Bilingual

CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Education:

An Experience in Peruvian Amazonia

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DALLAS

Funds for publishing *Bilingual Education* were supplied by:
The Center for Applied Linguistics
The M. E. Foundation, and
The Summer Institute of Linguistics.

ISBN 0-88312-918-3

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 81-51059

18
TRAINING NATIVE AUTHORS IN WRITERS' WORKSHOPS

Martha A. Jakway

NEED

One of the major goals of bilingual education is that vernacular speakers become fluent readers of their own language. To accomplish this, a large body of vernacular literature is necessary, both to help develop reading skills initially and to help maintain them. In addition, such a body of literature fosters the author's pride in his language and culture and thereby helps to create a positive self-image. Last, but not least, vernacular literature is essential to the continued use of the language in its written form.

In Peru, field linguists have endeavored to produce a basic reading series for each viable vernacular language studied,[1] and have prepared translations of health manuals, community development manuals, Scripture, and other informational books. Such a limited quantity of literature, however, is hardly sufficient to accomplish the aforementioned goals. What was needed was an authentic literature produced by the vernacular speakers themselves.

To train vernacular speakers in the skills necessary to produce their own literature, writers' workshops were developed.[2]

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1 For languages such as Resígaro, which is currently spoken by only eleven people, vernacular literature has not been prepared, as it is obvious that such languages are about to become extinct.

2 These workshops were first developed in Mexico. See Dorothy Herzog, "A Literature Workshop: Part I," *Notes on Literacy* 17:2, 1974, and Margaret Wendell, "Writer Training Workshops," *Notes on Literacy* 18:19–22, 1975.

The workshops brought together potential authors to share experiences and to learn how to set down ideas effectively in writing, as well as to learn the mechanics of typing, stencil cutting, duplicating, and putting a book together.

GOAL

The ultimate goal of the workshops was that the participants become contributors to their society by producing various types of literature—personal experience stories, descriptions, instructional manuals, histories of the culture, biographies, newspapers, legends, folktales, origin stories, primers, advanced readers and other books for the schools, and translations of materials from Spanish.

EXPERIENCE TO DATE

Eight writers' workshops have been held among various vernacular groups in Peru, the first in the mountain town of Ayacucho. At this workshop, fifteen Quechua speakers from six different dialects met for three months. Later, a two-month workshop was held for fifteen Aguarunas in their tribal area. Asháninca Campa and two San Martín Quechua workshops were held in their respective areas, while two two-month workshops for six more dialects of Campa were held at Yarinacocha. The eighth workshop, held in the mountains, served as a follow-up for the Quechua writers who attended the workshop in Ayacucho.

Since I was more directly involved in the Aguaruna and the first Quechua workshops, most of the experiences referred to here are taken from those seminars.

Staff

Two Aguaruna men, former bilingual teachers, were trained specifically to teach in the Aguaruna workshop and were given additional training by the SIL literacy worker as the workshop progressed. Teachers for the Quechua workshop in Ayacucho

were the literacy workers themselves. The San Martín Quechua workshop was supervised by an SIL field worker, but was taught by two of the participants from the Quechua workshop in Ayacucho. The remainder of the workshops were taught by literacy personnel.

Participants

The choice of participants was crucial to the ultimate success of the program. Selection included: their knowledge and appreciation of their own culture and language, as well as a positive awareness of the Spanish language and culture; a wide background of experiences from which to draw; some facility with words; and a desire to express themselves in writing.

To help determine who would best meet these requirements, we asked those who expressed an interest in participating in the Aguaruna workshop to submit a story they had written. These stories were often the determining factor in the final selection.

