Music revitalization as language revitalization: The jakuli and katẽntiri of the Mỹky people in southern Amazonia[1]

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the connection between language and music in the context of language revitalization. The focus is on one case study among the Mỹky-speaking indigenous people in Brazilian southern Amazonia, that of the documentation and revitalization of the traditional *jakuli* genre of dance and music, and the traditional *katẽntiri* reed pipes that are played with it. It is shown that (re)creating a social space for traditional music has a positive impact on the attitude towards an endangered language and on its use in the speech community.

RESUMO

Este artigo trata da conexão entre língua e música em um contexto de revitalização linguística. Ele apresenta um estudo de caso com o povo indígena de língua mỹky na Amazonia meridional brasileira, descrevendo a documentação e a revitalização do gênero tradicional de dança e música jakuli, juntamente com as flautas katẽntiri, usadas nas práticas culturais relatadas. O texto descreve a (re)criação de um espaço social para a música tradicional e mostra o impacto positivo na atitude dos membros da comunidade com relação à língua ameaçada e ao seu uso na comunidade de fala.

[1] I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Manoki and Mỹky communities for welcoming me. Special thanks go to Bartolo Napjoku, Kamũnũ, Paatau, Kamtinuwy, and *mäktẽ* Tamũxi. I would also like to thank Peter Coutros, Sara Larios i Ongay, Nicolle Torres Niviayo, Nina van der Vlugt, and Hein van der Voort, as well as the audiences at Amazónicas IX and Language Documentation and Archiving II. I am also grateful to Luiz Amaral for his editorial work, and the two anonymous reviewers for their feedback and support.

1. INTRODUCTION

As an orally-transmitted means of knowledge and communication, traditional music is very adjacent to language. This paper discusses the role that documenting and revitalizing an endangered musical tradition can have in the broader context of language reclamation and revitalization. Language and traditional music are brought together in this paper under the umbrella of orally-transmitted culture. The claim that the fate of orally-transmitted, non-grammatical aspects of a language is inextricably connected to the vitality and survival of said language should be no surprise. In his influential article on the urgency of language documentation, Ken Hale (1992) made a point of drawing attention to this too often neglected reality of language:

> *"Of supreme significance in relation to linguistic diversity, and to local languages in particular, is the simple truth that language – in the general, multi-faceted sense – embodies the intellectual wealth of the people who use it. A language and the intellectual productions of its speakers are often inseparable, in fact. Some forms of verbal art – verse, song, or chant – depend crucially on morphological and phonological, even syntactic, properties of the language in which it is formed. In such cases the art could not exist without the language, quite literally. Even where the dependency is not so organic as this,* ***an intellectual tradition may be so thoroughly a part of a people's linguistic ethnography as to be, in effect, inseparable from the language****." (Hale 1992:36)*

After this introductory section, the relevant aspects of the social and linguistic situation of the speakers of Mỹky are laid out in section 2, describing the histories and realities of its two speech communities, the Manoki and the Mỹky. Section 3 describes jakuli music and the katẽntiri reed pipes, and section 4 presents the documentation and revitalization process of jakuli. Section 5 deals with the connections between musical and linguistic revitalization. Section 6 concludes the article.

2. THE MỸKY AND THE MANOKI

The Manoki (or Iranxe) and the Mỹky are two indigenous groups that speak the same isolated language, called also Mỹky (Monserrat 2000, 2010, Bardagil 2023). These two Mỹky-speaking peoples live in central-western Brazil in the area of the Juruena river, in the headwaters of the Tapajós, a tributary of the Amazon. Early 20th century information already places the Mỹky-speaking peoples in the valley of the Juruena, between the Cravari and the Do Sangue rivers. No pre-20th century mentions of this nation or language have yet been uncovered.

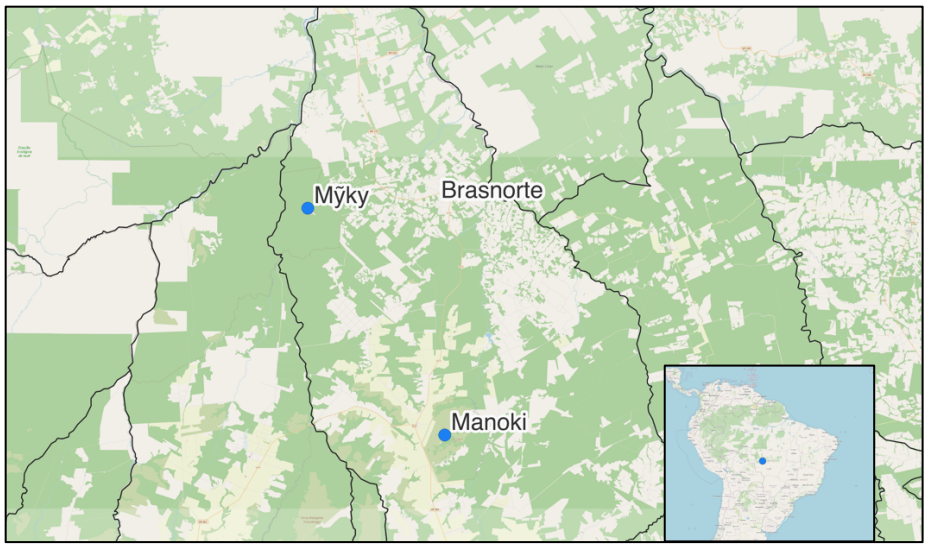

Figure 1. Location of the Mỹky and the Manoki in their indigenous lands.

