

# Taushiro and the Status of Language Isolates in Northwest Amazonia

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*Fieldwork Forum*

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## 1 Introduction

- Taushiro (ISO 639-3: trr) is a language isolate spoken fluently by one man, Amadeo García García,<sup>1</sup> resident in Intuto on the Tigre River in the northeastern Peruvian region of Loreto
- I carried out 5 8-hour days of targeted fieldwork with him in Iquitos in June 2015
  - Ethnohistory
  - Genealogy
  - Sociocultural practices
  - Lexicon
  - Grammar
- Previous documentation by SIL missionary-linguist Nectalí Alicea includes:<sup>2</sup>
  - a preliminary phonological sketch (Alicea Ortiz 1975a)
  - a sketch grammar and dictionary (Alicea Ortiz 1975b,d)
  - two short texts (Alicea Ortiz 1975c; Alicea Ortiz and García García 1976)
  - brief ethnographic notes (Alicea Ortiz 1976)
- Unusually, no word of Taushiro survives from the colonial period or in the German naturalist Günter Tessmann's (1930) *magnum opus*
- Until the mid-20th century, two extended family groups lived in the remote right-bank tributaries of the Tigre River
  - Contact w/outside was minimal, and the language of daily life was Taushiro
  - Amadeo did not begin to learn Spanish until ~11 years of age
- Historically, Taushiros were surrounded by or occupied territory very close to speakers of:

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<sup>1</sup>I am very thankful to Amadeo for traveling from Intuto to Iquitos to teach me his language and for being willing to collaborate in the future. Miguel Angel Cadenas Cardo and Manuel Berjón Martínez introduced me to José Álvarez Alonso, who graciously offered me his home in Iquitos as a workspace. Wagner Tello Macedo facilitated Amadeo's travel from Intuto, and Herlinda Nolorbe cooked and cleaned for him while in Iquitos. I am grateful to Amalia Skilton for assistance in the processing of phonetic data, although she is not responsible for any of the claims here.

<sup>2</sup>Additionally, a BA (*licenciatura*) thesis (Pérez Ríos 2008) targets motion verbs, largely based on Alicea's work.

- Zaparoan languages (e.g., Andoa, Iquito) – various
- Omurano (isolate, extinct) – O’Hagan field notes
- Urarina (isolate, ~3,000 speakers) – Olawsky (2005, 2006)
- Shiwiar (Jivaroan, ~1,000 speakers) – Fast et al. (1996), fieldwork by M. Kohlberger (U. Leiden)
- Candoshi (isolate, ~1,100 speakers) – Tuggy (1966, 1977, 1981, 1992), fieldwork by S. Overall (James Cook)
- Other isolates are not that far afield:
  - Wao (Ecuador, ~1,700 speakers)
  - Aʔiwa (Peru, extinct) – Michael and Beier (2012)
- We need linguistic evidence for Taushiro’s status as an isolate to counter a literature that relates groups based on cultural or geographic similarity (e.g., Renard Casevitz et al. (1988))
- The goals of this talk are:
  - Report on fieldwork with Amadeo
  - Review Taushiro classification, speakers, and history (§§1.1-2)
  - Describe basic phonological and grammatical phenomena in Taushiro (§3)
  - Compare with related phenomena in Zaparoan, Omurano, and Urarina (§§4-6)
  - Lexical comparison across these languages/Achuar to establish Taushiro as isolate (§7)

## 1.1 Classification

- Taushiro was known until the 1950s as Pinche (see §2), an exonym of unknown origin<sup>3</sup>
  - Until the 1970s was any linguistic data available on Taushiro
- Hervás y Panduro (1800:262) erroneously classified Pinche together with Araro, Chudaviño, Gae, Guazago, Murato, Pabo, Semigae, and Bobonazo
  - Gae and Semigae are Zaparoan and Murato is Candoshian
- Chantre y Herrera (1901:92) classified Pinche with Roamaina, Uspa, Araza, and Neva
  - Roamaina is almost certainly related to Omurano, another isolate
  - Uspa and Araza seem from the colonial literature to have been related to Pinches, but this will never be demonstrable
- Beuchat and Rivet (1908) classify Pinche as Zaparoan (without any linguistic data!)
- Tovar (1961:151) classifies Pinche with Omurano
- Loukotka (1968:156) classifies Pinche with Candoshi
- Kaufman (1994) combines Taushiro with Candoshi and Omurano – voilà!

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<sup>3</sup>For another summary, see: <https://anthroling.wordpress.com/2008/08/21/on-the-classification-of-taushiro/>.

