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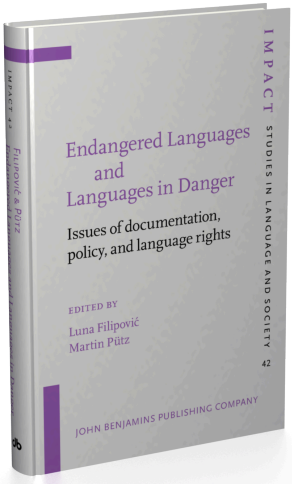

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Metaphors of an endangered forest people, the Yanomae (N. Brazil)

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Among the Yanomae-speakers of Brazilian Amazonia the close relationship between language, culture and the environment is revealed in the use of metaphor, metonymy, and euphemism in a wide range of words and phrases. For example, euphemistic metonymy demonstrates how *not* speaking of the dead can provide insights into Yanomami culture as the deceased are referred to by specific items of material culture that identify each individual's role in traditional Yanomami society. This paper provides abundant examples from field data to demonstrate how the traditional culture and rain forest lifestyle are reflected in images created by the Yanomae language. Deeply rooted in rain forest culture, the language will continue to thrive only as long as Yanomami lands remain protected from outside exploitation.

Keywords: Amazonia, Brazil, endangered, euphemism, metaphor, metonymy, rain forest environment, Yanomae, Yanomami

1. Introduction

Metaphor involves looking at a concept from another perspective, extending the meaning of one concept to another. As Lakoff and Johnson define it, "The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another" (1980: 5). For example, in English a classic metaphor views *time* as a commodity that can be spent, saved, or wasted, like money. Among the Yanomae-speaking people of northern Brazil, the use of metaphor is especially common for neologisms and taboo topics, such as death, as well as in orientational and temporal expressions. This paper examines the use of metaphor and two related phenomena – metonymy and euphemism – in the Yanomae language to demonstrate the close relationship between language, culture and the environment among one

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group of indigenous Amazonians who maintain a traditional rain forest lifestyle, despite the ever-encroaching modern world.

Yanomae-speakers belong to one of four major subgroups of the Yanomami language family, found in the Amazon rain forest of northern Brazil and southern Venezuela. The other linguistic subgroups include Yanomamɨ, Sanɨmá, and Ninam (also called Yanam). The author conducted her doctoral dissertation fieldwork among Ninam-speaking Yanomami (Gomez 1990). No definitive genetic relationship has been established between Yanomami languages and any other South American linguistic group. According to the 2011 Brazilian National Health Foundation (FUNASA) census, an estimated 19,000 Yanomami live in Brazil. Of these Brazilian Yanomami, about 47.5% (or an estimated 9,123 people) speak Yanomae. The present paper focuses on the dialect of Yanomae spoken in the community of Watorikɨ located in the state of Amazonas, Brazil. The linguistic data in the present study were collected during personal fieldwork by the author and in collaboration with French cultural anthropologist Bruce Albert, who has worked with the Yanomami since the 1970s. Specific examples are from the manuscript of a thematic lexicon of Yanomae that is in preparation (Gómez & Albert n.d.).

Linda Chinelo Nkamigbo points out that metaphorical proverbs in Koring (a Niger-Congo language of Nigeria) "resulted from the lifestyle and customs of people, who have had strong bonds with the natural world" (Abstract LAUD 2014: 113). This same bond is evident among the Yanomae, whose metaphors reflect the flora and fauna that inhabit their natural rain forest environment. The inhabitants of the community of Watorikɨ are hunter-gatherer horticulturalists, whose survival depends on slash-and-burn cultivation of manioc/cassava, bananas, sweet potatoes and other crops as well as gathering wild forest products and hunting for game, especially monkeys, birds, wild pigs, tapirs and small mammals, using bows and arrows. Men are the hunters, and women plant, harvest, and process garden produce. Their culture is built upon these traditional activities, the practice of shamanism, and an animistic belief in spirits of the natural world.