Map created using QGIS.

2.1. HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC BACKGROUND

The denomination for this isolated language and the indigenous groups that speak it is complex, as is their history of contact with Brazilians. Before direct contact with Mỹky-speaking peoples, neocolonial Brazilians began to use the exonym Iranxe, presumably borrowed from the neighbouring Paresi-speaking groups (Arawakan) who live in the upper Juruena (Rondon 1946). The beginning of the 20th century brought about decades of attacks by Brazilian rubber tappers and by other indigenous nations, followed by the spread of western epidemics. The Brazilian invasion of Mỹky land ended with the removal of all surviving Iranxe (with the exception of two men), to be settled at the Jesuit mission of Utiariti, where they reached a population low of 33 individuals.

At Utiariti, children were forcibly placed in a boarding school that punished any display of their native language and cultural practices, while adults were forced into a wage economy and put to work doing various extractive jobs. The boarding school generation lost their active fluency in the language, with only a handful of people in that generation who did acquire the Mỹky language due to exceptional family circumstances.

Following the Second Vatican Council, a new cohort of Jesuit missionaries with different sensitivities closed Utiariti in the late 1960s, helping the various indigenous nations who had been settled at the mission to seek official demarcation of their indigenous lands. The Iranxe ended up in a meager official reservation, the Terra Indígena (TI) Iranxe, on the western bank of the Cravari river, a

cerrado savannah territory that they had never occupied before, traditionally favouring the deeply forested land on the eastern bank:

"We had penetrated significantly north, and we were still able to keep advancing in that direction thanks to the trails opened by the indians, which connected the various tributaries on the left shore of the Cravary river. In truth, the exploration of this river has so far been limited to its left bank, since the entirety of its right bank is inhabited by the Iranxe indians, who have so far resisted any invasion." (Lyra 1908; my translation)

Jesuit missionaries Thomáz Lisboa and Vicente Cañas,[2] together with some indigenous men from the former Utiariti mission, led a series of expeditions to locate a rumoured isolated community on the eastern bank of the Papagaio river, another tributary of the Juruena. In 1971 the expedition made contact with a Mỹky-speaking group of 23 persons, of whom 9 were adults. This small group had left the Cravari and Do Sangue area after Brazilian invaders started to massacre the Mỹky-speaking peoples in the 1900s and 1910s. First settling where today's Brazilian town of Brasnorte is located, they had kept away from the advancing colonial frontier, and suffered losses from attacks by Brazilians, Nambikwara and Rikbaktsa. One of the Iranxe in the contact expedition, Tapura, decided to stay with the newly contacted group. Tapura soon married into the community and went on to become village chief. The 1971 group was given the name Mỹky, for their word for "person".[3] This also became the name of their demarcated indigenous land, TI Menku (sic), and, eventually, the name of the language, as in Monserrat (2000).

The Mỹky group presented some dialectal differences with the Iranxe group, most notably the loss of a lateral /l/ consonantal phoneme, which is retained in the Mỹky language spoken by the Iranxe; see Bardagil (2023: 898) for other dialectal differences. This is likely not the result of a language change that took place in 50-70 years but, rather, a trace of the former dialectal diversity of Mỹky-speaking peoples. The Iranxe group that lived at Utiariti and later relocated to the TI Iranxe is in fact the result of an amalgamation of several Mỹky-speaking communities that occupied their ancestral territory and presented dialectal variation. When describing the Iranxe groups that were brought

[2] The same missionaries eventually also established ongoing contact with the Arawakan-speaking Enawenê-Nawê, on the left shore of the Papagaio river. Thomáz Lisboa stepped down as a Chatholic priest and stayed with the Mỹky community, marrying a Mỹky woman and raising two children, until his passing in 2019. Vicente Cañas ended up living with the Enawenê-Nawê until 1987, when his body was found by the Enawenê-Nawê in his quarantine hut; he had been murdered shortly after having returned from the city. Recently, the at-the-time police commissioner of Juína has been found guilty of the charge of murder, for leading an execution team against Cañas following orders of the town's landowners.

[3] Also the word for "person" among the Iranxe, documented already by Moura (1957) as *münkü*.

together at the Utiariti mission, Moura (1957: 160) points out that "every group has a different pronunciation of words" (my translation).

Based on what we can reconstruct from oral memory, the area between the Cravari and Do Sangue rivers was occupied by Mỹky-speaking people who lived in clusters of villages that formed differentiated groups. At least a few of these groups would have presented dialectal differences, and also had proper names associated to them. Elders are still able to provide me with names of old Mỹky-speaking groups like the *akohmia* "toucan people" or the *mõĩmia* "bee people".[4] Without giving group names, Pivetta (1993: 43) claims to have found evidence for the existence of at least 17 groups of Iranxe in interviews with elders in 1992, but states that "many of these groups exist only as memories [...] since many of them had already disappeared when these elders were children" (my translation). Today's Mỹky group, on the Papagaio river, was one of these groups, with the rest of them having either coalesced into the Iranxe or perished.

