



THE JOURNAL OF AMAZONIAN LANGUAGES

Editorial Policy: **The Journal of Amazonian Languages** seeks to publish high-quality, peer-reviewed articles on any aspect of the languages of lowland Amazonia. In addition to Amazonian languages proper (those spoken in the Amazonian or Orinocan basins), The Journal of Amazonian Languages welcomes submissions on other indigenous languages of lowland South America, including languages of Chile, Argentina, Columbia, etc. Topics or areas might include survey results (e.g. reports on new languages & dialects or updating of information on inaccurate or vague older survey data), theoretical or typological linguistics, issues in language survival, descriptive linguistics (especially "grammar fragments", i.e. sketches of whole grammars or parts of grammars that are too large for other journal outlets, but too small to be published as separate monographs), sociolinguistics, historical and comparative linguistics, and other areas of relevance to the classification, history, and general understanding of Amazonian languages and their contributions to development of ideas on human language. **JAL** also welcomes articles on issues of language preservation and revival.

All submissions will be rigorously reviewed by members of the editorial board and/or outside referees as needed. Works may be submitted in Portuguese, English, Spanish, or French, but if accepted must be translated into English for publication. There is no absolute size limit on mss., but the maximum suggested size is 40-60pp double-spaced. Contributors should attempt to follow the LSA stylesheet carefully (this is not required for initial submissions, but will be for accepted mss.).

There are three motivations for the establishment of yet another journal. First, many of the types of article we are looking for, as mentioned above, are less likely to be published by other journals. Second, since so little is known about Amazonian languages, it is important to have an authoritative, central source of information on these languages. Finally, research on Amazonian languages has been increasing over the last few years such that for the first time in the history of Amazonian studies we believe that there is a sufficient amount of high-quality research being conducted to warrant a separate journal.

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THE JOURNAL OF AMAZONIAN LANGUAGES VOLUME ONE

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to present this first issue of the **Journal of Amazonian Languages (JAL)**. There are a number of reasons why the launching of a journal dedicated to the study of Amazonian languages is timely and ought to be useful to both researchers who specialize in research on Amazonian languages as well as to the general community of linguists. First, the number of researchers, funded projects, and centers of study of Amazonian languages are growing rapidly in quantity and quality. In the U.S., there are now researchers at Rice University, The University of Oregon, The University of North Carolina, and The University of Pittsburgh. In Brazil, there are respectable centers at the Museu Goeldi at Para, the Museu Nacional in Rio, the Federal University of Goias, the University of Brasilia, and the State University of Campinas, among others. Similar growth seems to be occurring in other countries. The need for a publication outlet dedicated to this research, one able to serve as a centralized source of information on these languages was a major impetus in my desire to launch **JAL**. The second principal justification for founding **JAL** has been the important impact that Amazonian research has had on linguistic theory. The publications of Desmond Derbyshire and Geoffrey Pullum on object-initial languages and their subsequent efforts in editing the **Handbook of Amazonian Languages** have been very important in directing senior and junior scholars into research on these languages (R.M.W. Dixon, p.c., credits the **Handbook of Amazonian Languages** as a decisive factor in the inauguration of his own research on Amazonian languages).

Amazonian languages have been studied since the 1500s. From words gleaned by Portuguese sailors from the Tupinambá who inhabited villages scattered along thousands of miles of Brazilian coastline, to conversations transcribed by the French Calvinist missionary, Jean de Lery and the brilliant grammatical and lexical work of the Portuguese Jesuit, Padre José de Anchieta, the discovery and study of Amazonian languages and peoples has had an important impact on the Western mind - in philosophy, theology, anthropology, and linguistics, to name the most affected disciplines.

Like many endangered languages of the Americas, Amazonian languages proved robust initially in the presence of Europeans and their languages. As Guarani remained first dominant over then equal to Spanish in what is current-day Paraguay, so Tupinambá, a closely related Tupi-Guarani language, survived even the death of the people whose language it originally was. As many of the Jesuits had learned Tupinambá, they began to teach it to other indigenous peoples, rather than take the time to learn the large number of other indigenous languages that they encountered. This latinized, creole version of Tupinambá became popular throughout Brazil, coming to be known as *Nheengatu* ('good tongue'). Its popularity grew to such an extent that King João V of Portugal prohibited its use in the early 18th century, in order to revive and guarantee the use of Portuguese.

In the twentieth century, the vast bulk of the documentation of Amazonian languages still results from the efforts of missionaries, although, happily, professional linguists are taking on a growing share of this work. In the USA, the number of linguists specializing in research on Amazonian languages and holding tenure-stream appointments in linguistics departments at research universities has grown from exactly two in 1988 (Doris Payne at the University of Oregon and me at the University of Pittsburgh) to at least four now, including Spike Gildea at Rice University and Megan Crowhurst at the University of North Carolina. Four is still a small number, but new doctoral students are being trained in Amazonian research and one hopes that the number of researchers on Amazonian languages from around the world will grow substantially over the next few years. This of course depends on employment and tenure opportunities

for people engaged in such research, so it is also hoped that departments of Anthropology and Linguistics around the world will recognize the scientific urgency and unique value of the study of Amazonian languages in their hiring decisions.