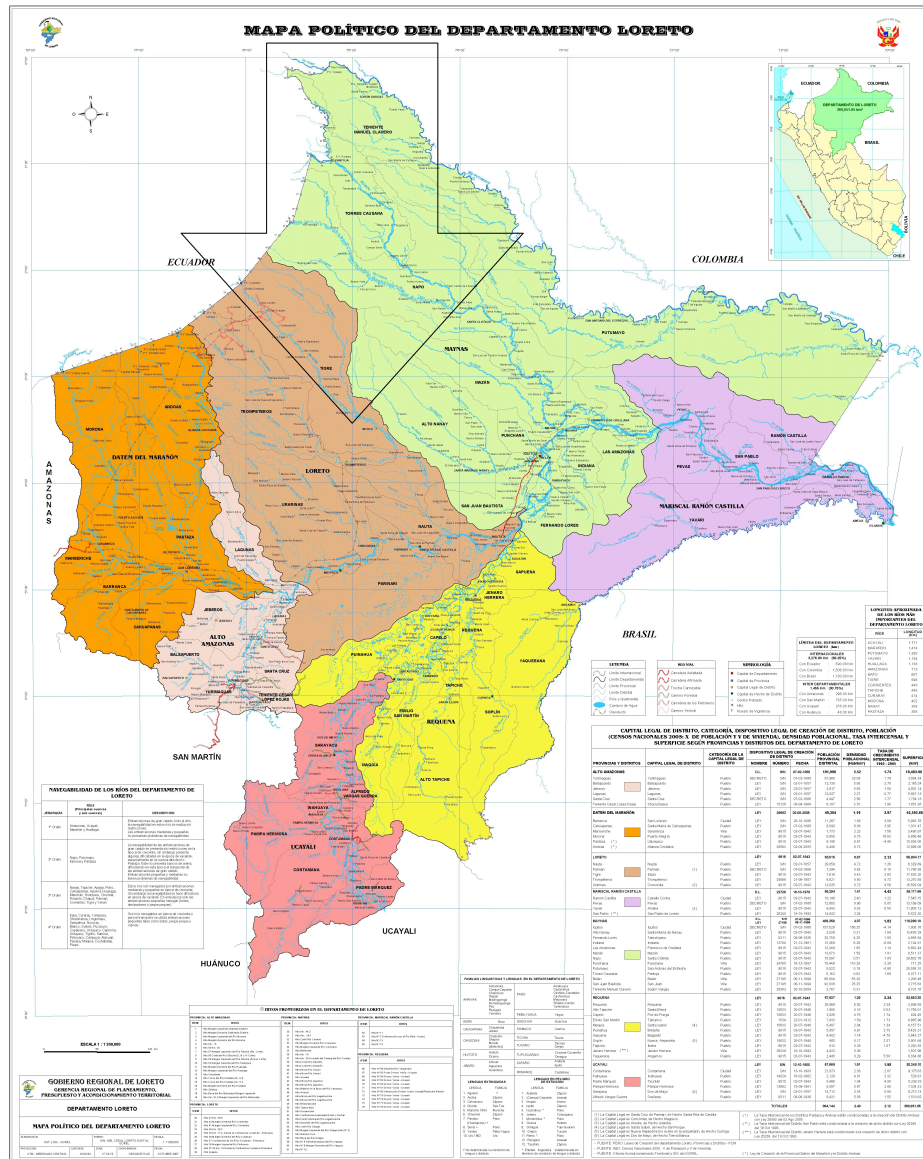


Figure 1: Peruvian Region of Loreto (map courtesy of the Gobierno Regional de Loreto)

- Wise (1999:312) returns to an unconfirmed Zaparoan connection for Taushiro
- Solís Fonseca (2003:200) treats Taushiro as a divergent Zaparoan language
- Taushiro is variously Zaparoan or classified with inaccurate proposals for other families

## 1.2 Recent History

- Taushiro territory of the early 20th century encompassed two drainages, the Huanganayacu and Aguaruna rivers, right-bank tributaries of the Tigre

- Social organization involved named, patrilineally defined clans that intermarried and occasionally fought one another
- Residence locations prior to 1941 were split
  - The *atontutua?* lived on the Ava Blanca, a left-bank tributary of the Huanganayacu
  - The *enontutua?* lived in the extreme headwaters of the Aguaruna
- During the Ecuadorian-Peruvian War (1941), fighting broke out near Ava Blanca settlements
  - Many *atontutua?* were killed by gunfire
  - The survivors fled to the headwaters of Gómezcaño, a left-bank tributary of the Aguaruna and the site where all Taushiros are said to have originated and spread from
  - In the 1950s there were 3 large houses in Gómezcaño, with  $\sim 30$  residents
- At the behest of the Jivaroan *patrón* Cesario Hualinga, in  $\sim 1957$  the two clans settled together on the Aucayacu, another left-bank tributary of the Aguaruna
  - Hualinga was involved in the extraction of *lechecapi* and *balata* (latex species)
  - He took two Taushiro women as wives, and only clothes and alcohol were given in exchange for labor
- In  $\sim 1964$ , one Felipe Vásquez, another *patrón*, came into the region
  - Vásquez was involved in the extraction of *lechecapi*, and in the poaching of peccaries and ocelots for their pelts, of other game for their meat, and of monkeys
  - In exchange for labor he gave shotguns, radios, machetes, and axes
- 1971 was a big year:
  - Oil was discovered in the Corrientes basin and the Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Canadian) took over
  - A *patrón* took the *enontutua?* to the Lejía River, a **left**-bank tributary of the Tigre, separating the two clans until some came to live in Intuto years later
  - Daniel Velie (SIL), in the company of a Máihuna man, visited Taushiros on the Aucayacu
- As of 1976, there were 6 adult *atontutua?* and 6 adult *enontutua?* (Alicia Ortiz 1976)
  - This is probably an overly conservative estimate, but regardless the number is very low

### 1.3 Speaker Situation

- By the mid-20th century, there appear to have been a handful of adult Taushiros
- Amadeo García García (b.  $\sim 1949$ , *atontutua?*) is probably the last fluent speaker of Taushiro
  - father = Amadeo Sr. (d.  $\sim 1980$ , *atontutua?*); mother = Grisalda (d.  $\sim 1978$ , *atontutua?*)
    - \* Amadeo Sr. (father) had 4 brothers (two killed by *enontutua?*, one by jaguar, another by snake) and 2 sisters
    - \* Amadeo (Jr.) knew none of Amadeo Sr.'s siblings