During the 1990s, the Iranxe and NGO actors working alongside them sought a Mỹky-language autonym to replace the term Iranxe. When consulting with the Mỹky group, the word *manoki* was given to them. In the language, *manoki* means "neighbouring village". Despite reluctance from some Iranxe/Manoki elders, the name was adopted by the community as their autonym to differentiate themselves from the Mỹky group and to leave behind an ethnonym that they had had no agency in choosing.

The Manoki community, aided by the newly-formed OPAN (first Operação Anchieta, later renamed as Operação Amazônia Nativa), missionaries like Darci Pivetta (1993) or anthropologists like Rinaldo Vieira Arruda, started a process to officially demarcate a protected indigenous land in their original territory, where their villages had been located and where their ancestors are buried. Declared an official Terra Indígena in 2008, this decision has spent over a decade in the limbo of the Brazilian justice system, contested by the neighbouring Brazilian settlers that would rather exploit this land than see it preserved as indigenous territory. Plots of Manoki land have been purchased illegaly and, just like one century ago, the settlers practice a policy of fait accompli. While the final decision to evict the land and grant the Manoki full rights to it awaits, land invasion has routinely taken place to extract wood and burn down parts of the forest for cattle pastures.

Figure 2 shows a timeline of the main events in the history of Mỹky-speaking peoples during the 20th century.

[4] These names might refer to animal resources that were prevalent in their territory, in a similar way to which some Mỹky exonyms for neighbouring indigenous nations refer to the territory that they inhabited and present a similar morphology to that of Mỹky-speaking group names (e.g., *pãjmia* “forest men” for the Tapayuna/Kajkwakratxi, or *mãmia* “savannah people” for the Paresí).

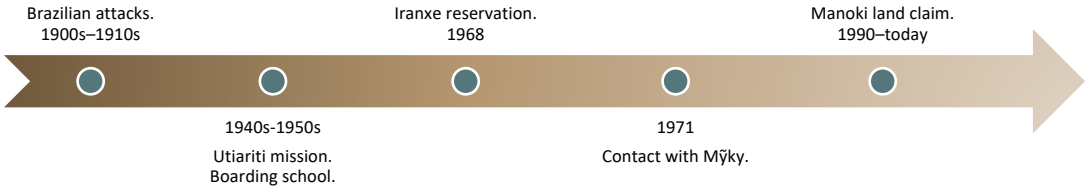

Figure 2. Timeline of 20th century Manoki and Mỹky history.

The Mỹky traditionally used the word *mỹky* in their language as a word for "person", not as an autonym. It commonly applies to Brazilians or Europeans and other indigenous nations. However, phonologically adapted in Portuguese as [miki], the word is often used with this pronunciation by the Mỹky in the sense of an ethnonym. They call their language *jãjanỹ*, "our language", as in 1.

(1) *jã* *ja'a* *nỹ*
1PL language DEF

The native autonym that is used productively by the Mỹky is *jãkjapy*, "our kin", as in 2.

(2) *jã* *kapy*
1PL relative

In this paper I will favour the tradition in Mỹky scholarship rather than switch to the native autonym Jãkjapy, and so I will refer to Mỹky-speaking peoples when talking about today's Mỹky and Manoki generally, or their 20th century forming groups, and I will use the word Mỹky for their language.

2.2. THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC REALITIES

Just as the 20th century histories of the Manoki and the Mỹky are different, so is the situation of their language and its vitality. As a result of the linguistic genocide that took place at Utiariti, there has been a severe language shift in the Manoki community. Today three Manoki elders are the only speakers of the language in a community of approximately 420 Manoki who have Portuguese as their language. Additionally, there are another two speakers of the Manoki variety living in the Mỹky village of Irupjata (Japuíra). Among the Mỹky, with a population of approximately 100 people, the language is vital and spoken as a first language across all generations.

The Mỹky language has a clearly stronger vitality among the Mỹky than among the Manoki. However, the situation is far from stable, and language shift could be on the verge of taking place. Several Mỹky in the community have consistently voiced their concern about the growing presence of Portuguese-dominant children and teenagers, even among some whose parents are both Mỹky and thus were not raised in a bilingual household, as is the case of the few existing Mỹky-Manoki couples in the Mỹky community. A coarse evaluation of the patterns of language use in the village of Irupjata/Japuíra carried out in 2022 revealed the situation represented in Table 1, where M is Mỹky and P is Portuguese, and the more favoured language is displayed to the left in a pair.

	Elder	**Adult**	**Young**	**Children**
Elder	M	M	M	P/M
Adult	M	M	M	P/M
Young	M	M	M/P	P/M
Children	P/M	P/M	P(/M)	P(/M)

Table 1: Communication among Mỹky age groups in the TI Menku.

The situation roughly depicted in this table is, as mentioned, a source of preoccupation in the Mỹky community. There is a major interest among the Mỹky in establishing an early language immersion initiative in the style of a language nest, as has been successfully done in similar contexts (cf. Zahir 2018). In this sociolinguistic landscape, any communicative space that favors the Mỹky language against the growing presence of Portuguese will have a positive impact in the perception, exposure to and use of the Mỹky language in the community. The practice of traditional music is one of these spaces.