Amazonian languages have increased our understanding of universal phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Our debt as scientists to these languages is already large and growing annually. However, the impact of Amazonian languages on linguistic theorizing has been less than might have been expected. The reason for this falls partially under what Tony Kroch (p.c.) once referred to as the 'data-purification' problem. When data are discovered which could alter the development of linguistic theory, the immediate questions to ask are, 'Are the data reliable?' and 'Is the analysis accurate and well-argued?' When few, if any, other people have access to the data, claims are extremely difficult to evaluate. So, unlike, say, work on European languages where the data can be verified with relative ease, and thus the data are in principle more able to be evaluated, the 'purity' of the Amazonian data can be less reliable. Another reason that studies of Amazonian languages have had a relatively small impact on linguistic theory (at least in Europe and North America) is that the bulk of studies of these languages has appeared in relatively obscure publication outlets, in languages less widely spoken or read (at least by theoretical linguists).

JAL cannot solve all of these problems. But it can help. By providing rigorous review, readers can at least be assured that the quality of argumentation in all **JAL** articles will be high and that authors will have had to answer probing questions about the nature of the data used in their studies. By providing a North American financial and editorial base, it is hoped that important work by researchers outside of North America will receive greater attention from the international linguistics community. At least as other linguists become aware of the data and analyses of these languages, they can decide how and whether it needs further testing.

Perhaps, all Amazonian languages are endangered for one of two reasons. The first is a common one, namely, that speakers of some languages are ceasing to speak an indigenous language and switching to the national language. The second is less common and more serious - although some of these languages are spoken by all members of relatively monolingual populations, these populations are themselves in danger of extinction. Groups such as the Juma (eight living speakers), the Maimandé (less than sixty speakers), the Banawá (less than eighty speakers), and the Pirahã (around two hundred speakers) all may have died out in the next few decades unless they receive significant outside assistance, at the very least in securing their land rights and preventing further incursions of outside settlers. To be realistic, in light of these facts, as sad as it sounds, one of the most important goals of **JAL** is to contribute to the historical record of these languages for posterity, as studies conducted in the next few years may be the last opportunity available to document the structures of these languages. More positively, it is hoped that **JAL** will as a forum for articles on language preservation in Amazonia.

I would be very grateful to readers for suggestions on improving both the form and content of the journal. Also, the journal can only succeed if fieldworkers and others submit resources for review, so I do hope that the excellent articles of this first number will serve to attract other submissions.

A final note: each of the articles in this first issue is the result of original field work by (at least one of) the authors.

WARI' PHONETIC STRUCTURES

Margaret R. MacEachern, Barbara Kern and Peter Ladefoged

This paper describes the phonetic characteristics of Wari', an endangered language spoken in Brazil. Wari' has an otherwise unattested vowel inventory (i, y, e, ø, a, o). The qualities of stressed and stressless vowels are described in terms of their formant frequencies; variation in the production of these vowels, both within and across speakers, is discussed. Voice onset time values for the stop consonants are given, and various unusual phenomena such as the presence of contrastive glottalization, and the realization of two sounds — roughly characterized as alveolar tap and post-alveolar fricative — which vary considerably across speakers). The location of main phrasal stress is briefly discussed.

The Wari' language is spoken along the Pacaas Novas river in Western Rondonia, Brazil (see Figure 1). Everett and Kern (in press) state that there are about 1,300 speakers of the language; a 1986 Summer Institute of Linguistics survey places the number at between 990 and 1147 (Grimes 1988). Voegelin and Voegelin 1978 place Wari' (Pacas Novas) in their Arawakan: Chapacura-Wanhaman: Guapore: Madeira grouping, along with the extinct languages Jarú and Tora(z), and extant Urupa (Txapacura). Grimes 1988 categorizes Wari' (Oro Wari, Pakaasnovos, Jarú, Uomo, Pakaanovas, Pacaas-Novos, Pakaanova, Pacahanovo) as a Chapacura: Madeira language, and describes it as isolated. (Note also that Grimes lists Jarú as an alternate name for Wari', rather than as a distinct language.) Everett and Kern (in press) and Ladefoged and Everett (in press), which are the only other publications on this language, point out that another Chapacuran language, Oro Win, was spoken in an adjacent area, but there are now only five living speakers in Brazil and perhaps a few more in Bolivia. They note that the only other living Chapacuran language is Moré, which is spoken by a single elderly speaker.



Figure 1. The location of the Wari' language.