The Aymara Indian population in the Yungas area, north-west Bolivia, often become monolingual. In their traditional multilingualism, they live in a dialectal area, where several languages are spoken — the Quechua, the Aymara, and the Quechua spoken in the highlands of the Cordillera. This area is known for its unique linguistic diversity and cultural richness.

Chapter 3

Traditional Multilingualism and Language Endangerment

Language maintenance, social consciousness, and cultural identity play a crucial role in the preservation of multilingualism. However, in recent years, there has been a decline in the use of many languages due to various factors such as education, globalization, and economic development. This decline affects not only the linguistic diversity of a community but also its social and cultural identity.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the factors that contribute to the loss of multilingualism and to discuss the strategies that can be employed to maintain and promote linguistic diversity. The chapter focuses on the Aymara community in the Yungas, a region in Bolivia, where multilingualism is still prevalent.

The Aymara language is an important part of the cultural identity of the Aymara people. However, due to the dominance of Spanish in education and media, the use of Aymara is declining. The chapter examines the challenges faced by the Aymara community in maintaining their linguistic diversity and suggests solutions to address these challenges.

In conclusion, the preservation of multilingualism is essential for the maintenance of cultural diversity and the preservation of linguistic heritage. The Aymara community in the Yungas is a case study of how multilingualism can be maintained in a region where it is still prevalent, despite the challenges faced by the community.

Alexandra Y. Atienza

La Trobe University
The basic rule of language choice throughout the Vaupés area is that one should speak the interlocutor’s own language. Descent is strictly patrilineal, and consequently, one identifies with one’s father’s language. According to the language ‘etiquette’ of the area, one is supposed to speak the language one identifies with — that is, one’s father’s language — to one’s siblings, father and all his relatives, and mother’s language to one’s mother and her relatives. However, during past decades the traditional language transmission in the Brazilian Vaupés has been affected by a number of factors. When Salesian missionaries established themselves in the area in the early 1920s, they imposed Western-style schooling on the Indians, forcing children into boarding schools where they were made to speak just one language of the area, Tucano. Salesians aimed at ‘civilising’ Indians. This implied not only making them into ‘good Christians’. Salesians also considered the traditional multilingualism of the area a ‘pagan’ habit, and strove to make Indians monolingual ‘like other christianised people in the world’. The Tucano language was chosen because it was, numerically, a majority language. Salesian missionaries also practiced forced relocation of Indian settlements closer to mission centres — where the Indians could be more easily controlled — and amalgamation of different settlements, eliminating the traditional longhouse system and introducing European-style nuclear family houses. Another reason for the disintegration of traditional multilingualism was a breakdown of traditional father-child interaction; with the needs for cash-flow, all the able-bodied men would go off to work for Brazilians — undertaking such tasks as collecting rubber and gold mining — and as the result children would have a considerably reduced degree of exposure to their father’s language. This resulted in the spread of Tucano, and, to a lesser extent, of other Eastern-Tucano languages, to the detriment of Tariana.

What happened during the last 100 years is the following. All the groups in the Vaupés are hierarchically organised into ‘sibs’ (these differ from each other culturally — in their versions of origin myths — and linguistically — they speak somewhat different dialects). The sibs that were hierarchically ‘higher’ tended to get closer to powerful white people. Consequently, within the ethnic Tariana now only one, lowest-ranking sib called Wamiarikune has preserved their language.

Tariana is an obsolescent language. It is not being learnt by children. The younger generation of Tariana speakers prefer to use Tucano when speaking among themselves or to their wives. They consistently use Tariana only when speaking to the members of their father’s families. Table 1 below illustrates these points, showing a gradual shift from multilingualism, among sixty to eighty year olds, to monolingualism, among young people, through a stage of bilingualism observed for those aged between 30 and 50. Basically the same situation has been observed in Piratapuya (for instance, the village of Uluri on the Vaupés River) and in Desano-speaking villages.