3. JAKULI MUSIC AND THE KATẼNTIRI

Jakuli [5] is a genre of music and dance of the Mỹky-speaking peoples which occupied a central role in traditional Mỹky and Manoki society. It combines instrumental playing and singing of a rich repertoire of jakuli melodies with dancing. These melodies are different from other genres of Mỹky music, such as *nãripju* or *jetajawuli* song. Traditionally, jakuli would take place on special days and would start in the evening or late afternoon, and the playing and dancing could go on for hours until past midnight.

[5] *Jakuli* /jakuli/ is the Manoki word, with the corresponding Mỹky ɨ-less form *jakuwy* /jakuwɨ/.

The Mỹky reed pipes, called *katẽntiri*, have a protagonist role in jakuli music. A katẽntiri consists of five reed sticks bound together in decreasing length, open on the upper end and stopped by the natural joint of the reed on the lower end. The type of reed used to make katẽntiri is known as *wasĩna*, and is characterized for being narrow with thick walls, and for having a long distance between the joints, necessary for the right length of the lowest tubes. The reed tubes are tuned very specifically in relation from one to the other, but with no pitch strictly associated with them as long as their range is within that of the voice for singing. The different tubes have specific names, shown in Figure 3. From lower to higher, they are called *mju'u*, *mju'jari*, *mju'mäjtariki*, *mju'jamã*, and *mju'jamãrintasi*. The katẽntiri is played with a slightly overblown, percussive style.

Figure 3: The katẽntiri is a reed pipe made from five bound reed sticks.

While men will play jakuli melodies on the katẽntiri, women sing them. It is not formally forbidden for women to see, touch or play the katẽntiri, but it is largely avoided. The traditional belief among both men and women is that a girl or woman who holds a katẽntiri may get a nosebleed. It can also have more permanent consequences, as touching a katẽntiri could cause a woman's breasts to become too large and, thus, embarrassing. Instead, women play the jakuli melodies by singing them with a very precise lilting, or singing with syllables that have no meaning beyond carrying a melody.

Jakuli is played with two melody lines. The main melodic line is played by the leading player called *tikjãnta*, a word also used for a village chief (*cacique* or *capitão* in Portuguese) and sometimes translated by the Mỹky as "master" (*mestre* in Portuguese) in the musical context. Playing jakuli as a tikjãnta is considered significantly more difficult than as a *tikjãntahjari*, a "secondary chief", playing the second or accompanying melody line. All katẽntiri players can play the instrument as tikjãntahjari, but only a few of them are skilled enough to play as tikjãnta. The same difference applies to the lilting of jakuli melodies done by a woman: she may either sing as tikjãnta or as tikjãntahjari. An example of jakuli music can be heard in the following recording (https://cla.berkeley.edu/item/?bndlid=36548) made by missionary Elizabeth Rondon Amarante.

Flute playing with instruments similar to the Mỹky katẽntiri could be considered a regional characteristic of the Juruena valley. The presence of several types of Paresi flutes is reported by Salles (2017) and has been pointed out to me by several Paresi that have married into the Manoki community. It is also the case of the neighbouring Enawenê-Nawê, another Arawakan nation (Wright 2011, Lima Rodgers 2014). Other Juruena indigenous peoples like the Rikbaktsa, speakers of a Macro-Jê language, also have their version of the region's musical traditions (Polegatti 2013). In Nambikwara communities, the presence of flute music was reported already by Roquette-Pinto (1920), Atay (1967) and, more recently, Fiorini (2011) still reports a strong presence of various types of flutes, including ocarina-shaped nostril flutes. The flute-playing musical traditions of the Juruena valley nations are consistent with the presence of very similar flutes in the broader area east of the Guaporé river (Lévi-Strauss 1948), which itself is the eastern portion of a highly diverse linguistic and cultural area known as the Guaporé-Mamoré (Crevels & van der Voort 2008) whose recent history is being investigated to this day.

The cultural genocide that took place at Utiariti targeted not only indigenous languages, but also traditional cultural practices and the native religions of the indigenous nations settled in the mission. In particular, jakuli was banned during an extended period for being perceived as demonic or uncivilized. Just like with the Mỹky language, the oral transmission of jakuli music was severely broken, both instrumental and vocal, among the Manoki. The practice of jakuli survived into the 1990s and early 2000s, with several skilled players of katẽntiri belonging to the pre-mission generation such as Inácio Kajoli, Celso Xinũxi and especially Alonso Irawali, a highly skilled tikjãnta.[6]

However, with their passing in the late 2010s, today the knowledge of jakuli melodies and katẽntiri playing in the Manoki community is limited to one man, Luíz Tamũxi (born before 1939), who only ever played as tikjãntahjari. Tamũxi's advanced age and a lack of practice in recent years mean that both his memory and his motor skills severely limit his displays of jakuli on the katẽntiri. He learnt to play in his youth from a paternal uncle who was a jakuli tikjãnta, his namesake Tamũxi. Luíz Tamũxi is also one of the three fluent speakers of Mỹky in the Manoki community, being the last member of his generation—the generation that arrived at Utiariti as young adults and still remember growing up in pre-mission Manoki village life.

[6] In post-Utiariti times, most Manoki have two names and no surname. Besides their Portuguese given name, they have a Mỹky language given name.

Figure 4: Luíz Tamũxi playing the katẽntiri.