Sustained contact between the inhabitants of Watorikɨ and outsiders began in the 1990s, manufactured goods became commonplace, and a village school was established. These modern innovations brought new words and concepts to the Yanomae language. Since most speakers were (and still are) largely monolingual, many of the terms for these new items are metaphorical extensions of existing vocabulary that directly relates to the Amazon rain forest and traditional cultural practices and beliefs. This new vocabulary will be the focus of section 5 on neologisms.

Sally Rice points out that metaphor and metonymy in Dene Sųłiné are "ubiquitous in colloquial language and do not pertain to a highly composed genre or

register" (2012: 24); this is quite similar to the Yanomae case described here, and all of the examples are from oral language. Most of the paper deals with traditional metaphors, not resulting from contact with outsiders. These metaphors are grouped into sections according to well-established categories of metaphors observed in many languages, beginning with body-part metaphors in Section 2 and moving to orientational and temporal metaphors in Sections 3 and 4, respectively. Section 6 describes the culturally significant taboo against speaking of the dead and how this is maintained through euphemistic metonymy that references the daily activities of the speakers. In Section 7 concluding remarks link the endangerment of metaphors in Yanomae to the threat to the survival of native Amazonians and their traditional lands. The data were collected in Watorikɨ village during elicitation and interviews conducted jointly by the author and Bruce Albert, who is fluent in Yanomae and provided the Portuguese translations. Discussions with our Yanomae collaborators confirmed the metaphorical nature of the examples, especially the use of euphemism to refer to deceased individuals that reflects a strong cultural taboo. Many of the examples discussed in this paper appeared in a previous publication (Albert & Gómez 1997) that was designed to be used as a bilingual health manual for visiting medical teams and health workers among a mostly monolingual, non-literate Yanomae-speaking population.

2. Body-part metaphors

A metaphor is "[a]n expression that has a literal interpretation of application in one domain [and] takes on a figurative meaning in another domain" (Rice 2012: 24). Consequently, the mapping of body-parts onto other physical objects is commonplace in languages throughout the world. In English, for example, references to the *neck* of a bottle, the *eye* of a needle, and the *elbow* of a river are classical examples of metaphors. "The parts of the body are the closest and most immediate things in our physical environment, and are thus more deeply imprinted in our cognition, so it is no wonder that body-parts are the sources of terms for all kinds of more abstract concepts in so many languages" (Deutscher 2005: 139).

In Yanomae, objects that have openings, such as a clay pot in example (1), may be described as having a mouth. Likewise, the interior of a house in example (2) is referred to as its chest, which is the center of family and cultural activities much as the human chest holds the most important organs to keep the body alive and active.

(1) *hapaka kahikɨ*
clay.pot mouth
'mouth of a clay pot'

(2) *yahi parɨkɨ-ha*
hearth chest-LOC
'inside the house'

Mountains, hills, and rivers are obvious landmarks, and geographical terms are classic sources of body-part metaphors in many languages. In English we speak of *foot*hills and the *foot* of a mountain; whereas, in Yanomae the base of a hill is its 'anus' *xioka* in (5), and the side of the mountain or hill is its 'chest' *parɨkɨ* in example (4). In example (3) in the direction 'toward the top of a mountain/hill,' one is headed (to use another English metaphor!) toward the 'top of the mountain or hill,' which is metaphorically linked to the top of the human body.

(3) *hehu hwesika=hamɨ*
hill top.of.head=DIR
'toward the top of a mountain/hill'

(4) *hehu parɨkɨ-ha*
hill chest-LOC
'on the side of the mountain/hill'

(5) *hehu xioka-ha*
hill anus-LOC
'at the base of the mountain/hill'

With regard to the upper tributaries of a river, the body part 'head' *he* is employed in example (6) in a similar fashion to its English equivalent to designate the '*head*-waters.' The river bank is its 'lip' *kasi* in example (7) and a tributary stream is its 'arm' *poco* in example (8).