- \* Grisalda (mother) had 2 brothers (both died from disease) and 1 sister, Aurora (d. ~1980)
- 4 full siblings, all deceased; 3 half siblings, all deceased (i.e., mother previously married to *enontutua?* man who died)
- Amadeo married Quichua woman Margarita Machoa and had 5 children
  - \* All 5 children were raised in Puerto Rico
  - \* 2 sons have returned to Peru but do not see their father
  - \* None of Amadeo’s children speak or understand Taushiro
- Eldest sister Margarita (b. late 1930s(?), d. ~1971) married Cesario Hualinga and had 6 children (5 living)
- Eldest half-sister Juana married Andrés (*enontutua?*) and had 5 children (4 living)
  - Andrés and Juana’s daughter Trini (b.~1940?) also married Hualinga
  - Trini is claimed to speak “a little”
- Of the 8 children that include Amadeo, only 2 had children exposed to Taushiro
- Hualinga’s children likely had considerably less exposure to Taushiro
- Amadeo the only living *atontutua?*
  - All others are either *enontutua?* or not considered to be Taushiro because their father was not part of a Taushiro clan (e.g., Hualinga)

## 2 Taushiro History before 1941

- 1638: Jesuits begin missionary work in northeast Peruvian Amazonia (now Loreto)
- 1656: conquistador Martín de la Riva Herrera makes trips to at least two Taushiro groups

...vinieron ... diez y ocho caciques que hubo y se hallaron en las dicha [sic] provincias de Ruamaynas y Conchas y en la de los **Avitoas** y Coronados, veinte y siete que por todos son, quarenta y cinco los quales estaban poblados en las orilla de estos rios...  
(de la Riva Herrera [1656]2003:238-239, emphasis mine)

...rrespondieron [sic] los dichos indios Ruamaynas y Conchas que diez de navegacion por aquel rrio o del Tigre, estaban mas naciones que les hacian mucho daño con la guerra y asaltos que les davan y que habia poco tiempo que les avian hecho una entrada y **les mataron mucha gente y comidosela** y algunos lloravan y hicieron demostraciones de sentimiento de las muertes de sus padres, hixos y mugeres que se llamaban *avitoas*, *coronados* y *atios*.

(Velasques de Medrano [1657]2003:293, emphasis mine)

...y teniendo noticia que alli cerca en otro braço del rrio avia otra nacion que llamaban Attios despacho una esquadra de soldados a ella y por cabo al alferez Don Francisco Ortiz y con los rrecaudos que se les embiaron por parte del dicho Cacique Taraigua [chief of Havitoas] a quien tenian algun rrespeto se dieron de paz y lo

mismo hicieron **los Agoronatoas que todos estan vezinos unos de otros**, se allo y vio salir veinte y seis Caciques, que rrindieron vasallaje al Rey Nuestro Señor... (ibid.:294, emphasis mine)

...prosiguiendo su viaje por el mismo río del Tigre arriba á descubrir á los Abitoas y Azoros; y supe que habiendo hecho presa de algunos los despachó á que dijese á sus parientes los buenos intentos conque iba, dándoles algunas herramientas. Supe que por este medio todos los Abitoas, Azoros, y sus parcialidades salían y le esperaban de paz; y la recibió dicho General de veinte y siete caciques dejando estas provincias sujetas al vasallaje de S. M... (de Figueroa [1657]2003:315)

- 1661: Jesuits report on intention to convert Avitoas and Azoronatoas [sic] with Roamaynas and Zapas as intermediaries (de Figueroa [1661]1986:235)
- 1684: P. Tomás Santos contacts Asarunatoas [sic] and Cenicientos, and the Pinches and Havitoas on an expedition guided by Roamaynas and Zapas (Santos [1684]1986)
- 1698: P. Nicolás Durango, aided by Roamayna chief Damian, founds San José de los Pinches in the hinterlands east of the Pastaza River

...donde el padre Vidal en 1700 se supone que encontró a 500 indios de lanza, lo que significaba aproximadamente una cifra total de 2000 personas. (Grohs 1974:85)

Habiéndose consumido parte y parte desaparecido la nación de los Roamainas, como se dijo hablando de aquella reduccion, nuestros misioneros trataron [sic] formar otra nueva poblacion con los *Pinches*, *Pavas*, *Arazas* y otras parcialidades **casi todas de una misma lengua con los Roamainas**. Vivian, éstos, parte en las cabeceras del Chambira y parte hácia el Tigre. (Maroni [1738]1988:265, emphasis mine)

- 1708: Pinches and Pavas moved to the Roamaynas mission on the Pastaza (Grohs 1974:85)
  - S. .J. de Pinches was later reestablished apart from the Roamaynas mission on the Pastaza
- ~1735: S. J. de Pinches with 46 families including Pinches, Pavas, Roamaynas and Arazas, totaling almost ~200 individuals (de Zárate [1735]1988:402)
- 1737: 136 inhabitants at Pinches mission, not long thereafter to be augmented by group of recently befriended Roamaynas (Maroni [1738]1988:106)
  - It is unknown how many Pinches remained outside the mission system at this time
- ~1768 (i.e., at expulsion): still a recognized presence (unlike Roamaynas)

Más aguas arriba del Pastaza está ubicada, también a la dercha, la comarca de los Pinche y de algunas ramas de esta tribu como los Araza, los Pava, los Uchpa. Su territorio se extiende del Pastaza hasta la ribera del Alto Tigre, cruzado por diversos riachuelos y pequeños ríos que conforman luego el río Chambira. No es éste aquel Chambira que desemboca directamente en el Marañón, sino ese otro, llamado también Chingana, que confluye en el Tigre, cinco jornadas más arriba de su desembocadura. Los Pinche, cristianos ya desde algunos años, viven en su propio pueblo que, si bien pequeño, tiene su iglesia y su misionero, y está situado,

tierra adentro, en la margen occidental del Pastaza a media milla de distancia de su orilla. **Hablan su propia lengua.** Hace pocos años se descubrieron, en los montes apartados hacia el oriente, todavía algunas cabañas habitadas por familias aún gentiles de esta nación. (Veigl [1798]2006:113-114, emphasis mine)