Picture by the author; used with permission.

Among the Mỹky group, jakuli and katẽntiri dwindled with the severe population loss that the group suffered while they were on the run from the advancing colonial frontier during the first two thirds of the 20th century. It is not clear to me when jakuli stopped being played and danced before 1971, but memory of it was still alive among the adults in the group. After 1971, however, jakuli music became extremely important in the Mỹky community with the arrival of Tapura, who not only became chief of the Mỹky community but was also a highly skilled tikjãnta on the katẽntiri. Tapura was one of only two Iranxe/Manoki who had decided to stay in the Cravari river region, rather than move to Utiariti, and he played a decisive role in the expeditions that eventually established contact with the Mỹky group. Tapura was the first outsider of the small contact expedition to approach the Mỹky settlement in 1971; as he walked slowly towards the main hut, he heard the voice of a woman humming a jakuli tune that he recognized. He took that as final proof that the uncontacted group belonged to his nation, and started to say a ritual arrival speech. Today, 15 years after his passing, Tapura is still highly remembered in both the Mỹky and the Manoki communities.

Figure 5: Tapura, leader of people and music.

Picture by Ivar Busatto; used with permission.

Fortunately, the full knowledge of jakuli music in the Mỹky community exists still in three musicians, one man and two women. All three are relatives of the deceased Tapura. Kamũnũ and Paatau, two sisters, became Tapura's wives soon after his arrival at the Mỹky community. Today they are highly regarded for their traditional Mỹky knowledge, which includes medicinal plants, myths and oral history. They also possess great musical knowledge and skill, remembering perfectly all the jakuli melodies that they had learnt with their husband. As for katẽntiri playing, it is still retained by Bartolo Napjoku, an adopted son of Tapura who was born shortly before the transfer of the Manoki/Iranxe to the Utiariti mission in the 1940s-1950s. Napjoku inherited from his adoptive father an interest and skill as a tikjãnta player of katẽntiri, while also being versed in tikjãntahjari playing, and he shares with his step mothers a deep love for jakuli music.

Figure 6. Paatau, Kamũnũ and Napjoku performing jakuli.

Picture by the author; used with permission.

Napjoku, Kamũnũ and Paatau are the three last people to have full proficiency in the art of jakuli music. As such, they play a crucial part in the process to document and revitalize jakuli.

4. DOCUMENTING AND REVITALIZING JAKULI MUSIC

In the last months of 2022, during my fieldwork visit with the Mỹky and the Manoki, I started to work alongside some members of the Mỹky community to document jakuli music. In parallel, this led to a process of revitalization of jakuli music and katẽntiri playing. This section describes these processes.

4.1. COLLECTING AND RECLAIMING THE MUSIC

The process started with the documentation of jakuli tunes sung by Kamũnũ and Paatau, which I undertook with the collaboration of Kamtinũwy, a young school teacher and cultural activist in the Mỹky community. Over several sessions, we managed to record 25 different jakuli tunes. According to the singers, there are still another 20 or 30 that we will record in a second step of the documentation project. These recordings were made with a Zoom H4n voice recorder, using the recorder's cardioid microphone, and filmed with a Canon EOS M50. The audio was then cleaned using Audacity and merged with the video recording, and the different clips were split into each of the tunes.

For the Mỹky and Manoki communities, jakuli music exists primordially as an instrumental genre. Even though women can and will participate by lilting the melodies, the perception in the community is that without katẽntiri there can be no jakuli. This brings us to one of the main obstacles in the process to document and revitalize jakuli music: there is a chronic lack of katẽntiri in the Mỹky and Manoki communities. As mentioned above, katẽntiri are made of wasĩna reeds. In recent years, wasĩna has become more and more difficult to find in the forest, in part due to the advance of deforestation around and even inside the demarcated indigenous areas. In the TI Mỹky, two trips into the forest were made to locate the reeds, plus another expedition into the forest near the Honorato river, between the town of Brasnorte and the Iranxe demarcated land. No wasĩna was located. A katẽntiri that had been gifted to me in 2019, which I had brought back in 2022, was the only existing instrument in the community.

With some justified skepticism among the Mỹky, my proposal to use thin plastic house piping as a replacement of wasĩna reeds was met with an enthusiastic response by Napjoku. The scarcity of appropriate materials to make katẽntiri was one of two reasons for the adoption of non-traditional materials. The second reason was the durability of the material itself: even if wasĩna reeds are located in the near future, the traditional katẽntiri is not a lasting instrument, and was never meant to be. Instead, when it was inevitably damaged by humidity, insects, children or otherwise, new wasĩna would be procured and new katẽntiri would be fashioned just ahead of a jakuli celebration, often closely copying the proportions and tuning of an existing one.

Figure 7: One of the first prototypes of the Napjoku katẽntiri.
Picture by the author; used with permission.

Napjoku turned out to be an extremely skilled katẽntiri luthier. Over the course of two weeks and a couple of trips to the construction material shop in Brasnorte, we worked together on different models of katẽntiri. Knife in hand, Napjoku tuned the pipes by ear with rock solid confidence, notching off thin slices of PVC until he reached the desired tuning. During the crafting process I started my training as a katẽntiri player, and we practiced with the new PVC instruments both together and privately. After some exploration, we settled on a two-model solution: one low katẽntiri, with a 34cm mju'u (lowest tube), for the closeness in tone to the originals, and another higher katẽntiri, with a 27cm mju'u, to match in pitch the singing of Paatau and Kamũnũ in the recordings. This second model was necessary to use the recordings of jakuli lilting as learning support. Ten katẽntiri were made, two of which I kept.