(6) *mãu=u he-kɨ-ha*
water=CL.liquid head-PL-LOC
'at the headwaters of the river'

(7) *mãu=u kasi-ha*
water=CL.liquid lip-LOC
'on the river bank'

(8) *poko=u*
arm=CL.liquid
'tributary stream of a river'

As mentioned in the introduction, the Yanomae men hunt forest animals with bows and arrows, hence, the importance of these weapons in their culture. Bows and arrows are handcrafted from natural materials, and the men refer to the parts of the bow, *raha sihi*, and arrow, *xaraka*, using body-part metaphors. The parts of a bow include a 'chest' in example (9), a 'back' in (10), and a 'penis' in (11). An interesting detail of Yanomami men's traditional attire might add to understanding this last metaphor; a man's penis is traditionally tied up with a cotton string that connects to a string around the waist. A loose (adult) penis is considered obscene, culturally taboo. The *raha sihi moxi* is where the cord (like a man's penis string) is attached, but it may also be the pointed shape of the end that is a contributing factor for the metaphor. In contrast, the parts of an arrow include the 'head' *he* at one end in example (12) and the 'umbilicus' *makasi* at the other in (13). It should be noted that the 'head' end of the arrow, *xaraka he*, is the one that has the feathers, which might be seen as a link to the feather headdresses worn by men. Perhaps, the *xaraka makasi* end of the arrow, with its repeated wrapping of cotton thread, calls to mind the tied knot of a newborn's umbilical cord. In any case, it is interesting to speculate on the cultural details that seem to relate to certain body-part metaphors.

(9) *raha=sihi* *parɨkɨ*
bow=CL.bow chest
'inner side of a bow'

(10) *raha=sihi* *yaɨpë*[1]
bow=CL.bow back
'outer side of a bow'

(11) *raha=sihi* *moxi*
bow=CL.bow penis
'end of a bow [where cord is attached]'

(12) *xaraka* *he*
arrow head
'[feathered] end of an arrow'

(13) *xaraka* *makasi*
arrow umbilicus
'part of an arrow (where the thread is wound just before the arrow point)'

1. Standard IPA symbols are used in the examples, except for /ë/ which represents the 'schwa' sound /ə/ in Brazilian Yanomami orthography and /x/, which is common usage in Brazilian linguistics, for the standard IPA /ʃ/.

3. Orientational metaphors

There are two opposing spatial orientations: *koro* and *ora*, each of which has a broad range of meanings used in a variety of semantic domains, including the human body, physical objects (such as a canoe), and a story narrative, but they are not common in temporal expressions. Basically, *koro* refers to 'lower or back' while *ora* is 'upper or front.' By extension, *koro* is used to refer to the *lower part* of the body, the *back* of a canoe, or the *end* of a story; while *ora*, in contrast, is the *upper part* of the body, the *front* of a canoe, or the *beginning* of a story. When combined with the word for 'sky' *hutumosi*, *koro* and *ora* refer to cardinal directions 'east' in (14a) and 'west' in (14b). When accompanied by locative and directional morphemes, their meanings are 'downstream' in (15a) and (16a) and 'upstream' in (15b) and (16b).

(14) a. *hutumosi* *koro*
sky lower/back
'east'

b. *hutumosi* *ora*
sky upper/front
'west'

(15) a. *koro-ha*
lower/back-LOC
'downstream (location)'

b. *ora-ha*
upper/front-LOC
'upstream (location)'

(16) a. *koro=hamɨ*
lower/back=DIR
'downstream (direction)'

b. *ora=hamɨ*
upper/front=DIR
'upstream (direction)'

These orientational terms may also specify nouns, such as *yano* 'house' in (17) and *aka* 'tongue' in (18) to indicate relative positions: *koro* in (17a) refers to the 'lowest point of a communal house,' while in (18a) it refers to the 'back of the tongue.' In contrast, *ora* refers to the 'highest point of a communal house' in (17b) and the 'front of the tongue' in (18b). When co-occurring with the body part 'teeth' *nakɨ*, the terms *koro* and *ora* specify 'lower' and 'higher' parts of a tooth – the root or the crown, respectively, in (19a) and (19b).

