Comparison of Cinta Larga and Gavião

Preliminary Version

By

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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 \textit{wara}'

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

2. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CL</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>drink water</td>
<td>iter\textit{bā}</td>
<td>ipap\textit{ba}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water to drink</td>
<td>itet parat ipap parat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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' \textit{tsiba} is used in both languages.

\textit{Tet} is 'real', \textit{pap} is 'raw' in other contexts in both languages.

3. star

G. distinguish a \textit{gatti kip} 'individual star(s)' and \textit{joï kip} 'a group of stars'.

CL used \textit{joï kip} for both.

4. blue/green

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

5. yes

Both languages have \textit{boa} and \textit{atea}. Gavião has \textit{awa} and \textit{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 \textit{gopepo} for 'lip'. CL, but not G, also uses \textit{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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gavião</th>
<th>Cinta Larga</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wiji</td>
<td>\textit{wigi}</td>
<td>j-g correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pe. ma ki</td>
<td>bwe ma ki</td>
<td>Horst says that in Gavião \textit{pwe} is sometimes used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gavião  Cinta Larga  Comment

o. kini  'see'  oikini  taikini  Horst says that in G. 'see' may alternately have i, i.e., be identical to CL.
ta. kini  'see'

medat  'your heads'  meyadat
papá  'father'  peoba
bolip kabe  'pacu' (a fish)  bolip kabeo
dzagabekà  'cockroach'  same without medial -ga-  Added morpheme -ga-

iɓakorin  '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  padzikip
my foot  bi
sole of my foot  bi yambe
underneath my foot  bi patä
thatch (palha)  pasap sep
thatch of açai palm  biipi
our feet  pabi topi (excl)
outside the house (no terreiro)  bereɓa abi
outside  kaapi
I am going to take a bath  vidzi oma ka
dog  abili
work  pe. ma ki
cornerpost  ipito (ipitoa)
fork of cornerpost  korinaki iɓakorin
sister  ombat, atti
sky  gat'pi
moon  gatti
you came
your feet
my blood
white-lipped peccary (queixada)
armband
white
one
only (sozinho)
paddle (remo)
heavy
drink
drink water

see see me
see you
see them
he saw me
he saw you
he saw him

I saw
we see
they see
my nose
her nose
your (sg) nose
your (pl) noses
our (excl) noses
our (incl) noses
their noses
morning
road
her eyebrow
smoke
possum
hammock
lip

(emalo) emaloa
mě pi
õndzit'
me pit
babekíp
kit'
mõ nt' added -zit 'only'
mõngít' / dete
könzā (hoe in CL) kutsi, wará wará
pati
(tsi 'liquid') paɓit iterɓa, tsi iterɓa
i pap ḃa xi ḃa otkinima
i ter ḃa
o.kini
e.kini
ta.kini
o.kini ma
e.kini ma
ta.kini ma
watkinī
pawatkinī
tawatkinī
o.mi
sa.mi
e.mi
me.mi
to.mi
pa.mi
ta.mī
māngere, narappim
be, waaniin
ondzapepotsep, jappíppokkâlet
pokāindîŋ, wannî
nekos ön, goriaba
înî
bepo dzipo go pepo, godzerek
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>he walks</td>
<td>aberta manga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cold</td>
<td>xitaka tāgībīp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father</td>
<td>odzait papa peoba odzop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>