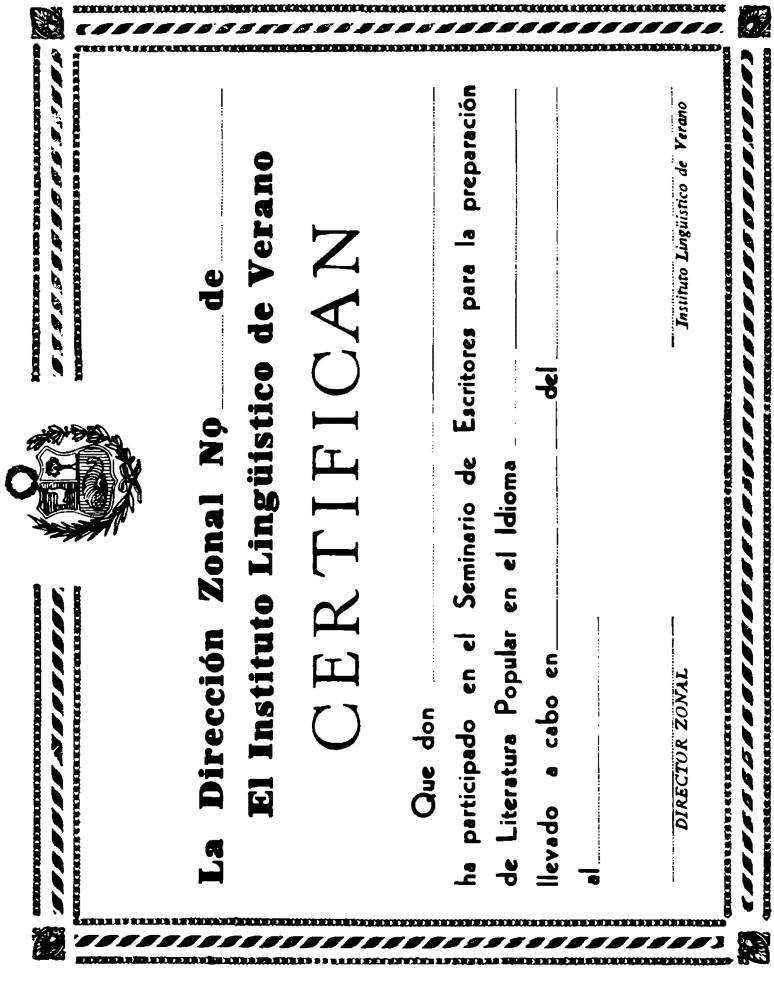
We also tried to choose participants from many different areas so that the literature would represent the whole vernacular group and stimulate a wider production of materials.

Stages of writing

In discussing the production of vernacular literature, Wendell (1975) and Herzog (1974) describe four stages of writing, from the easiest to the most difficult.

First stage writing deals with topics within the author's experience and within the culture of both the author and the reader.

- *Second stage writing* deals with topics within the experience of the author but outside his own culture. Writing at this stage is more difficult to express clearly enough so that the reader will understand fully.
- Writing about a topic with which neither the reader nor the author have had experience is considered to be *third stage*



La Dirección Zonal Nº _____ de _____

El Instituto Lingüístico de Verano

CERTIFICAN

Que don _____

ha participado en el Seminario de Escritores para la preparación de Literatura Popular en el Idioma _____

llevado a cabo en _____ del _____

al _____

_____ _____

DIRECTOR ZONAL Instituto Lingüístico de Verano

Figure 18.1. Certificate presented for attendance at a writers' workshop.

writing. Information for this type of literature must be gathered from reading resource materials and/or interviewing persons who are knowledgeable on the subject. This information is then presented in the free idiomatic style of the vernacular.

- Translation, or *fourth stage writing,* is the most difficult because it is not within the experience of the writer or the reader, and both form and style are limited by the original document.

Location

One of the more important factors to be considered in determining the location for each workshop was the stage of writing at which the participants were working. If the majority were working on stage one or stage two materials, the area where the vernacular was spoken provided the type of resource materials needed, and the writer could better test the accuracy and acceptability of his work.

On the other hand, if the majority of the participants were working on third and fourth stage materials, where the writing depended on resource materials outside the culture, a location was chosen which provided not only a wealth of resource materials in the form of books and specialists in various fields, but also a whole gamut of new experiences about which to write.

In some vernacular groups, however, lack of reasonably-priced transportation to another location and other factors have made the home area of the group the more advantageous location for the workshop, regardless of the stage at which the participants were working.

Authorization

Once the location for the workshop had been chosen, steps were taken to tie it officially into the existing educational program. In the case of the Aguaruna workshop, for instance, a group of bilingual teachers sent a petition to the area Director of Education, requesting that the workshop be incorporated

into his official yearly plan, and that he designate one of the bilingual school plants as the location and appoint a literacy worker from SIL to serve as official advisor for the workshop.

The area director was delighted to grant these requests and authorized it as an extension course as soon as the literacy advisor submitted a plan for the workshop. The workshop was placed under the administration of the director of the bilingual school where the course was to be held.

When the workshop ended, a final report was filed with the area director, and he and the literacy advisor co-signed the certificates granted those who successfully completed the course (see figure 18.1).