Table 1: Population of San José de Pinches Based on Grohs (1974:86)

| Year | Adult males | Families | Total          |
|------|-------------|----------|----------------|
| 1727 | 15          |          | 104            |
| 1732 |             |          | 140            |
| 1735 |             | 46       | 200 (40 Pavas) |
| 1737 |             |          | 136            |
| 1768 |             |          | 200            |
| 1769 |             |          | 184            |

- 1828: S. J. de Pinches still exists on the Pastaza River

These pueblos [i.e., Santander, Pinches, Andoas, Canelos] have likewise their churches in repair, and I presume that the curate of Andoas [sic], Friar Fernando Guerrero, of the Seraphic order, occasionally consoles these faithful. It is this curate's intention to return to his native country of Quito shortly. (Maw 1829:94)

- 1925: Tessmann (1930:445, 582) understands there to be three geographically defined groups of Pinches: on the Huangana, on the Yanayacu (his Zúngaroyacu, a left-bank tributary of the upper Urituyacu), and in the headwaters of the Nucuray Chambira rivers
  - On the Nucuray they had previously murdered one Señor López (ibid.:583)
  - These were probably Muratos, who speak a dialect of Candoshi, and not Taushiros
- 1926: a group of Pinches is captured and brought to the Tigre but later released, and at this time they were thought to have attacked and murdered some rubber tapper (ibid.)
- 1953: first known attestation of 'Taushiro',<sup>4</sup> some 50 remaining, perhaps in two geographically distinct groups

Solamente son 50 personas y viven en el Huanganayacu, Ahuaruna, Intuto y Pavayacu, afluentes del Tigre la m. der., buscando siempre los centros; **hablan su dialecto propio** y entienden el quechua; son salvajes de carácter tímido. En algunas oportunidades han tenido contacto con los blancos, pero no hay patrón que quiera hacerse cargo de ellos, pues no quieren trabajar. Visten fibras o andan semidesnudos, razón por la cual, cuando se agotan ambas cosas en un sector, se trasladan a otro; sus viviendas son miserables chozas construidas para pocos meses. Hay también algunos indios de esta tribu en el Urituyacu.<sup>5</sup> (Villarejo 1953:146)

<sup>4</sup>The term 'Taushiro' is clearly of Chicham/Jivaroan origin – cf. Achuar-Shiwiar <tawishur> 'taushiro (grupo idiomático casi extinto que vive entre los ríos Corrientes y Tigre)' (Fast et al. 1996:270).

<sup>5</sup>These data probably refer to 1941, when Villarejo traveled through parts of the Tigre basin (Villarejo 2000:89-94).

### 3 Taushiro Language

- All representations of forms in this section and elsewhere are preliminary

#### 3.1 Phonology

- Taushiro exhibits a typologically unusual inventory of 13 consonants (Table 2)
  - The only bilabial segment is /w/
  - It exhibits fricatives /ɕ/, /x/, and /h/, but no /s/

Table 2: Taushiro Consonants

|           | Bilabial | Alveolar | Palatal  | Velar            | Glottal |
|-----------|----------|----------|----------|------------------|---------|
| Stop      |          | t        |          | k k <sup>w</sup> | ʔ       |
| Nasal     |          | n        |          | (ŋ)              |         |
| Fricative |          |          | ɕ        | x                | h       |
| Affricate |          |          | çç       |                  |         |
| Flap      |          | (ɾ)      |          |                  |         |
| Glide     | w [w, ẁ] |          | j [j, ỹ] |                  |         |

- Only /n/, /ʔ/, and /h/ may appear in coda position, the former only before /t/
- Thus far /ɾ/ is only attested in verbal suffixes and /ŋ/ only in the dative suffix -*ŋi* and the relative pronoun *aŋka*
- Taushiro appears to exhibit 8 phonemic vowel qualities (Table 3)

Table 3: Taushiro Vowels

|      | Front | Central | Back |
|------|-------|---------|------|
| High | i, ĩ  | ɨ, ỹ    | u, ù |
| Mid  | e, ẽ  | ə, ǣ    | o, õ |
| Low  | æ, ǣ  | a, ǣ    |      |

- Nasalization is clearly contrastive (e.g., *wé* ‘water’ vs. *w’éẽ* ‘same sex sibling’) and appears to spread leftward
- Vowel length is not obviously contrastive but is also not predictable
  - For now I include length in representations but do not place it in Table 3
- Vowel hiatus is permitted, and apparent diphthongs of falling sonority are analyzed as sequences of vowels
- Tone is contrastive, e.g., *háʔntà* ‘over there’ vs. *hàʔntá* ‘white’



## 3.2 Grammar

- Taushiro appears to exhibit a fairly rigid VS(O) constituent order
- The language shows a combination of head- and dependent-marking, but is also fairly isolating
- The only obligatory verbal category is person
  - Verbs agree in person with both subject and object via prefixes
  - Verbs appear to be obligatorily followed by either a pronoun or noun (i.e., agreement prefixes are not “pronominal”)
  - SUBJ-OBJ-VERB PRON/NOUN
- Additional verbal prefixes include:
  - Future-like *ha-* (see suffixes)
- Additional verbal suffixes include:<sup>6</sup>
  - Future-like *-ha*
  - Perfective-like *-ki*
  - A pluractional *-ro* ‘again’
  - Causative *-hi*
  - Reflexive *-ini*
  - Negation *-hĩrõ*

(1) Weʔtuharo úi àʔtúà.