(17) a. *yano koro*
house lower/back
'lowest point of a communal house (at the base of the exterior wall)'
b. *yano ora*
house upper/front
'highest point of a communal house'

(18) a. *aka koro*
tongue lower/back
'back of the tongue'
b. *aka ora*
tongue upper/front
'front of the tongue'

(19) a. *na-kɨ koro*
tooth-PL lower/back
'root of the teeth'
b. *na-kɨ ora*
tooth-PL upper/front
'crown of the teeth'

Synonyms *oraka* and *orahi,* which refer to the 'neck,' are undoubtedly related to the orientational morpheme *ora*, since the neck is located in the upper body. The term *oraka* is also used to refer to the long 'neck' of a gourd, the entrance to a bee hive, and the top of a closed communal house. Similarly, the phrases *hapaka ora* 'upper part ('neck') of a clay pot' and *kapixa ora* 'clothing worn on the upper part of the body' continue to employ and extend the meaning of *ora*. As a side note, the term *kapixa* is borrowed from the Portuguese *camisa* 'shirt'; traditional Yanomami attire for both men and women is the absence of clothing, except for the penis strings for men and fringed cotton genital coverings for women. Body paint designs are favored over clothing in the hot tropical climate.

4. Temporal metaphors

Deutscher claims that in many languages "no two domains are more intimately linked than space and time…we invariably speak of time in terms of space, and this reflects the fact that we *think* of time in terms of space" (2005: 134), and English demonstrates this with examples like "at the *end* of the year" and "the last *half* of summer." This does not seem to be the case in Yanomae, where the temporal clitic *tëhë* is postposed to noun phrases that describe particular events or characteristics associated with the dry or rainy seasons. For example, favorite rain forest

foods – *paxo wīte* 'fat monkey (meat)' in (20a) or *raxa* 'peach palm (fruits)' in (20b) – are abundant during particular times of the year, and the water level of the rivers is correspondingly higher or lower at specific times, as described in examples (21a) and (21b). The time-related metaphors in these examples highlight the close link between the language and observable events associated with the tropical rain forest.

(20) a. *paxo wīte=tëhë*
monkey fat=TEMP
'fat monkey time (= at the end of the rainy season)
b. *raxa=tëhë*
peach.palm=TEMP
'peach palm (harvest) time' (= summer / dry season)

(21) a. *maũ=u õki-o=tëhë*
water=CL.liquid deep-STATIVE=TEMP
'high water time' [lit. 'when the river is deep']
b. *maũ=u wehe-o=tëhë*
water=CL.liquid dry-STATIVE=TEMP
'low water time' [lit. 'when the river is dry']

To further specify a point in time during the evening or night hours (*ɨtɨ tëhë* 'dark time'), quantifiers that relate to human life stages – *oxe* 'young' in (22a), *hiya* 'young boy' in (22b), and *pata* 'old' in (22c) – are applied to the night. To indicate the midpoint, or midnight, two synonymous expressions are possible. The first (23a) uses the body part, *hrɨkɨ* 'back,' designating the middle or center of the body, as a metaphor for the middle of the night. The second example (23b) employs a spatial term, *mɨamo* 'middle,' that refers to the middle or center of a space, which when applied to the temporal duration 'night' produces the meaning 'midnight.' This is one example that links spatial and temporal domains.