Physical plant

After official permission for the workshop had been granted, a location selected, and dates set, the physical plant was chosen or constructed and the necessary furniture was obtained or built. After holding several workshops where there was barely enough space for each participant, it was concluded that one of the most important considerations in the choice of a physical plant was that there be ample space where more than one activity can take place simultaneously and people can move about freely.

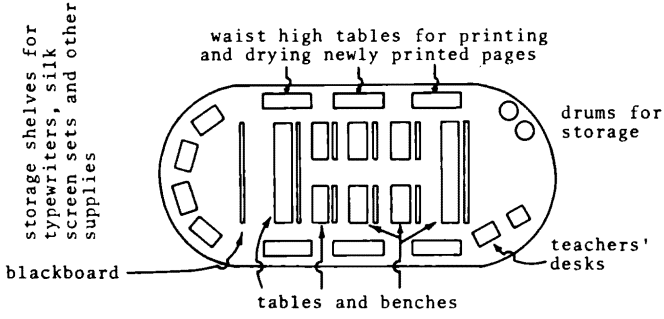


Figure 18.2. Layout of the physical plant for the Aguaruna workshop.

In the case of the Aguaruna workshop, such a building was constructed of native materials (figure 18.2). Storage shelves for typewriters and silk screen sets stretched along the end of the building. Large tables with ample space for typewriters and writing materials were constructed in the center. Care was taken to make them a comfortable height for writing and typing. Silk screen printing was to be done at long, waist-high tables constructed at one side of the building. These same tables were also suitably high for drying freshly printed pages and later for collating books. Fifty-five-gallon drums provided adequate storage for paper and books, keeping them away from moisture, insects, and animals. A blackboard was installed for teaching purposes, and a bulletin board for mounting displays of interest to the participants.

Schedule

The daily schedules for the workshops were flexible, depending on the desires and other responsibilities of the participants as well as on the workshop's location.

Since two of the Campa and the first Ayacucho Quechua writers' workshops were held concurrently with linguistic workshops, half-day sessions were held for the writers, giving them sufficient time to act as language helpers for linguists. Among the San Martín Quechua, the workshop was held only in the morning hours to allow a half-day for the participants to do seasonal harvesting and planting. The Aguaruna workshop was planned for a full-day schedule because the participants had come from some distance and wanted to learn as quickly as possible in order to be free to return to their families and home responsibilities.

In the first Quechua workshop, Thursday was dedicated to field trips, planned to broaden the writers' experience and to provide stage two and three writing materials. Aguaruna writers, on the other hand, felt they wanted to preserve traditional tribal practices and crafts in their literature. So, rather than go on field trips, they invited the older men from the community to teach them about such topics as tribal medicines and

cures, marriage customs, advice of tribal leaders to young men, how to spin thread, and how to make combs, belts, etc. The participants then wrote articles on the material presented and illustrated them. The best of these were selected and printed.

The Aguaruna workshop involved activities lasting all day Monday through Friday and Saturday morning, with Saturday afternoon left free for hunting, fishing, writing, washing clothes, etc. Sundays were also free. Nevertheless, the writers often spent much of this free time practicing their typing and composition. The following are the daily schedules for the two months of the Aguaruna workshop, given here as an example of what might be done in such a workshop.

First Month		Second Month	
8:00	Typing instruction	8:00	Typing instruction and practice
8:30	Typing practice	9:00	Discussion of topics
10:00	Recess	10:00	Recess
10:15	Discussion of topics	10:15	Story writing, working on book projects
11:00	Aguaruna punctuation and grammar	11:45	Aguaruna punctuation and grammar
11:45	Presentation of, and motivation for, writing assignments	12:30	Lunch and rest
12:30	Lunch and rest	2:00	Book projects
2:00	Work on writing projects	5:00	Recreation and rest
5:00	Recreation and rest		

Instruction

Typing. Spanish typing manuals were used in all the workshops; however, an exercise book in the vernacular would have been more appropriate. During the typing instruction period, in addition to the parts of the typewriter and instruction in keys and fingering, processes necessary for making dummies and cutting stencils were also taught. (See Wendell 1975:19–22.)

The teachers oriented workshop participants to the special care required for a typewriter in the jungle. For example, its users must keep it covered with a cloth to keep myriads of

particles (some dead, some alive) from falling into it from the leaf roof. When not in constant use, it needs to be returned to its case and put in a plastic bag away from the humidity. Dried-out ribbons may be reactivated with kerosene.