The last element of the documentation portion of this project was to record the jakuli tunes played on the katẽntiri. Several recordings were made of Napjoku playing in tikjãnta style by himself, and also playing alongside several of the recordings of his step mothers. Both these katẽntiri recordings and the lilting recordings are the main corpus for the revitalization portion of this jakuli music project.

4.2. PEDAGOGICAL MATERIALS

The pedagogical materials produced during the 2022 process to revitalize jakuli are of two kinds, audiovisual and textual. These are listed below in 3.

(3) a. Recordings of lilted tunes (Paatau and Kamũnũ)

b. Recordings of tunes played on the katẽntiri (Napjoku)

c. Recordings of lilted tunes alongside the katẽntiri (Napjoku, over recordings of Paatau and Kamũnũ)

d. Transcriptions of lilted tunes

e. Musical notation of tunes

The most important element, even essential, is for the jakuli learner to have easy exposure and access to the music to be learnt. This is provided by the two types of recordings, with tunes played on the katẽntiri by Napjoku and lilted by Kamũnũ and Paatau. Most of the recording sessions consisted of a continuous series of jakuli melodies lilted or played one after the other. In these cases, the video and audio were segmented into different shorter clips corresponding to each one of the recorded jakuli tunes. For lack of specific names for the different jakuli melodies, the video and audio files were labeled using a sequential numbering. This audiovisual output allows learners of jakuli to become familiar and memorize a tune before attempting to produce it. The primary materials of the documental portion of the jakuli project are archived alongside the other Mỹky-Manoki field materials collected during my fieldwork in a dedicated California Language Archive (CLA) collection (https://cla.berkeley.edu/collection/?collid=11313), in open access as agreed by both communities, who are well aware of this repository of their cultural heritage and make use of it.

The audiovisual output of the jakuli documentation initiative also has a secondary impact in the community as listening material for non-learners. Many Mỹky and Manoki showed interest in listening to the recordings on their smartphones, at home, or while travelling by car on a USB stick. The documentation and dissemination alone, besides it being crucial for a revitalization process, already had a net positive impact on the presence of and interest in jakuli music in the Mỹky and Manoki communities.

To supplement the pedagogical recordings, a simple notation method was proposed for jakuli music.[7] The notation assigns a number from 1 to 5 to each one of the five reeds of the katẽntiri, with the lowest reed, mju'u, receiving number 1. An example of a transcribed melody follows in example 4.

[7] Similarly to ABC musical notation adopted in some European traditional music, this notation is intended as a support for learning by ear, rather than a tool for faithful musical transcription.

(4) 2222–22–5555444
2222–54–4444333
2222–44–33332–1
2222–22–2–32–1
2222–22–2–22–222–1
2222–22–2–22–222

For a few of the tunes, the specific lilting was transcribed. This was produced in two formats. As an autonomous text, which can be printed and handed out to learners, or projected onto a whiteboard in a classroom context. The transcription was also added as a subtitle on a video clip of the recording of a specific jakuli tune. An example of a transcribed jakuli tune lilted by Kamũnũ and Paatau, the same one in 4, is provided in example 5.

(5) takakatanerane takakarane
taneranurane takakatane hõ
taneranurane akarane tõm
takakatanerane akarane hõm
takakatanerane hanerane hane hõm
takakaranerane hanerane hane
takakaranerane takakarane hõm
taneranerane takakarane hõm
taneranerane akarane tõm
takakaranerane hanerane hõm
takaneranerane anerane hane tõm
takakaranerane tanetjane hããã

A 2024 visit to the Mỹky community revealed that the materials produced as an output of the jakuli documentation initiative are still circulating. Several people, both older and younger, listen to the recordings and there is a growing familiarity with the melodies. Younger people with an interest in learning jakuli are visibly less intimidated by the process, and Napjoku has been approached by a few young men to borrow a plastic katẽntiri and learn under him. The lilting recordings are used often in

the village school by the Mỹky school teachers, and young students have performed jakuli in public displays at very few school and community events. While not radically reverted, the attitudes towards jakuli music and its presence in the Mỹky community are today substantially different than they were in 2022.

Participant observation during the various stages of the jakuli initiative described in this paper, as well as jakuli-related interactions in 2024, have revealed that the dominant language in these contexts is largely Mỹky, rather than Portuguese. Younger Mỹky, in the age segment where language shift is more possible, have been in very direct contact with a music, a vocabulary and a series of stories in Mỹky that they had never had direct access to. If younger Mỹky accomplish a true revival of jakuli music in the community, the (re)emergence of a Mỹky-dominant communication space in the social landscape will be an even larger positive development for the vitality of Mỹky in the Mỹky community. Future initiatives include setting up study groups and even musical sessions for young male and female learners of jakuli, and encouraging jakuli performances at significant events and celebrations in the community.