Table 1: Multilingualism in Northwest Amazonia: the Tariana community of Santa Rosa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Older generation</th>
<th>60-80 years of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mother’s tribe and language:</td>
<td>Piratapuya, Tucano, Wanano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father’s tribe and language:</td>
<td>Tariana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages spoken:</td>
<td>Tariana, also Piratapuya, Tucano, Wanano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understand:</td>
<td>Língua geral (an old lingua franca, now extinct), little Portuguese, little Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wives speak:</td>
<td>Tariana, Piratapuya, Tucano, Wanano, Kubeo, some Baniwa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Younger generation</th>
<th>30-50 years of age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mother’s tribe and language:</td>
<td>Piratapuya, Tucano, Wanano, Kubeo, Baniwa</td>
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<td>father’s tribe and language:</td>
<td>Tariana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages spoken:</td>
<td>Tariana, also Piratapuya, Tucano, Wanano, some Kubeo, some Baniwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good to passable Portuguese, some speak reasonable Spanish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wives speak:</td>
<td>Tucano</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ENDANGERMENT IN THE EAST SEABECK MANAMBU AREA

Traditional Multilingualism and Language

Table 2. Language Shifts: Traditional vs. English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speakers' attitudes</td>
<td>Community members feel strongly about maintaining their traditional languages and cultures.</td>
<td>Community members prefer English for daily communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominance</td>
<td>Community languages dominate in schools and community settings.</td>
<td>English is dominant in schools and community settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Community identity is strongly tied to their traditional language and cultural heritage.</td>
<td>Identity is tied to English-speaking identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education primarily in traditional languages.</td>
<td>Education primarily in English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can draw the following preliminary conclusion. A traditionally multilingual area becomes bilingual with a strong majority in bilingual.
Table 2: Traditional multilingualism in the Manambu speaking areas (East Sepik)

**Older generation** (60-80 years of age)
- Manambu
- Iatmul (for trade and ritual purposes)
- Kwoma (good knowledge; trade purposes)
- little Tok Pisin

**Younger generation** (30-50 years of age) (in the village)
- Manambu (little Iatmul; little Kwoma)
- good knowledge of Tok Pisin
- some knowledge of English

**Younger generation** (20-50 years of age) (city dwellers)
- Manambu (little Iatmul; little Kwoma)
- good knowledge of Tok Pisin
- good knowledge of English

**Their children** (in the village)
- good knowledge of Tok Pisin
- passable knowledge of Tok Pisin
- some knowledge of Manambu

**Their children** (city dwellers)
- good knowledge of English
- passable knowledge of Tok Pisin
- little knowledge of Manambu

Thus, in this area the patterns of traditional multilingualism are replaced by bilingual patterns; and the younger generation tends to become monolingual.

Disruption of traditional multilingual areas in a situation of ‘advanced language death’ (Larsen 1984: 210-5) has been described for a few other regions of the world, e.g. village of Rodenils south of the Danish-German border in the extreme north-west of the Federal Republic of Germany (Kreis Nordfriesland), with five varieties: Standard German, North Frisian, Low German and South Jutlandish. There is a strong tendency towards Germanisation, which can be illustrated with the following:

1. **1st phase** (70-89 years of age): High German/Low German/Frisian/Jutlandish
2. **2nd phase** (30-69 years of age): High German/Low German
3. **3rd phase** (20-29 years of age): High German

“A period of bilingualism seems to have intervened between the stage of extreme multilingualism and that of monolingualism” (Larsen 1984: 215). The actual situation also included some strengthening of Low German due to an influx of refugees speaking Low German.

4. **LINGUISTIC CONSEQUENCES OF LANGUAGE LOSS**

We have seen that the loss of multilingualism in the situation of language endangerment goes through reduction to bilingualism and then to monolingualism, depending on age groups. The linguistic consequences are of two kinds.

4.1 **language change and reduction of spheres of knowledge**

In Amazonia this implies loss of cultural knowledge and attrition of certain archaic morphological patterns. The surviving languages tend to become structurally more similar to the dominant one. For instance, Tarinara rapidly loses morphological structures that have no equivalents in Tucano, e.g. morphological reflexive-reciprocal, morphological causative of transitive verbs and irregular gender forms of demonstratives. These survive only in very archaic traditional stories which young people just do not know. Language obsolescence may, however, involve some grammatical enrichment rather than straightforward loss; obsolescent languages can be innovative in that they develop new categories and new terms within already existing categories (see Aikhenvald in this volume and Dorian 1999).
LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT AND LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE

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