(22) a. *ɨtɨ oxe-o=tëhë*
dark young-STATIVE =TEMP
'at the beginning of the night' (compare Eng. 'the night is still young')
b. *ɨtɨ hiya-o=tëhë*
dark young.boy-STATIVE=TEMP
'early in the night'
c. *ɨtɨ pata-o=tëhë*
dark old-STATIVE=TEMP
'late at night' [lit. 'when the dark (time) is old']

(23) a. *tɨtɨ hrɨk=tëhë*
dark back=TEMP
'at midnight'
b. *tɨtɨ mɨamo=tëhë*
dark middle=TEMP
'at midnight'

5. Neologisms

The physical environment and the culture within which a language thrives and changes provide old meanings that can be extended to new concepts. Among the neologisms found in Yanomae, new vocabulary for modern, manufactured goods provides a clear picture of the speakers' rain forest framework within which these new terms are situated. Examples (24), (25) and (26) show how the referents of objects from the natural environment: a thorn, a gourd, and a woven sac-like recipient (compare *koxikɨ pesi* 'sac-like spider web' and *kaxapë pesi* 'caterpillar's cocoon') are extended to a needle or pin or water bottle.

(24) *misi=a*
thorn=SG
'needle or pin'

(25) *napë horokoto=e*
outsider gourd=POSS
'bottle' [lit. 'outsider's gourd (used for water)]

(26) *maũ=u pesi*
water=CL.liquid woven.sac
'bottle of water' (especially bottled mineral water)

Like the examples presented in Section 2, names for new manufactured items frequently employ the same strategy of applying human or animal body-parts to designate new objects. The shape of a spoon resembles a tongue introduced by (or used by) an outsider in example (27) and a machete in example (28) brings to mind a large metal tongue. Example (29) involves the transfer of the name of a traditional knife *thomɨ nakɨ*, which is actually made of agouti teeth, to the new metal object that serves the same purpose.

(27) *napë aka*
outsider tongue
'spoon'

(28) *poo aka*
metal tongue
'machete'

(29) *thomɨ na-kɨ*
agouti tooth-PL
'knife'

Examples (30) through (36) link the body parts of specific rain forest animals (including a mythological being in (35)) to manufactured objects, especially tools, that physically resemble parts of these animals. As hunters are careful observers of their rain forest homeland, the Yanomae speakers immediately associate new objects with others already familiar to them. Because metal was previously unknown to Amazonian peoples and is stronger and more resistant than other known materials, metal tools and objects are highly prized and sought after by the Yanomami. Terms for such useful innovations from outsiders were quickly incorporated into the culture.

(30) *yawere nahasi-kɨ*
sloth claw-PL
'fork' [lit. 'sloth claws']

(31) *hewe yõpa=si-kɨ*
bat wing=CL.thin-PL
'umbrella' [lit. 'bat wings']

(32) *oko na-kɨ*
crab tooth-PL
'pliers' [lit. 'crab teeth']

(33) *yõra-kɨ-rimë a*
antler-PL-ATTRIB SG
'pick-ax' [lit. 'an antlers-like thing']

(34) *tëpë hwasipë*
anteater back
'a type of concave hoe' [lit. 'anteater's back']

(35) *tëremë nahasi*
mythological.being claw
'a type of triangular hoe' [lit. 'claw of a specific mythological being']

(36) *xama moka*
tapir penis
'a type of hoe for digging' [lit. 'tapir's penis']

Examples (37) and (38) show the adoption of the Portuguese words *carro* 'car' and *camisa* 'shirt', respectively, while at the same time incorporating the new concepts through the use of body-part metaphors.