The Manoki community reacted with great excitement to the jakuli initiative that took place among the Mỹky in the village of Irupjata, and they have approached me with an interest in replicating the process. My 2024 visit established a tentative calendar for a jakuli workshop in the Manoki village of Cravari, which will count with the presence of Napjoku, Kamũnũ and Paatau.

The 2022 process to document and revitalize jakuli music in the Mỹky community followed a workflow that started with the documentation of the music. This consisted of a systematic recording of jakuli tunes lilted and played in tikjãnta style, or main melody line, as well as katẽntiri playing alongside lilting recordings in both tikjãnta and tikjãntahjari style. More peripheral aspects of jakuli music, such as the legend of its origin or oral retellings of pre-contact and post-contact jakuli celebrations, were also collected as part of the documentation. Several sessions of katẽntiri making and tuning were also recorded.

The revitalization portion of the process set out with the documentary materials as its source corpus with two goals: dissemination of the music, and production of pedagogical materials. Among these are segmented recordings, which can be subtitled in the case of the lilting, and written representations of both the melody and the lilting. Practice instruments made of plastic were also developed as a response to the shortage of the natural materials traditionally used to make the instruments, a shortage directly caused by the advancing colonization and deforestation in the area from Brazilian settlers.

5. MUSIC REVITALIZATION AS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

In a global context of rampant cultural imperialism and severe language loss, especially in indigenous and traditional societies, orally-transmitted musical traditions all over the globe are extremely endangered. This is especially the case in Amazonia. After talking to several indigenous activists, leaders, and non-indigenous researchers working closely with communities, I propose the following generalization:

(6) In a context of endangerment of an orally-transmitted culture, and in absence of an intervention to reinforce it, traditional music is more endangered than language.

This observation applies to language and traditional music as complete systems. In other words, the persistence of a small set of lexical items of a vanished language, or of a handful of songs, independent of their linguistic or musical system, would not be considered counterexamples to (6) in its meaningful significance. The situation of musical loss can, of course, be reverted by taking steps to effectively revitalize the traditional music. The strong version of this generalization picks up the tendency that, in the absence of a process of reinforcement of the traditional music (e.g., the Irish traditional music revival in the 1950s, and the 1968 foundation of Na Píobairí Uilleann to promote the uilleann pipes in Ireland), the orally-transmitted musical tradition of a community undergoing language shift will be more endangered than the language itself.

As has been discussed in this paper, the Manoki provide an example of this very situation. As of 2024 there are three fluent speakers of the language in the Manoki community. One of them, Luíz Tamũxi, is the last member of the last generation of fluent speakers; the other two are exceptions in the following generation, where most people retained a passive understanding of the language but were not able to acquire a fluent competence. In the Manoki community, only Tamũxi (90) is able to play jakuli music on the katẽntiri and by his own admission he was never a highly skilled player.

The situation of the Mỹky language and jakuli music among the Manoki is summarized in table 2.

Population: 420	**Manoki -50s**	**Manoki 60s-70s**	**Manoki 80s-90s**
Mỹky language	0	2	1
Jakuli music	0	0	(1)

Table 2: Linguistic and musical fluency in the Manoki community.

The situation is similar in the Mỹky community. The speakers of the Mỹky variety of Mỹky number approximately 90 people. Among these, there are no more truly skilled players of katẽntiri; however, the Manoki speaker Bartolo Napjoku has lived in the Mỹky community for a few decades and is to all

effects a member of that community. Among the women, two of them are still fluent in singing jakuli tunes: Kamũnũ and Paatau. The knowledge of the Mỹky language and jakuli music among the Mỹky is summarized in table 3.

Population: 100	**Mỹky -50s**	**Mỹky 60s-70s**	**Mỹky 80s-90s**
Mỹky language	80	10	n/a
Jakuli music	0	3	n/a

Table 3: Linguistic and musical fluency in the Mỹky community.

An informal survey of the instrumental traditions of indigenous nations of the Juruena valley and neighbouring areas has revealed situations similar to those of the transmission of Mỹky instrumental music. For instance, among the Rikbaktsa community, language shift is taking place as a consequence of a 20th century situation not dissimilar to that of the Manoki. While there were still 40 fluent speakers of Rikbaktsa in 2010 (Eberhard et al. 2023) in an ethnic population of at least 1120 (Crevels 2012), today there are only four musicians who can properly build and tune traditional Rikbaktsa flutes, all four of them elderly. The Aikanã language (isolated) still counts with approximately 250 speakers, making it a robust indigenous language in the context of the state of Rondônia. However, the last fluent performer of the Aikanã flute tradition, José Pe'i Aikanã, unfortunately passed away in 2020, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Van der Voort 2021).

It would be an interesting study to examine in a systematic way which foreign musical genres, if any, are adopted to take the place of the traditional music in those situations where the latter is lost. While it is very likely that the results would align very closely with the commercial music consumed by the neocolonial society that has emerged around a specific traditional indigenous community, it need not be exclusively so. Among the Manoki, while popular commercial Brazilian music genres like lambadão, forró, funk or sertanejo are commonly listened to, in some occasions that are closely connected to traditional indigenous culture (such as matches of the traditional *ajãli* head-ball game), anthems sung in Guaraní can be heard. These are often circulated by means of borrowed USB drives among indigenous people in the Juruena area during meetings, festivals or other events where different indigenous nations get together.