*u- Ø- eʔtu -ha -ro úi àʔtúà*  
 1- 3- scare.off(.animal) -FUT(?) -? 1.PRON chicken

‘I’ll scare off the chicken.’ (2015-39)

- Content questions are formed via a sentence-initial *wh*-word and the enclitic *=hã*
  - Note that the oblique *uwĩ* intervenes between verb and subject pronoun

(2) Inaha hajukaro uwĩ í?

*ina =ha ha- i- uka -ro u -wĩ í*  
 when =INTERR FUT(?) - 2- come -PLRACT 1.PRON -ALL 2.PRON

‘When you will you visit me again?’ (2015-44)

- Second-person directives are surface-equivalent to second-person declaratives (3)

(3) Jeʔtu í àʔtúà.

*i- Ø- eʔtu í àʔtúà*  
 2- 3- scare.off(.animal) 2.PRON chicken

<sup>6</sup>In what follows I do not write tone on verbs because it is not yet well understood.

‘Scare the chicken off!’ (2015-39)

- Hortatives are formed with the sentence-initial particle *haʔwi*
- Existential constructions involve suffixing *-tua* to a noun
  - This strategy is used in predicative possession, along with the “dative” suffix *-ŋ(i)* (4)

(4) *Haʔwi aʔte ài éççì eççituahirõ aŋ.*

*haʔwi aʔ- te ài éççì éççì -tua -hirõ a -ŋi*  
 HORT 1INCL- clear(.land) 1INCL.PRON swidden swidden -EXST -NEG 1INCL -DAT

‘Let’s go clear a swidden because we don’t have a swidden.’ (2015-51)

- Relative clauses are formed with the relative pronoun *aŋka* (often shortened to *ga* or seemingly suffixed to noun as *-ŋka*), which occurs between the head and the relative clause

(5) *Iççu k<sup>w</sup>antaki anowa anka waʃo hæʔĩ.*

*iççu Ø- k<sup>w</sup>anta -ki anowa aŋka u- Ø- aʃo hæʔĩ*  
 already(?) 3- tear -PFV(?) clothes REL 1- 3- get previously

‘The clothes that I bought previously have already torn.’ (2015-56)

- Nouns may be categorized as alienable or inalienable
- Possession is of the order POSSESSOR-POSSESSUM
  - Inalienable nouns combine directly with possessive prefixes (e.g., *i-há* ‘your house’)
  - Alienable nouns are possessed by suffixing *çça* to the prenominal possessor
  - Nouns possessed by a third person always exhibit the alienable possession strategy
  - At least one suffix may additionally attach to *çça*, namely *-çia* ‘only’
- Nouns do not exhibit any case marking
- Number is not marked on the noun or verb
- Numerals and quantifiers (e.g., ‘*açíntù* ‘many’) are discontinuous

(6) *Iʔitu uççaçia wananta.*

*Ø- iʔitu u -çça -çia wananta*  
 3- run.away 1 -POSS -only dog

‘My only dog ran away.’ (2015-58)

- Numerous nominal suffixes and postpositions encode spatial and other associated meanings
- Both nouns and adjectives may modify nouns directly (i.e., no agreement, no derivation)

Table 4: Iquito Consonants (Michael 2011:55)

|           | Bilabial | Alveolar | Palatal | Velar            | Glottal |
|-----------|----------|----------|---------|------------------|---------|
| Stop      | p        | t        |         | k k <sup>w</sup> |         |
| Nasal     | m        | n        |         |                  |         |
| Fricative |          | s        |         |                  | h       |
| Flap      |          | r        |         |                  |         |
| Glide     | w        |          | j       |                  |         |

Table 5: Iquito Vowels (ibid.)

|      | Front | Central | Back |
|------|-------|---------|------|
| High | i(:)  | ɨ(:)    | u(:) |
| Low  |       | a(:)    |      |

## 4 Zaparoan Languages (Iquito)

### 4.1 Phonology

- Iquito exhibits 11 phonemic consonants (Table 4)
- The language exhibits a 4-vowel system with contrastive length but no nasality (Table 5)
- Tone and stress co-exist and interact
  - Tonal minimal pairs exist
  - Each prosodic word requires at least one high tone
  - If a word exhibits no lexical tone, a high tone is assigned to the position of primary stress
- Target phonological shapes may trigger vowel lengthening and tone shifts (Beier et al. 2011:68)

### 4.2 Grammar

- Iquitos exhibits fairly rigid SVO word order with a preverbal focus position yielding OSV
  - Alternation between SVO and SOV expresses a reality status contrast (Hansen 2011; Beier et al. 2011)
- Mainly dependent-marking (n.b., two applicative suffixes)
- Verbal morphology is completely suffixal
  - Obligatory verbal categories are tense (3-way) and aspect (2-way), with tense-aspect and directional-tense portmanteaus
  - Person is indicated via clitics or free pronouns (unlike Taushiro)

- Nouns may be categorized by their animacy status
- Nominal morphology includes:
  - Possessive prefixes
  - “Optional” number marking
  - Second-position clitics encoding spatial and other meanings
- Adjectives agree with the noun they modify in animacy (unlike Taushiro)
- Possession is of the order POSSESSUM-POSSESSOR

