

Comparison of Cinta Larga and Gavião

Preliminary Version

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* The original version of this paper was made available in 1976 as No. 024 of the Arquivo Linguístico (Summer Institute of Linguistics, Brasília, DF). This is an edited version, modified in various ways to make it more readable and clearer; but the original data and analyses have been faithfully maintained.

The two informants used were Chambete Barros, a Gavião of about 30 years, and Vintinho, a Cinta Larga of probably 18 years. They had been in contact at the workshop, at meals, etc., for some weeks. Horst Stute and Clive and Trisha Sandberg provided data and valuable comments for Gavião and Cinta Larga respectively. Everything described here was recorded on tape. Eunice Burgess was present during all tests except for some word list checks. She has read the report and concurs with its findings.

I. Conversation

Horst began speaking to the two in Gavião about a bow and arrows which Clive gave to the informants to hold. Horst dropped out of the conversation after only a few sentences. Chambete and Vintinho continued then for 15-20 minutes, talking about (Horst later told us) bows and arrows, hunting, what animals one kills with which arrows. Chambete led the conversation almost all the time. After a while then, Horst reentered the conversation to ask Vintinho to tell about how the Cinta Larga (CL) hunt. Vintinho did this and initiated conversation for the next few minutes. At no time did either appear to be having any trouble understanding; neither slowed down or seemed to make any allowances for the other.

After they finished, we asked if there were any difficulties. They said 'no' but that they had noted words which were different in the two languages. All during their conversations throughout the afternoon, one of the topics they most enjoyed was comparing words that are different in the two languages. Throughout the remainder of the afternoon whenever there were lapses between the various things we were checking, the two conversed with apparent pleasure.

II. Gavião Comprehension of CL Text.

One text was played but Sandbergs, Horst, everyone agreed that its sound quality was bad and therefore would hardly serve as a test of comprehension. As soon as it ended, Chambete and Vintinho began to discuss what it was about, so on two counts the text was thrown out as a text in itself. The two did discuss its contents animatedly, however.

A second text was played, stopping after each phrase for Chambete to give the gist in Portuguese. He never appeared to feel that he did not understand, and always commented on what he had heard.

For several reasons, however, this test was not as good as it might have been. One problem was that the content of the text was not at all concrete. It mostly consisted of the narrator saying repeatedly why she was saying what she was saying -- but very little in the way of events.

Chambete did follow the gist of the text however, that the speaker was talking because others were talking about her, but that she wasn't afraid. There were several things which Chambete said which did not jibe with the Portuguese glosses Tricia had received from CL's, but she did not feel at all sure that the CL glosses were the more accurate, given the difficulty of expressing outside the culture and a language things which are very closely tied to the indigenous culture. This difficulty was also apparent in Chambete's attempts to give a good Portuguese translation for the text.

III. Sentence Repetition

Gavião repeating CL: Without being asked to, Chambete repeated most of the phrases of the text he listened to. He repeated effortlessly, quickly and as far as I could tell, exactly, even in some quite long phrases.

CL repeating Gavião: A short Gavião text by Chambete (3-4 minutes) was played for Vintinho, stopping at pauses. He repeated as easily and well as Chambete had done.

IV. CL Comprehension of Gavião Text

After repeating the phrases, we asked Vintinho to tell us the story in Portuguese or CL -- to no avail. Then we asked questions in Portuguese, then Gavião, also to no avail. He just grinned. Then the text was played again. He had heard it only in a choppy version while repeating, we realized. Horst asked him to tell the story. He did, in CL to Horst, and included all of the seven or eight events telling about how a jaguar was killed, what was done with the skin, etc. Chambete gave enthusiastic nods as Vintinho told the events.

V. Comparison of Word Lists from the Two Languages

From a long list of Cinta Larga words which Clive had used for checking phonology, I chose 80 that I thought would be fairly easy to elicit from the Gavião informant. Horst elicited and tape-recorded the words. Clive taped the CL words. The 80 English words produced a total of 121 words inasmuch as the informants sometimes gave synonyms. For example, for the item 'possum' one gave the word for a big possum and one gave the word for small possum.

On October 22, I played the tape of the Gavião word list for the CL informant, stopping the tape after each word. The glosses given on the tape were in Portuguese. He was asked to repeat the word and tell us if that was the word the CL used for the Portuguese gloss or if the CL word was different. It was not totally clear if he understood the instruction on the first 10-15 items, but after that we were sure that he did.

On October 23, the same procedure was followed, playing the CL first for the Gavião informant. This time, however, the glosses were in English. I asked him if the Gavião had a word like the one on the tape and if so, what did it mean. It became apparent after only a few items that this was not the ideal procedure because of there being either no context or a misleading context produced by the previous word. In a few cases there was enough phonological similarity between two consecutive words in the list to (wrongly) suggest to the informant that he should be thinking of them as related in meaning. After observing this, I began to give general clues as to meaning in cases where the word was not immediately identified. Giving the specific Portuguese gloss would not have made the check any less valid, but I wanted to see if he could identify the words without this.

Of all the lexical items checked, there are none which do not have at least one synonym in common in the two languages. Both informants repeated all the words effortlessly. In the six cases listed below, one or the other language does not have a cognate for one of the synonyms used in the other, or there is some difference in the semantic field taken in by a term used in both languages. Other than these six, each of the words on the list is used in both languages with either the identical or almost identical meaning.