During the first week, typing practice periods were devoted to simple exercises from the typing book. During the second week, participants began to type all their stories in dummy form and very shortly began typing the dummy for their first book. After the keys and fingering had been mastered, speed tests were given to help increase speed. In addition, writers learned to type letters and address envelopes.

Punctuation. The course in punctuation taught in the Aguaruna workshop included lessons in the use of capital letters, periods, commas, colons, semicolons, dashes, question marks, exclamation marks, and accents, as well as lessons in paragraphing. Since conversation is such an important feature of Aguaruna discourse, special attention had to be given to the punctuation of quotations. Care had to be taken to differentiate between the punctuation of quotations in legends and that of quotations in contemporary literature.[3]

Discussion of topics. The topics chosen to be discussed during a given workshop depended largely on the stage of writing at which the participants were working; the literary types used by the vernacular group; and the interests, needs, and problems of both the participants and the audience for which they were writing. In some groups much time was spent in discussing the worth of the vernacular as an adequate vehicle for the expression of ideas.

Listed below are the topics discussed in the Aguaruna workshop. (For other details concerning discussion topics, see Wendell 1975:12–15.)

What are the goals of the Workshop?
What is Aguaruna literature?
Why do the Aguarunas need a literature of their own?

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3 See Mildred L. Larson, "Punctuating the Translation for Ease of Reading," *Notes on Translation* 60, 1976.

The importance of the Aguaruna language as a means of communication:
  What were the means of communication in the Aguaruna communities before the creation of schools?
  What are the advantages of the written message over the oral one?
  Written vs. oral style
  Written vs. oral literature
What are the types of writing in Aguaruna prose and poetry?
What makes a good story?
  Keep in mind the audience to whom you are writing—age, background, experience, interest.
What are the stages in writing?
  Writing stage one materials
  Writing stage two materials
  Writing stage three materials
    How to interview
    How to take notes on an interview
    How to organize and rewrite the notes
    How to gather information from resource material, organize it, and write it up
  Writing stage four materials
What is a book dummy and how is it made?
  Measuring margins
  Placing illustrations
  Placing page numbers
  Taping pages together
What are the parts of the book and how is each prepared for the dummy?
  How to plan the book cover (figure 18.3)
  How to print capital and small letters by hand
  Making the cover picture relate to the content of the book
  How to make the title page (figure 18.4)
    Centering on the typewriter
  How to write the Spanish summary of the book and its placement in the dummy
  How to make the copyright/publication history page
  How to make the layout dummy (figure 18.5)

How to cut a stencil
Measuring the margins
Typing on the stencil and using correction fluid
Outlining the illustrations
How to print with the silk screen set
How to clean the silk screen set and the stencil
How to collate pages and bind the book
How to send copies to the National Library and the form for writing the cover letter
The cost of book production and setting sales prices for books
Ideas for promoting the sale of books
Planning a newspaper
Writing a newspaper
Planning the closing ceremony

Stage four writing

None of the beginning workshops has advanced very far into stage four writing. Some exercises leading up to translation were done in the Aguaruna workshop. In the first exercises the teacher read a Spanish story to the writers. They discussed the important incidents taking place in the story and then listed them briefly on the blackboard. They were then asked to write the story using the list and comparing it with the original story.

At the end of the second Quechua workshop, eight days were dedicated to the teaching of translation or fourth stage writing. Orientation classes, taught by a translator, emphasized the basic principles of translation and how to apply them. Translation was described as a process of (1) understanding the meaning of the Spanish and (2) expressing the meaning in idiomatic Quechua.

Morning hours were used to teach some of the basic adjustments that need to be made from Spanish to most of the Quechua dialects. These are: (1) passive to active; (2) implicit information to explicit (primarily expanding on items unknown in Quechua culture); (3) abstract nouns to verb phrases (this often involves adding implicit information); (4) use of direct quotes (from indirect discourse or to express attitudes or

feelings); (5) Spanish idioms, i.e., the need to understand the meaning and express it in natural Quechua; (6) use of pronouns; (7) breaking up long sentences and complicated constructions. Each adjustment was taught by working through many simple examples and exercises together during class hours. The participants were then able to check their grasp of the daily lesson by translating a number of one-paragraph animal descriptions in the afternoon hours. Time was given during several morning hours to read the translation assignment in class and to discuss the adjustments which had been made during the translation process.

