, interact intensively on the base of common social and cultural traits.

ETHNOGRAPHY AS A COMPONENT OF THE ARCHIVE

First of all, we consider that a linguistic documentation so conceived must include a sketch ethnography as a component of the archive design. This component has to be seen as an element of a network of links that cross the archive in all directions, envolving all its components, in so far as it contains the necessary explanations of key cultural categories. For the Kuikuro Project, the following structure and contents of a sketch ethnography is envisaged, considering the characteristics of the Lowland Southamerican societies (see the good sketches in the page www.socioambiental.org, for indigenous Brazilian peoples):

I. Identification (ethnonim, auto-denomination) (link to *Sociolinguistics*)
   Location (link to maps and images)
   Demography
   Linguistic affiliation (link to *Grammar*)
II. History (link to *History*)
III. Settlements (link to descriptive text, videos, images)
IV. Economy
   Subsistence activities (link to descriptive texts, videos, images)
   Material culture (link to descriptive texts, videos, images)
   Trade (link to images)
   Division of Labour
   Land Tenure
V. Kinship
   Kin Groups and Descent
   Kinship Terminology (link to diagrams)
VI. Marriage and Family
   Sex and Age (link to texts and images)
   Marriage (Spouses and Lovers) (link to songs and texts)
   Domestic Unit (link to images)
   Inheritance
   Socialization (link to images)
VII. Sociopolitical Organization
   Social Organization (link with descriptive texts and images)
   Political Organization (link with descriptive texts, life stories, images)
VIII. Religion
   Xamanism (link with narratives, life stories, songs)
   Cosmos (link with mythical narratives and draws)
   Ceremonies and Rituals (links with Sketch *Ethnolinguistics*, songs, music, images)
   Medecine (link with Sketch *Ethnolinguistics*)
   Death and Afterlife (link with narratives and images)
IX. Today (link to images and texts)
X. Bibliography

Each item or sub-item should also to be linked with the semantic domains in which the lexical db is organized.

THE PROBLEM OF GLOSSES FOR CULTURAL TERMS

KINSHIP TERMS: GLOSS AND DEFINITION OF RELATIONAL CATEGORIES

Kinship terminology is a central ethnographical domain and as such should be treated in the ethnographical and lexical components of the archive. These terms denote positions in a genealogical structure, but they are inherently relational terms, and multiple denotata are associated with each of them. Ethnography must remember that the application of these principles is inflected by many variables such as the calculus made through a third relation mediating between Ego and the individual for which a term is used, the genealogical distance or proximity, contextual and momentaneous variables, as factional disputes, broken marriages, extraconjugal affairs. In the limits of this presentation, only the Kuikuro terms for consanguineal basic kin types are considered. The tables below, extracted from the ethnographical component of the archive, show the following problems to be dealt with: (i) the multiplicity of denotata of each term (Tables 1 and 2); (ii) the structural significance of age and sex variables for terms denoting parallel and cross parents (Table 3 and 4):

Term	Denotata	Gloss
G+2		
-ngaupügü	FF, MF	grand-father
-ngítsü	MM, FM	grand-mother
G+1		
-uü	F, FB,	father
áma, ata, isi	M, MZ	mother
-ijogu	MB	maternal uncle
etsi, -ipügü	FZ	paternal aunt
G0		
-hisuügü		brother
-hinhano	eB, FBSe, MZSe	older brother
-hisü	yB, FBSy, MZSy	younger brother
-ingadzu	Z, FBD, MZD	sister
-hãü	MBCh, FZCh	cousin
G-1		
-mugu	S, BS	son
-indisü	D, BD	daughter
-hatuü	ZS	nephew
-hati	ZD	niece
G-2		
-higü	SS, SD, DS, DD	grand-son/daugther

Table 1: Kuikuro Reference Terminology
(Male Ego)

Term	Denotata	Gloss
G+2		
-ngaupügü	FF, MF	grand-father
-ngitsü	MM, FM	grand-mother
G+1		
-uü	F, FB, FFB	father
ama, ata, isi	M, MZ, MMZ	mother
-ijogu	MB	maternal uncle
etsi, -ipügü	FZ	paternal aunt
G0		
-hisuügü		brother
-hasü	eZ, FBDe, MZDe	older sister (w.s.)
-ikene	yZ, FBDy, MZDy	younger sister (w.s)
-hisü	B, FBS, MZS	irmão (w.s.)
-hãü	MBCh, FZCh	cousin
G-1		
-mukugu	S, ZS	son
-indisü	D, ZD	daughter
-hatuü	BS	nephew
-hati	BD	niece
G-2		
-higü	SS, SD, DS, DD	grand-son/daughter

Table 2: Kuikuro Reference Terminology
(Female Ego)

Male		Female	
X	/ /	/ /	X
-ngaupügü		-ngitsü	
-ijogu	-uü	ama	-ipügü
-hãü	-husuügü	-ikene -hasü	-hãü
-hatuü	-mukugu	-indisü	-hati
higü			

Table 3: Box Diagram (Female Ego)