(37) *kahu* *mahɨ=kɨ*
car (Port. *carro*) foot-PL
'car tires' [lit. 'car's feet']

(38) *kapixa* *mamo-kɨ*
shirt (Port. *camisa*) eye-PL
'shirt buttons' [lit. 'shirt's eyes']

6. Euphemisms for death

Throughout the previous sections, examples of new vocabulary as well as established Yanomae expressions have been presented that support Deutscher's claim that "…if not from the physical world, where else could terms for abstract concepts come from?… The mind cannot just manufacture words for abstract concepts out of thin air – all it can do is adapt what is already available" (2005: 127). The examples in this section focus on the most abstract of concepts that confront human societies: death. This highly sensitive abstraction is communicated in the Yanomae language through an extension of the concept of metaphor into the related phenomena of euphemism and metonymy. Allan and Burridge define euphemism as "an alternative to a dispreferred expression, in order to avoid loss of face" (1991: 11). Burridge further clarifies the term "dispreferred expression" by describing it as "one that is not desired or appropriate on a given occasion. Typically it denotes a taboo topic and so might alternatively be called a 'taboo term'" (2006a: 455). The original Tongan conception of *tabu* as "forbidden behavior, in particular, behavior believed to be dangerous to certain individuals or to the society as a whole" (ibid.) is closer to the Yanomami severe prohibition of speaking of the dead than the common use of euphemism in contemporary contexts, such as English *sanitation worker* for *garbage man* or *dearly departed loved one* instead of *dead relative*.

Among the Yanomami of Amazonia, addressing someone in public by his or her personal name is an insult; likewise, mentioning the name of a deceased person is an offense akin to blasphemy in Western cultures. Burridge (2006b: 452) notes the close connection between naming taboo, the topic of death, and a fear of evil or supernatural powers in many cultures, and Yanomae figurative language nicely illustrates this intersection between linguistic usage and cultural beliefs. Unlike many languages that have euphemisms for death and dying that offer an

image of consolation by emphasizing "different aspects of the physical event … for example, death as a journey (*pass away*) or death as the beginning of a new life (*go to a better place*)" (Burridge 2006a: 459), death in the Yanomae culture is the end of a productive life.

The abstract concept of *death* is "repackaged" in concrete terms to make it more acceptable in normal conversation. In Yanomae, the domain of *death* is "metaphorically linked with" (Coulson 2006: 33) the domain of *daily activities*, which are further specified according to age and gender roles and identified with particular objects – in this case, specific baskets and arrows. Dying is an aberration of daily activities, and, thus, it is euphemistically referred to within that "normal" context, instead of directly using Yanomae lexemes that refer to dying, death, or a dead human body, which would be culturally taboo.

Death may be conveyed as emptiness, loss, or deterioration in the domestic space. An empty hearth, as in example (39), with no fire or food cooking is not normal in daily life and serves as an indication of the permanent absence of a person who otherwise would inhabit the space. In examples (40) and (41) deterioration is the metonymic image that expresses a death, as the bark (hammock) and old house post represent the dead people. In addition, an understanding of cultural assumptions within these examples suggests that the dead person in each case was elderly. The use of the term *rainathe* in (40) suggests a traditional bark hammock, which would only be used by an older person; cotton or manufactured hammocks, *toutou siki*, are much more common these days. In (41) the fact that the house post that fell is described as old, *pata*, implies that the dead person is an elderly man, keeping in mind that houses are constructed by men.

(39) *yutu* *nahi* *proke*
long.ago hearth empty
'For a long time [her/his place at] the hearth [has been] empty.'

(40) *rainathe* *prohe-pra-rio-ma*
bark be.loose-INTEN-TEL-PAST
'A (traditional) bark (hammock) became very loose.'

(41) *pata* *nahi* *ke-rayo-ma*
old house.post fall-TEL-PAST
'The old house post fell.'