It soon became apparent that there was a marked difference in the ability and interest of the students. The writers who lacked ability in Spanish had a very difficult time understanding the source material which they were to translate, and it became evident that they would need to study a great deal more Spanish before they could undertake translation. On the other hand, some who knew Spanish well and were very interested made excellent progress, and with more training could become effective translators.

The *Translators' Field Guide*[4] lists a number of simple exercises which can be used to develop the skills in stage four writing:

Materials

The materials needed in a given workshop depend on the number of participants, the local availability of material, the stage of writing being included, and the goals of each workshop. A list of materials ordered for the fifteen participants in the Aguaruna workshop and for their postworkshop writing is given at the end of this chapter.

Challenges to ingenuity. There is much room for creative ingenuity in the isolated jungle workshop where transportation,

4 Alan Healey, ed. *Translators' Field Guide* (Ukarumpa, Papua New Guinea: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1970).

space, and funds are limited. Teachers are always on the lookout for the best, most economical way of carrying out each process. In the Aguaruna workshop the stencil-cutting kit for making pictures included a flattened tin can for backing and a dry ballpoint pen for a stylus. Pie pans, cookie sheets, and squares of masonite have also been used for backing. Old toothbrushes and needles were used to clean the type on the typewriters. *Chambira,* a palm fiber used in making bags and hammocks, was used to hand sew the books together. It's much cheaper and more readily available than commercial thread or staples. When participants in one of the Campa workshops were ready to start typing dummies for their first book, they still didn't have an established alphabet. In order to make the most effective use of time, however, the teacher taught them to cut pictures on stencils, and they used this method to make picture books for beginning readers.

RESULTS

The major results of the writers' workshops have been the large volume and variety of the vernacular books that have been produced. In each workshop at least one, and usually two, books have been produced by each individual writer. There have been a few books produced by a group of authors collectively.

Quechuas have produced books of songs, riddles, jokes, and poetry, as well as books about such topics as pasture grasses, prenatal and postnatal care, Quechua letter-writing form (developed by the author), school, personal experiences, stories for children, Tupac Amaru (a Peruvian hero), how married people should live, trips to Ayacucho and Lima, how an orphan boy became a professional teacher, some legends, and folk tales such as "The Deer and the Turtle," "The Child and the Fox," and "The Foxes and the Burro."

Aguaruna writers have produced books on Aguaruna musical instruments; jungle medicinal herbs; descriptions of traps, some for catching rodents, others for catching birds; how to make stools, blowguns, tote bags, combs, and crowns; how to