Male		Female	
X	/ /	/ /	X
-ngaupügü		-ngitsü	
-ijogu	-uü	ama	-ipügü
-hãü	-hinhano -hisü	-ingãdzu	-hãü
-hatuü	-mugu	-indisü	-hati
-higü			

Table 4: Box Diagram (Male Ego)

The lexical entry of a kinship term should, then, be associated with, at minimum, the specification of the denotata and the sex of the speaker, as in the following examples:

\lx uü \gle father \den F , FB , FFB

\lx ingãtsu \gl sister \den S , FBD , MZD <ms>

\lx –hasü \gl older sister \den eZ , FBDe , MZDe <ws>

UNTRANSLATABLE TERMS

The translation or gloss of some specific cultural categories is at once an important aspect of linguistic and ethnographical description and a frustrating task. I am following here the ideas of Boyer (19). How to gloss and describe, for example, the notions of "spirits" (Kuikuro *itseke*) or "souls" (Kuikuro *akunga*)? For them it would be necessary to provide a fine-grained gloss, through which we will inevitably evoke local ideas about death and life, bodies and minds. Their description as shared mental representations is crucial. However, there are other traditional categories, extremely salient and apparently vacuous, whose gloss and definition is almost impossible. It is the case of the the notion of *kugihe* glossable as "witchcraft (substance)", at the center of beliefs about causality, illness, death, cure, individual capacities. People cannot say what *kugihe* is, but they can talk about the effect *kugihe* has and

the social relations that surround *kugihe*. Its exact meaning seems to remain ineffable to the speakers. It is erroneous to think that all categories are represented with a definition and that definitions are shared; this is the case of many non-observational categories. As Boyer says: "A vocabulary of a natural language is not a uniform landscape". Not everything is a signifier with its conceptual counterpart; moreover traditional terms as *kugihe* are not common shared categories. Traditional categories/terms should be especially marked, when occurring in texts or in the lexical db, and a strong link to the ethnographical component of the archive should be available. Moreover, special attention should be payed to their treatment as lexical entries. If the lexicon is functional to the text interlinearization, as in Shoebox, the use of a oversimplified and mistaken gloss is unavoidable. Description, native definitions, comments can partially supply to the poverty of our documentation tools. In our project we are trying to deal with this kind of categories using different native definitions for terms as *kugihe*, drawing from three verbal registers: common sense, gossip (informal politics) and comments of local experts (shamans)..

TEXT AS HYPERTEXT

Working on a (full) annotation of a text imply the construction of multiple links seeking the full understanding of its meanings. Narratives (*akinhá*) are at the hearth of the Kuikuro (and Upper Xingu) culture and they must be treated as elements of a complex network of multiple links through the archive structure. For example, historical narratives are a sub-genre at the borders between myth and history (Franchetto, 2001), and as such are identified in the Kuikuro archive structure., as shown in Figure 1 on the following page. Interviews and conversations with the village elders add details to these narratives and there are essential links between "historical" narratives and cerimonial discourses, formalized performances of "chanted speeches" during the Upper Xingu intertribal feasts, where each local group celebrate its own identity inside the intertribal system (Franchetto, 1993:2000). In historical narratives, places and times are identified through precise toponyms, references to events, as intertribal encounters, initiation ceremonies, faccional disputes. The history of the Kuikuro can be reasonably reconstructed based on these narratives back to middle XVIIIth century. Archaeological data add to the picture more evidences and information. Links with the "History"

component, as with photos, maps and drawings are then necessary to a satisfactory understanding of the text. More links should be available with the components "Sociolinguistics" and "Ethnolinguistics" in order to offer explanations of the dialectical variants and of the problem of "linguistic vs social identity", both thematized by such narratives.

The following utterances extracted from the beginning of the text *Kukopogipügü* (Our Beginning) are an example of the cultural density of the Kuikuro (historical) narratives and the need for readily available links to other texts and components of the archive, if one of our aim is to provide the users with a good understanding of the cultural heritage carried by a language and its speakers.

Mütsümü etsühügühü **oti** tongopenginhe
It was Mütsümü who came from Oti
Mütsümü > other historical narratives, cerimonial discourses, maps, images, History.
Oti > Ethnography (geography, ecosytems), other historical narratives, cerimonial discourses, maps, History.
Tajühe hatagü... oti otomo heke, tajühe hatagü
The people of oti was building the "big house", they were building the "big house"
Tajühe > Ethnography (settlement, material culture, politics), images.
engü hüle egei ... **üngita hagatelü** ihekeni
in the meanwhile...they put the house's posts
üngita > lexical semantic domains "house", Ethnography (settlement, material culture), images.

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Structure of the Kuikuro Archive

| KUIKURO DATA | | KUIKURO STUDIES |

| Linguistic Data | Non-linguistic Data | Language | Culture & Society |

| Lexicon | Natural use | Elicitation |

Songs
Music
Images
Drawings
Maps
Iconography

Grammar
Sociolinguisyics
Ethnolinguistics

| Momologue-like | Dialogical |

Ethnography
History

Narratives>Myths   Conversations
Historical — Interviews
        Personal
Explanations
Descriptions
Procedural
Songs
Ritual discourses
Oratory
Curing spells