1. oar CL wara'

Gavião kõnyã. The verbal form of kõnyã also means 'dig out with ax/break up soil' in G. This is its only meaning in CL. The verb form of CL wara is used in G for 'paddle water', but the nominal form is not used for oar.

2. CL G
- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| drink water | <u>iterba</u> | <u>ipapba</u> |
| water to drink | <u>itet</u> parat | <u>ipap</u> parat |

Both informants knew how the other language expressed these, but the tet vs. pap distinction is a real difference in vocabulary item used. An alternate expression for 'drink water' tsiba is used in both languages.

Tet is 'real', pap is 'raw' in other contexts in both languages.

3. star

G. distinguish a gatti kɨp 'individual star(s)' and joi kɨp 'a group of stars'.

CL used joi kɨp for both.

4. blue/green

Both languages have kere. Gavião, but not CL, also has tsiroi. What the distinction is, is unknown as yet.

5. yes

Both languages have boa and atea. Gavião has awa and abona also, which CL does not have. (Note: This is a difficult kind of thing to elicit, i.e., the different shades of meaning involved with affirmative replies.)

6. lip

Both languages have gopepo for 'lip'. CL, but not G, also uses go dzerek which means in both 'skin of my mouth'.

All except eight of the words were, as far as I could perceive, identical phonologically. The following phonological differences were noted.

<u>Gavião</u>		<u>Cinta Larga</u>	<u>Comment</u>
wiji	'bathe'	wigi	j-g correspondence
pe. ma ki	'work'	bwe ma ki	Horst says that in Gavião <u>pwe</u> is sometimes used.

<u>Gavião</u>		<u>Cinta Larga</u>	<u>Comment</u>
o. kini	'_____ see'	oikini	Horst says that in G. 'see' may alternately have <u>i</u> , i.e., be identical to CL.
ta. kini	'_____ see'	taikini	
medat	'your heads'	me <u>y</u> adat	
papá	'father'	peoba	
bolip kabe	'pacu' (a fish)	bolip kabe <u>o</u>	
dzag <u>a</u> bekã	'cockroach'	same without medial -ga-	Added morpheme -ga-
ibakorin	'fork of corner post'	ipkorin	

Prenasalization of stops in Gavião is regularly lighter than in Cinta Larga. There is considerable variation among individual speakers as to how heavy the prenasalization, especially among the Cinta Larga.

WORD LIST

Most of the forms are as they were written by Horst, in a semi-phonemic writing system. A few I wrote as I heard them, a few I took from Clive's lists, sometimes making small changes in orthography used. This list is not intended to say anything about the phonology involved, just to make it clear what lexical items were being compared.

two	padzakip
my foot	bi
sole of my foot	bi yambe
underneath my foot	bi patã
thatch (palha)	pasap sep
thatch of açai palm	biipi
our feet	pabi topi (excl)
outside the house (no terreiro)	bereba abi
outside	kaapi
I am going to take a bath	vidzi oma ka
dog	abilí
work	pe. ma ki
cornerpost	ipito (ipitoea)
fork of cornerpost	korinaki ibakorin
sister	ombat, attí
sky	gat'pi
moon	gatti

you came	(emalo) emaloa
your feet	mě pi
my blood	ōndzit'
white-lipped peccary (queixada)	mepit
armband	babekɨp
white	kit'
one	mō nt' added -zit 'only'
only (sozinho)	mōngɨt' / dete
paddle (remo)	kōnzā (hoe in CL) kutsi, wara wará
heavy	pati
drink	(tsi 'liquid') pabit iterba, tsi iterba
drink water	i pap ba xi ba otkinima
	i ter ba
see	o.kini
see me	e.kini
see you	ta.kini
see them	o.kini ma
he saw me	e.kini ma
he saw you	ta.kini ma
he saw him	watkinĩ
I saw	pawatkinĩ
we see	tawatkinĩ
they see	o.mi
my nose	sa.mi
her nose	e.mi
your (sg) nose	me.mi
your (pl) noses	to.mi
our (excl) noses	pa.mi
our (incl) noses	ta.mĩ
their noses	māngere, narappim
morning	be, waaniin
road	ondzapepotsep, jappɨppokkɨɨlet
her eyebrow	pokāindiŋ, wannĩ
smoke	nekosōn, goriaba
possum	ĩnĩ
hammock	bepo dzipo go pepo, godzerek
lip	

yesterday	mantet
axe	dabe
my hand	babe
our hands (incl)	pababe
my skin	dzerek
my shin	dzalame
cockroach	dzagabekã, majapope
black	pe.p
paper	batsep
blue	tsiroit, kere
yes	boa atea ana abona
pacu (a fish)	bolip kape
I yawn	goa mia
chin	gõ nbe
cooked manioc	tsiboza tsom
coati	dzaboli, čoiap
fish	bolip
hen egg	anã'n kap mangap
mother	gait ondi titi
grass	pazasep
mosquito	tsikiripã
stars	gatti kíp, joi kíp
my wrist	babe kíp
good water	ipap parat, itet parat
mist, fog	waakìts
sweet potato	betĩñã
your (pl) houses	metsap
my house	dzap
our (incl) houses	pa dzap
your (sg) arrows	endzap
our (incl) arrows	pandzap
arrow	dzap
their arrows	tadzap
your heads	medat, meyadat
her eye	dzakap
we (incl) eat	paneḅa

he walks

cold

father

aberta manga

xitaka tãgĩb±p

odzait papa peoba odzop