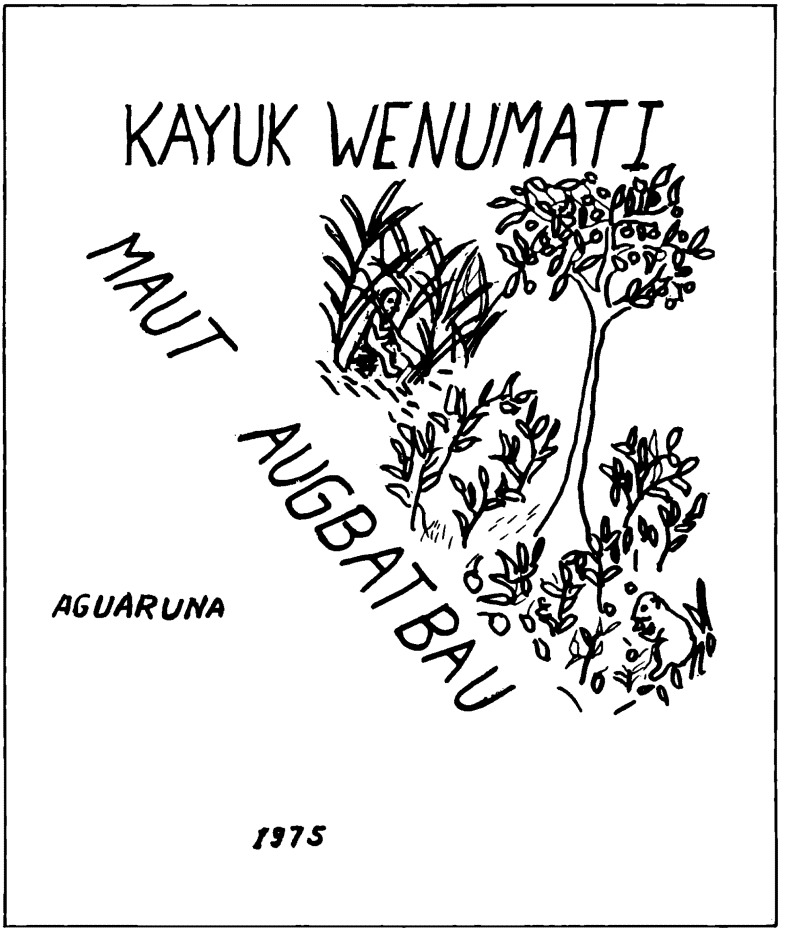
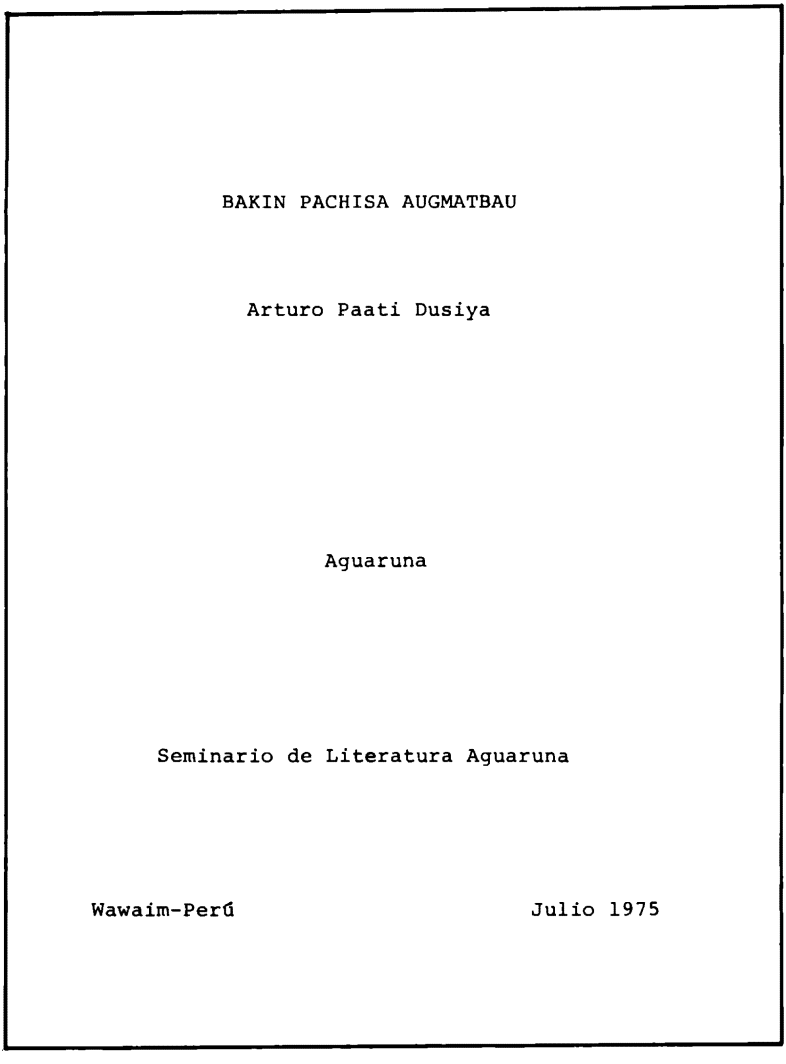


Figure 18.3. Book cover designed by a vernacular-speaking author.


BAKIN PACHISA AUGMATBAU

Arturo Paati Dusiya

Aguaruna

Seminario de Literatura Aguaruna

Wawaim-Perú Julio 1975

Figure 18.4. Title page of a story by an Aguaruna author.

nunik jegamtai shushui nuwan tau:--Yuwaju jui pujusta, tusa tima dui pujau timayi. Nunui pujuttaman shushui tau nuwan:--Yuwaju wika kaim kegken yujai, uchijum chichagkata kaim kegken chuchuken yuwawai tau, tutai dukujishkam uchijin tau:--Uchuchi yuwawaipa auk kiiwiyai tau, tama uchishkam yabaikik ayu tau timayi.

Shushuishkam nuna tii idaiyak, nuna nuwan tau:--Yuwaju, iish inak juka yuwami, ame yuwaju katsujam juwatmin wii chuyaimasuchin jumaktajai tau, wika yuwaju katsumainak yuchaujai tau. Tusa we wenakua jegantaju inak wajamunum.

