

Preface

The volumes of this Handbook offer a comprehensive panorama of the languages of Amazonia, one of the most linguistically diverse regions on earth. The chapters presented here aim to provide systematic overviews of virtually every attested language family and language isolate in the region, some of which have remained effectively undescribed until now. Volumes 1 and 2 focus on language isolates, while the subsequent volumes address small and larger language families. While linguists represent a primary audience for this Handbook, the work is also intended to be accessible and useful to scholars and other interested readers from a range of disciplines and backgrounds.

The chapters within these volumes bring together the accumulated knowledge, experience, and contributions of a great many people. First and foremost, we recognize the speakers of the languages represented here, especially in light of the immeasurable challenges that many of them have faced in speaking, maintaining, passing on, or remembering their languages. We wish to express our profound debt to them: without their generosity in sharing their languages, and their commitment to teaching others about them, these volumes would not be possible.

We are also very grateful to the authors of the chapters presented in these volumes. Many of these authors have dedicated much of their lives to documenting and studying the languages they describe here. Some came on board at later stages of the project, in some cases at quite short notice, to help bring the work to fruition.

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