

## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Status of Akuntsu**

This paper focuses on the status of the Akuntsu language and its documentation. Akuntsu is a member of the Tupari subfamily of Tupían (Cabral and Author, 2004), together with Makuráp, Tuparí, Mekéns, Wayoró and Kepkiriwat (already extinct). Akuntsu is spoken by only six people, all monolinguals, the remnants of a genocide. Akuntsu people were first contacted by FUNAI only in 1995. After that contact, they were free to begin their life again in a small part of the land remaining after an intensive deforestation of the region.

In this paper I report how the fieldwork was conducted, briefly on the structural properties of the language, and on future plans for Akuntsu. Documentation began only in 2004. First, lexical items of many sorts were collected and digitized in the Laboratory of Indigenous Language's (LALI) database. After some fieldwork trips, the morphology and aspects of the syntactic have been better understood. Fieldwork was undertaken twice each year, to stay as long as possible each time with these monolingual Akuntsu people, learning their language and their culture in daily contact. That work resulted in some papers (Cabral and Author 2005; Author and Carvalho 2008) and in an M.A. thesis about the phonology, morphology, and some aspects of the syntactic of Akuntsu language (Author 2008).

According to Rodrigues (1999), in Brazil there are approximately 200 indigenous groups who speak 180 different languages. Some of these languages are spoken by 20,000 people, while others are spoken by fewer than 20 people. Akuntsú is among the latter group; it is among the languages considered most strongly endangered in Brazil, because by the small number of its speakers and because they are not able to pass the native language on to another generation. It is destined to disappear. There are no marriageable men able to marry with the only woman who is of child-bearing age. So, what can be done to save this language from extinction? Is there any way to avoid this drastic loss to the world?

## Bibliography

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