-12-

Figure 18.5. Sample page of a reader produced at a writers' workshop.

prepare blowgun poison for killing birds and animals; how to prepare paint for the face and teeth; some beliefs concerning natural phenomena (lightning, thunder, rainbows); descriptions of animals from distant places; bird and animal stories; and legends and folk tales such as "How the Marañon River Got Its Name," and "A Man Who Ate an Egg from the Magic Bird."

Aside from the production of books, there were also some intangible results of the writers' workshops. As the Quechua workshop drew to a close, a new, positive attitude toward their language and culture replaced the old, negative one. The Aguarunas were proud to leave their workshop with a quantity of books dealing with various aspects of their changing culture, which would now be preserved for posterity. The books produced in one of the Campa workshops presented a new alphabet to their readers, who were accustomed to reading Spanish and perhaps some of the Asháninca Campa dialect, but not their own dialect.

Many more books have been produced by the vernacular writers since their workshops closed. When the trainees have become even more experienced in producing the freer type of literature, it is hoped that at least some of them will go on to master primer construction techniques and translation techniques to the degree that they can produce their own primers, school materials, and translated materials with little or no consultant help.

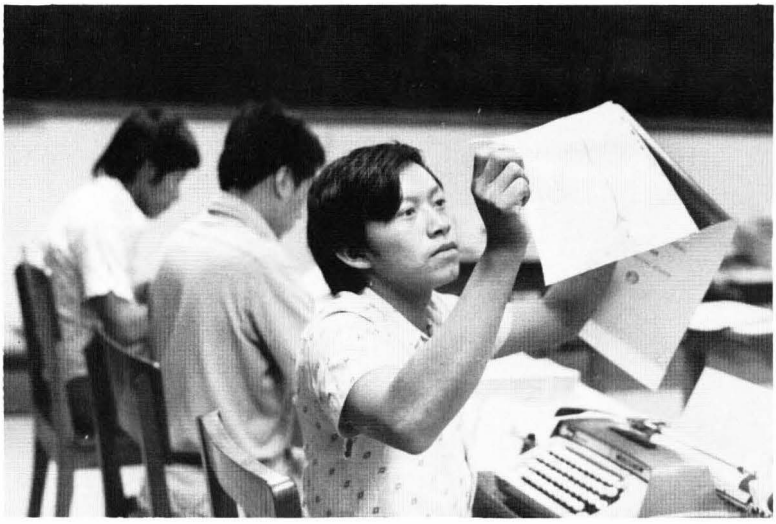
Materials for the Aguaruna Workshop

15	typewriters (a brand which makes good stencils)
15	large plastic bags for storing typewriters
11	silk screen sets, one for each region represented
20	packages of 48 stencils each
250	sheets of poster board for book covers (4 times legal size; newsprint can be used to cut down on expenses)
20,000	sheets legal size newsprint for typing dummies and printing books

15 100-page notebooks for writing stories
15 bottles of stencil correction fluid
15 tin cans to act as backing for cutting pictures on stencils (these can be cut with tin snips and flattened)
15 dry ballpoint pens for cutting pictures on stencils
15 pencil sharpeners
15 instructional manuals in typing (a book of exercises in the vernacular is ideal and can be made quite easily)
15 used toothbrushes for cleaning typewriters
15 bottles of alcohol (4 oz. each) and cotton for cleaning typewriter keys
15 rulers
15 razor blades
15 boxes of paper clips
15 typewriter ribbons
2 gallons of gasoline for cleaning silk screen sets
1 package of carbon paper
15 rolls of Scotch tape for putting together stencils and dummies
40 tubes of printer's ink
15 needles and *chambira* string for sewing books together
6 rolls of masking tape
15 pencils
15 erasers
1 package of chalk
15 manila folders, one for each writer to keep his materials
15 certificates (display 18.1)
1 Spanish dictionary
1 Spanish-Aguaruna dictionary
Assorted resource books in Spanish for writing stage 3 and 4 materials

(Velie, 1977)

At a workshop for indigenous writers, Campa young people learn to use a typewriter and make mimeograph stencils (see chapter 18).



(Velie, 1977)

An author in the making, Carlos Mariano examines the stencil he has just made (see chapter 18).

(Velie, 1977)

Using a simple duplicator, authors make copies of their typewritten books (see chapter 18).

(Velie, 1977)

An author sews together the pages of his book (see chapter 18).