(7) *ki= nu masii -rii -Ø amikaáka iina mutúuru ik<sup>w</sup> áni*  
 1SG= 3SG buy -ASP -TNS one.day.away DET motor man  
 ‘Tomorrow I will buy this man’s motor.’ (adapted from Hansen (2011:35))

- Content questions are formed via a sentence-initial *wh*-word (w/o a clitic, as in Taushiro)

(8) *tiiti kia= kia- sinaáki masii -k<sup>w</sup> aa -Ø*  
 where 2SG= 2SG- clothes buy -ASP -TNS  
 ‘Where will you buy your clothes?’ (adapted from Hansen (2011:183))

- Second-person directives are formed via personless verb stems (unlike Taushiro)

(9) *kuwasi -ki*  
 talk -ASP  
 ‘Talk!’ (adapted from Lai (2009:242))

- Sentential negation is expressed via the sentence-initial particle *kaa* (unlike Taushiro)

(10) *kaa ki= niki -Ø -kura iina ik<sup>w</sup> ani*  
 NEG 1SG- see -ASP -TNS DET man  
 ‘I did not see that man yesterday.’ (adapted from Lai (2009:56))

- Positive existential constructions involve an inflected verb
  - Negative existential constructions involve a sentence-initial particle
  - Contrast with the use of nominal suffixes in Taushiro

(11) *iina paapaaha tíira nu= iiki -i -Ø*  
 DET fish there 3SG= EXST -ASP -TNS  
 ‘There is fish there.’ (adapted from Lai (2009:59))

(12) *ahapaki paapaaha*  
 NEG.EXST fish  
 ‘There is no fish.’ (adapted from Lai (2009:59))

## 5 Omurano

### 5.1 Phonology

- Based on available data, Omurano has 10 phonemic consonants (Table 6)
  - Curiously, no fricatives or velars are attested (out of  $\sim 30$  lexical items)

Table 6: Omurano Consonants (O’Hagan, field notes)

|           | Bilabial |   | Alveolar | Alveopalatal | Palatal |
|-----------|----------|---|----------|--------------|---------|
| Stop      | p        | b | t        |              |         |
| Nasal     | m        |   | n        |              | ɲ       |
| Affricate |          |   |          | tʃ           |         |
| Flap      |          |   | ɾ        |              |         |
| Lateral   |          |   | l        |              |         |
| Glide     |          |   |          |              | j       |

- 5 vowel qualities are attested (Table 7)
  - Only /ĩ/ is attested out of the nasal series, but I will assume the system was symmetrical

Table 7: Omurano Vowels (O’Hagan, field notes)

|      | Front | Central | Back |
|------|-------|---------|------|
| High | i, ĩ  |         | u, ũ |
| Mid  | e, ě  |         | o, õ |
| Low  |       | a, ă    |      |

### 5.2 Grammar

- All that is known of Omurano grammar comes from the following sentence

(13) [mamatẽĩjane]

*mamá -ta ĩjane*  
 fish -ACC(?) eat

‘Eat the fish!’

- Word order is OV in this second-person directive
- The noun exhibits a suffix that is likely a case marker
- The verb appears to exhibit no person inflection

## 6 Urarina

### 6.1 Phonology

- Urarina has 16 phonemic consonants (Table 8)
- Note /f<sup>w</sup>/, /ɽ/, and the palatal affricate /çç/

Table 8: Urarina Consonants (Olawsky 2006:30)

|           | Bilabial | Labiodental    | Alveolar | Alveopalatal | Retroflex | Palatal | Velar            | Glottal          |
|-----------|----------|----------------|----------|--------------|-----------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| Stop      | b        |                | t d      |              |           |         | k k <sup>w</sup> |                  |
| Nasal     | m        |                | n        |              |           | ɲ       |                  |                  |
| Fricative |          | f <sup>w</sup> | s        | ʃ            |           |         |                  | h h <sup>j</sup> |
| Affricate |          |                |          |              |           | çç      |                  |                  |
| Flap      |          |                |          |              | ɽ         |         |                  |                  |
| Lateral   |          |                | l        |              |           |         |                  |                  |

- Both length and nasality are contrastive on vowels (Table 9)

Table 9: Urarina Vowels (Olawsky 2006:51-63)

|      | Front       | Central     | Back       |
|------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| High | i(:), ĩ(:) | ɯ(:), ɯ̃(:) | u(:), ũ(:) |
| Mid  | e(:), ẽ(:) |             |            |
| Low  |             | a(:), ã(:)  |            |

- Roots belong to one of a set of tonal classes that differ in where tone is realized across a construction (Hyman 2013)
- Nominal roots in isolation almost invariably surface with a final high, obscuring tonal class

### 6.2 Grammar

- Urarina exhibits a typologically unusual OVS word order (Olawsky 2005)
- The language is largely head-marking and polysynthetic (24 suffix/enclitic slots)
- Person is crossreferenced on the verb via three possible series of suffixes
- Content questions are formed via sentence-initial *wh*-words and are a distinct clause-type
- Second-person directives exhibit unique morphology and are a distinct clause-type
- Functional equivalents to relativization are achieved a series of nominalizers
- Possession is of the order POSSESSOR-POSSESSUM, with simple juxtaposition of the two

- Nouns do not exhibit case marking
- Numerals are fixed relative to the noun, but quantifiers are more mobile (no adjectives)