The metonymic images found in Yanomae euphemisms recall 16th century Nahuatl use of "source material from the physical world, scenes of life, social roles…" to create a complex system of metaphors rooted in a common cultural context (Palmer 1996: 240). An examination of the use of euphemism in the Yanomae language demonstrates how *not* speaking of the dead can provide insights into

Table 1. Euphemistic metonymy

	– ADULT	+ ADULT	
physical object dead person	small arrows *ruhu masi* (boy)	long arrows *xarakaki* (man)	+ MALE
physical object dead person	small basket *xote he* (girl)	large basket *wiɨ a* (woman)	+ FEMALE

important aspects of Yanomami culture. Euphemism can be expressed through metonymy as "the conceptual principle in which the object replaces the user" (Shen 2006: 462). Table 1 schematizes information about the gender and the relative age (adult vs. child) of the deceased that is conveyed by reference to specific items of material culture (baskets and arrows) that identify the individual's role in traditional Yanomami society. In metonymy "[s]ome subpart of a thing or aspect of a relation comes to stand for the whole" (Rice 2012: 25). As a classic example of metonymy, the person, in death, "becomes" the object with which it is identified in life.

Several verbs may be used euphemistically to announce a death when combined in an utterance with one of the following four specific objects: *wiɨ a* 'a large tightly-woven carrying basket' used by adult women to bring produce from the garden, *xote he* 'a small shallow basket' used by young girls, *xarakaki* 'long (cane) arrows' used by adult men for hunting game, and *ruhu masi* 'a small (palm) arrow' used by young boys learning to hunt (i.e. small birds, insects, or lizards). These four objects are commonly used in daily, village life and are associated with activities of specific gender and age groups. In example (42) the death of a young boy is announced in terms of the corresponding metonym, a small arrow:

(42) *ruhu=yama=masi* *kasi-ma-re-ma*
arrow=we=CL edge-CAU-TEL-PAST
'We put small arrows (= a boy's body) at the edge (of the village).'

In the context of euphemistic usage, the verbs *kasima-* 'to put at the edge (outside the village),' *yokama-* 'to put aside, to put to the side' and *urihima-* 'to put in the forest' refer to the initial stage in the Yanomami funerary ritual whereby the cadaver, carefully wrapped in a bundle of leaves, sticks, and vines, is placed outside the village in the forest to await decomposition (Albert & Gomez 1997: 169).

Similarly, the four metonymic domestic objects may be used with other verbs, such as 'carry' *hiĩpu-* in (43) and 'place' *ĩtha-* in (44) to announce the deaths of a young boy or an adult woman, respectively, using different contextual imagery. Example (43) includes an additional metaphor whereby the physical act of *carrying*

is extended to mean 'keep in one's heart or memory.' This same metaphorical use of the verb *carry* is common in English.

(43) *kama=hwm̃̃=e-nɨ̃ ruhu=masi hĩ̃pu xoa*
3SG=father=POSS-ERG small arrow=CL.plant carry still
'His father still carries the small arrows.'

(44) *okapə-ha-ixoru-nɨ̃ wɨ̃=yama=a ĩtha-ke-ma*
sorcerers-SEQ-attack-SEQ basket=we=SG place-FOC-PAST
'After the sorcerers attacked, we placed (firmly on the ground) a large basket (= a woman's body).'

The use of euphemism and metonymy in Yanomae as a solution to linguistic taboos dealing with death poignantly illustrates the interwoven relationship between language and culture. The discarded objects (baskets and arrows) of everyday use become, through language, symbols of the dead children and adults. In example (45) the small shallow basket *xotehe* is a young girl. Moreover, additional clues to the identity of the dead person may be revealed by a deeper knowledge of the culture that accompanies the metonymic expressions, as already mentioned in the discussion of examples (40) and (41). In example (46) the specific location *xoa e a hẽhãowiha* 'from the space next to my father-in-law's' suggests that the dead woman was probably the speaker's wife or sister-in-law, given the traditional matrilocal residence pattern of Yanomami groups.

(45) *xote=yama=he yoka-ma-re-ma*
small.basket=we=CL put.aside-CAU-TEL-PAST
'We put aside a small basket (= a girl's body).'

(46) *xoa=e=a hẽhãowi=ha wɨ̃=yama=a*
father-in-law=POSS=SG interior.living.space=LOC large.basket=we=SG
urihi-ma-re-ma
forest-CAU-TEL-PAST
'From the space next to my father-in-law's, we put a large basket (= a woman's body) in the forest.'