## 7 Lexical Comparison

- This section compares lexical data from Taushiro, Omurano, Urarina, Iquito, and Achuar to assess the plausibility that Taushiro might be related to any of these languages
- Data comes from:
  - Taushiro = O’Hagan field notes, except where ‘NAO’, then Alicea Ortiz (1975d)
  - Omurano = O’Hagan field notes
  - Urarina = Olawsky (2006) and Bower et al.’s *Hunter-Gatherer Language Database* (<https://huntergatherer.la.utexas.edu/>)
  - Iquito = [2006 Iquito Language Documentation Project dictionary]
  - Achuar = Fast et al. (1996)
- Segmental representations have been streamlined to facilitate comparison (adheres to IPA)
- Use of diacritics varies:
  - Taushiro grave and acute accents indicate proposed tone
  - Omurano acute accent indicates high pitch
  - Urarina tone is unmarked since variable across construction
  - Iquito acute accent indicates high tone
  - Achuar acute accent indicates primary stress
- Grayed cells indicate that the language does not lexicalize this meaning, that a form was not found, or that a relevant form in a source could not be confirmed to be the exact meaning

Table 10: Lexical Comparison

| Meaning           | Taushiro               | Omurano  | Urarina     | Iquito               | Achuar                   |
|-------------------|------------------------|----------|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| child             | ìwáʔ                   | ráwana   | kananaɲ     | maája                |                          |
| lazy person       |                        | tʃatané  |             | áhapana              | náki                     |
| scabied person    |                        | witʃúma  |             | isíikutaka           | mámu ( <i>sarna</i> )    |
| white person      | nìjǐ                   | natʃúri  |             | <b>wirakúusi [Q]</b> | <b>íŋkis [Sp.]</b>       |
| old man           | jè:jú ( <i>viejo</i> ) | burú     | bina        | kumáku               | weámrau ( <i>viejo</i> ) |
| water             | wé                     | tʃuá (?) | <b>akaɯ</b> | <b>aáka</b>          | júmi                     |
| manico beer       | ãhʃãnehoke             | tʃuá (?) | baɽue       | itíniha              | hamántʃ                  |
| agouti            | wìntǐ                  | purimá   | mami        | muúti                | kãjúk                    |
| paca              | àjáwà                  | japú     | ic̣ca       | tímaaka              | káfai                    |
| collared peccary  | hùjǒntò                | tʃa:né   | obana       | kaási                | jaŋkipík                 |
| white-lipped pec. | <b>tàjá [TG]</b>       | a:né     | ɽana        | anitáaki             | páki                     |
| spider monkey     | àhú                    | babané   | alau        | íiti                 | wáʃi                     |
| howler monkey     | wàʔná                  | mariabé  | ɽuɽu        | iipíi                | jakúm                    |

|                       |                    |                |                                    |                     |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| woolly monkey         | àhúntù             | lu:né          | aɾauata [?]                        | síruku              | tʃu:               |
| deer                  | ùʔwáwì             | alamaré        | uk <sup>w</sup> a:ɛ                | sikiáaha            | hápa               |
| tapir                 | xèhí               | lawtumé        | aɾála                              | arijuukwaáha        | pamá               |
| currasow              | éntì               | tátana         | ataɾi                              | pijúuri             | máʃu               |
| <i>pava del monte</i> | wàhìnó             | napítʃu        | kue:ɾi (?)                         | <b>kujĩsi</b>       | <b>kúju</b>        |
| Spix's guan           | tèntá              | tʃawrí         | kue:ɾi (?)                         | parúku              | aúnts              |
| fish                  | è:nà               | ma:má          | ate                                | pápaaha             | namák              |
| manioc                | àh'á               | ju:né          | la:no                              | asúraaha            | máma               |
| plantain              | <b>àntá</b>        | pui rá         | <b>f<sup>w</sup>anaɾa [TG]</b>     | samúkwaati          | <b>pán:tam [?]</b> |
| ayahuasca             | ànùʔwí             | <b>ijuné</b>   | <b>ipunu</b> ~ k <sup>w</sup> aiɾi | ákuta               | natém              |
| house                 | há                 | terté          | luɾɛɾi                             | iíta                | héa                |
| canoe                 | tininti [NAO]      | o:pí           | enanih <sup>j</sup> a              | iímina              | <b>kánu [?]</b>    |
| paddle                |                    | túnitʃa        | kiha                               | aritáwi             | kawín              |
| blowgun               | ànètá              | <b>pitʃaná</b> | <b>hiçana</b>                      | nimúuna             | u:m                |
| 1SG                   | úi                 | purú           | kanu                               | kí                  | wi                 |
| 2SG                   | <b>í</b>           |                | <b>i:</b>                          | kia                 | ámẽ                |
| 1INCL                 | ái                 |                | kana                               | pi                  | n/a                |
| one                   | wàçikántù          |                | lejhi:                             | núkiika             |                    |
| two                   | àʃíʔní             |                | kuɾuatahaj                         | kuúmi               | hímiar             |
| big                   | hò:wí              |                | sē:ruha                            | umáana              | hu:n               |
| woman                 | ijí                | nawté          | e:ne                               | mĩisáhi             | núwa               |
| man                   | àwē:wí             | mapá           | kaçça                              | ikwáni              | áifmaɲ             |
| person                | ìtécèi             |                | kaçça                              | kaája               | áints              |
| bird                  | çijú               |                | tahaze                             | siriíha             | tʃíɲki             |
| dog                   | wànántà            | marátʃi        | ɾe:mae                             | <b>mijaára [TG]</b> | <b>jāwā: [TG]</b>  |
| louse                 | àwìçá              |                | ataɾi                              | sikwanáha           | téma               |
| tree                  | àwá                |                | enua                               | náana               | númi               |
| seed                  | nàkú               |                |                                    |                     | hiɲkiáih           |
| leaf                  | àwájà              |                |                                    | íimi                | núka               |
| root                  | òtintí             |                | haisi                              | ániha               | kaɲkáp             |
| bark                  |                    |                |                                    | ísiki               | sáap               |
| skin                  |                    |                | kaɾi                               | ísiki               | nuwáp              |
| flesh                 | núʔwí              |                | iniu                               | nasíiha             | namáɲ              |
| blood                 | tá                 |                | (k <sup>w</sup> )içcana            | máhaaka             | númpa              |
| bone                  | hu? [NAO]          |                | buku                               | núiki               | (u)kúntʃ           |
| grease/fat            | núʔwí á            |                | eɾene                              | wíira               | mátʃa              |
| egg                   | kiʔtu [NAO]        |                | tahe                               | naáki               | (e)té:ri           |
| horn                  | kæwì               |                | haja                               | túwiha              | antíri             |
| tail                  | h <sup>w</sup> é   |                | nusei                              | aniáasi             | (u)juké            |
| feather               | há ~ àʔá           |                | uhi                                | kahási              | úre                |
| hair                  | núh <sup>w</sup> è |                | hanaka                             | kahási              | intáf              |
| head                  | núhì               |                | kutɾi                              | ánaka               | mú:k               |
| ear                   | kò                 |                | iɾiçeu                             | túuku               | kuwíf              |
| eye                   | ççùwí              |                | nuta                               | namíha              | hĩ:                |
| nose                  | tàntáh             |                | asi                                | nahíka              | núhĩ               |
| mouth                 | jàntàkú            |                | uha:ɛ                              | itípuma             | háɲkẽ              |
| tooth                 | jùnέ               |                | katu                               | iíka                | nái                |



|          |                    |                            |               |              |
|----------|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| tongue   | kèhé               | lele                       | niíti         | inái         |
| claw     |                    |                            | áwaka         | nantʃík      |
| foot     | tò                 | tiha                       | iínuwa        | náwē         |
| knee     | nàjú               |                            | siríha        | tikíʃ        |
| hand     | jàwá               | bihi                       | kuríka        | ũwéh         |
| belly    | kwintí             | suri                       | tanáka        | tantán       |
| neck     | jìwèhú             | nulɛnɛ                     | ríkíha        | kuntúh       |
| breast   | íçà                | isic̃ço                    | sipííha       | múntsu       |
| heart    | tàntúh             |                            | akánataaha    | (i)nintí     |
| liver    | xú                 | nahaɽi                     | kúwaaha       | akáp         |
| sun      | àkú                | enoto                      | nunamíha      | (e)tsáa      |
| moon     | àtòà               | atene                      | kásiiri [Awk] | jántu        |
| star     | àçùwí              | aɽasihe                    | sawíha        | ja:          |
| rain     | íçò                | elu                        | aási          | júmi         |
| stone    | àxíntú             | aheri                      | sawíha        | kája         |
| sand     | héjùntù            | ok <sup>w</sup> aj         | kakúti        | náikim       |
| earth    | úntù               | atane                      | níja          | núɲka        |
| cloud    | hàká               | dedeseɽi                   | anaháka       | mukúnit      |
| smoke    | kòk <sup>w</sup> á | sura:                      | anaháka       | mukúnit      |
| fire     | hòntó              | usi                        | iinámi        | hi           |
| ash(es)  | tùká               | aha:ne                     | pukíti        | júkú:        |
| path     | àtú                | beɽu                       | amáki         | hínta        |
| mountain |                    |                            | aniníiki      | múra         |
| red      | àçíà               | lana [v.]                  | ákusana       | kapántin     |
| green    | ká                 | beɽauesioh <sup>w</sup> aj | makína        | samék        |
| yellow   | àxíʔjà             | uhae                       | nijána        | jaɲkú        |
| white    | hàʔntá             | soma [v.]                  | musútina      | púhu         |
| black    | àjòntù             | hiç̃cua [v.]               | míínana       | fuwín        |
| night    | ìʔççíà             | hamuna:                    | niníini       | káshi        |
| full     |                    |                            | amíjaha       | kak pi(j)áku |
| new      | jàʔtùà             | ipe                        | saámina       | jamáram      |
| good     | jàʔtùà             | kauac̃ça [v.]              | suwaáani      | áju          |
| round    |                    |                            | suwánaha      | tenté        |
| dry      |                    | hakuɽu                     | hawána        | muhúkaʃ      |
| name     |                    | kura:                      | íjaaka        | ná:r (1P)    |

## 8 Conclusions

- Taushiro is not Zaparoan, nor is it related to Omurano (or Candoshi)
- Why are there so many language isolates and small families in western Amazonia?
- Geographically widespread families are also present in the region (e.g., Arawak, Tupí-Guaraní)
- Perhaps the density of isolates was formerly more characteristic of all of Amazonia
  - Certainly some isolates were formerly part of small families (e.g., Pirahã)
  - In the Pastaza-Tigre interfluvium (and nearby) historical accidents may have favored the preservation of small groups

- \* Parts of this region were not explored until late relative to other areas of Amazonia (i.e., 1650s)
- \* It is a smaller region than, say, central Brazil, such that the pace of exploration and initial documentation could “keep up” with the unfortunate spread of disease
- \* Elsewhere exploration did not take place until the late 18th or 19th centuries (e.g., central Brazil)
- Documentation of the last remnants of an isolate (Omurano) or with the last fluent speaker of an isolate (Taushiro) can shed enormous light on regional history and inform typology
  - Requires the careful study of the historical record, geography, topography, and especially ethnonyms and their creation, change, and polysemy
- Don’t develop language phylogenies without linguistic data!

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