The urgency of the directive expressed by the use of the imperative in example (47) conveys the importance of the task, yet the literal meaning of the words would seem nonsensical if the hearer were unaware of the euphemistic metonym. Likewise, the meaning of example (48) would not be obvious without an understanding of the euphemistic use of the verb *hatëtë* 'clasp tightly' in the context of the metonymic 'small arrows.' The listener would not realize that the speaker, who is not physically holding small arrows, was actually saying, 'Now my son has died (or my son's funeral has been planned).' All this, of course, is perfectly clear to a native speaker of Yanomae.

(47) *rope ruhu=wama=masi urihi=a ha-i-ma-ri*
quickly arrow=you.PL=CL.plant forest=SG go.out-DYN-CAU-IMP
'Quickly, take the small arrows (= the boy's body) to the forest!'

(48) *hwei=tëhë ipa ruhu=ya=masi hatëtë-ma-ke-ma*
this=TEMP my small.arrow=I=CL.plant clasp.tightly-CAU-FOC-PAST
'Now I kept tightly clasped my small arrows.'

7. Concluding thoughts on endangered metaphors

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate the use of metaphor as it is commonly used in a lesser known language of Amazonia and to show how the language and culture of the Yanomae are tied to the rain forest environment not only as reflected in specific lexical domains, but also as seen through the use of euphemistic metonymy to overcome a taboo on death by *not* speaking of the dead. It is clear in the use of body-part metaphors to refer to traditional objects, geographical phenomena, and neologisms that the bodies of humans and tropical fauna serve as reference points for Yanomae speakers. Furthermore, orientational and temporal metaphors reflect a vibrant traditional culture. This culture and, consequently, the language through which it is expressed will survive and have meaning only as long as its rain forest habitat remains intact. Andreas Musolff proposes "a system of criteria for classifying metaphors which can be said to be 'endangered' in a linguistic-ecological sense" (Abstract LAUD 2014: 109). The idea of linguistic-ecological endangerment is particularly relevant to languages in the Amazon Basin of South America, which are seriously threatened not only by encroaching national languages (especially Portuguese and Spanish) but also by the invasion and seizure of their lands by settlers, ranchers, loggers, and wildcat gold miners as well as international corporations seeking to exploit natural resources, especially oil.

Jonathan Loh and David Harmon emphasize that the decline in biodiversity globally coincides with the loss of linguistic diversity, especially in the Americas and Australia, where they claim "the most highly threatened language families are" (Abstract LAUD 2014: 93). The Yanomami language family is among these, as its population of speakers continues to suffer from uncontrolled invasions by outsiders into their territory. Unwarranted contact with outsiders not only results in changes to the traditional lifestyles, but it also brings disease and death to remote Yanomami villagers, who do not have acquired resistance to common Western infectious diseases. As one of the largest of the least acculturated indigenous groups in the Amazon today, the approximately 33,000 Yanomami in Brazil and Venezuela are especially endangered physically and culturally as their mineral rich lands are coveted by individuals as well as their respective governments. This

paper provided a short description of some of the metaphors in one of the four main Yanomami languages; it does not pretend to even begin to show the richness of the linguistic structures and the knowledge that the speakers of these languages have about the flora and fauna of the rain forest they inhabit. It remains to be seen whether the non-indigenous, so-called developed, world will learn to value such knowledge and preserve the world's remaining biolinguistic and human diversity.

Abbreviations

CAU	causative
CL	classifier
DYN	dynamic
ERG	ergative
FOC	focalizer
IMP	imperative
INTEN	intensifier
PAST	past
PL	plural
POSS	possessive
SEQ	sequential
SG	singular
STATIVE	stative
TEL	telic
TEMP	temporal
1	1st person
3	3rd person

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