As mentioned in the previous section, the initial work on revitalizing traditional indigenous music genres showed a positive effect on language revitalization in the case of the Mỹky jakuli. Musical revitalization, in a context of orally-transmitted cultural heritage, corresponds quite closely to the type of language revitalization initiative that Amaral's (2020: 31) classification of linguistic revitalization

practices calls **language revitalization programme based on community practices**. The main strengths of this type of programmes are (a) a strong integration of the language learning component with the context of active communication, (b) the fact that traditional practices of the community gain attention and perhaps also prestige, and (c) their capacity to mobilize and involve the elderly members of the community, very often the last custodians of linguistic and traditional knowledge, who in many traditional indigenous societies do not possess the literacy and training to actively participate in more institutionalized educational programmes. All three of these aspects were prominent features of the documentation and revitalization of jakuli music.

The use of traditional music in the context of reclamation and revitalization of endangered or dormant indigenous languages is not very widespread, often due to the more severe level of endangerment of the musical tradition itself when compared to the language, but it is an approach that several communities adopt in their linguistic initiatives. The Muysca language (Chibchan), in Bogotá, Colombia, has had no fluent speakers since the 18th century. Today, in their language revitalization programme, several Muysca language teachers in the Suba community like Nicolle Torres and Brenn Romero incorporate music that was also recently brought back, played with recovered reed pipes and conques, in their language learning sessions.

Even though our ontologies of language and music generally situate them in different, albeit related domains, it has been shown that several cognitive capacities that allow humans to produce and enjoy music are also shared by the human faculty of language, but not by other cognitive domains (cf. Jackendoff 2009). In particular, Amazonian languages often present a fuzzy division between what is commonly considered linguistic and what is considered musical (e.g., Meyer and Moore 2021). In other words, not only is the point of this paper that the process of revitalizing an orally-transmitted musical tradition can have a positive impact on the revitalization of an orally-transmitted language, but also that revitalizing an orally-transmitted musical tradition should be considered in and of itself linguistic revitalization.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper was written with the goal to provide the full picture of a process in which typically linguistic methodologies for documenting and revitalizing endangered languages were applied to the orally-transmitted jakuli musical tradition among the Mỹky. Besides providing an answer to the Mỹky community's desire to not let jakuli vanish, the ripple effect of our work on its revitalization also encouraged the use of the Mỹky language, by (re)creating a communication space where the Mỹky language is omnipresent, and by stimulating an interest in the lexicon, myths and oral history connected to the jakuli and to Mỹky-language song more broadly. The initial results of this project show the potential of a framework for a holistic approach to the revitalization of orally-transmitted

culture encompassing both language and traditional music. Given that traditional music is “so thoroughly a part of a people's linguistic ethnography as to be, in effect, inseparable from the language” (Hale 1992:36), the loss of the latter triggers the loss of the former. It stands to reason that reinforcing the former would also reinforce the latter.

I would be remiss if I did not encourage fellow researchers in linguistics who carry out fieldwork alongside an indigenous society, whose orally-transmitted musical heritage may be endangered, to consider doing a structured documentation of that musical tradition. This article includes an appendix with general guidelines for approaching this type of endeavour. Not only would those materials be undoubtedly invaluable to their heritage community, but the process may very well have a positive impact on the perception and the vitality of the community’s language. The fate of each and every endangered language is a song with no fixed lyrics, whose melody is constantly improvised.

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APPENDIX

MUSICAL DOCUMENTATION FOR FIELD LINGUISTS

This appendix provides very general guidelines to carry out a musical documentation process in fieldwork conditions. The text assumes that the field linguist is familiar with language documentation, and that standard language documentation equipment is available: voice recorder, microphone(s), video camera, tripod, photo camera.

In documenting traditional music, just like with standard language documentation, informants are very often emotionally attached in an intimate way with the material that is being collected. The field linguist engaging with the musical documentation activities outlined here will, no doubt, approach the culture, the music and the informants with utmost respect.

1. DOCUMENTING THE SOUNDING BODIES

The instruments or other elements used for producing the music should be properly documented. This includes taking good photos of, among other aspects, the instruments on their own from different angles and planes, and also with a skilled performer holding them while playing the music. It is also important to take measurements of the instruments and note the materials, and to record an instrument maker describing the construction process.[8] Even better, if possible, is to film the construction of one instrument, or parts of the process.

2. DOCUMENTING THE MUSICAL CONTEXT

The social and spiritual context should be documented, where possible. Aspects such as the occasions in which the music is/was played, the training process of a young musician, dances that accompany the music, the connection of the music to other aspects of the society, and any myths or stories connected to it. One or more conversations about what is considered good playing are really valuable: What is a good rhythm? What is good playing together, either for multiple players of the same instrument, or different instruments?

3. DOCUMENTING THE PERFORMANCE

The most important part of a musical documentation is documenting the music. Players or singers should be recorded in as many permutations as possible. This will depend on the nature of the musical

[8] This can be a valuable procedural text for a language documentation corpus, if spoken in the target language.

style. It is recommended to record the music both as it is performed in its usual social context, and in a slower-paced version for use by potential learners.

4. DISSEMINATION AND PRESERVATION

As with more usual language documentation, steps should be taken to ensure a proper dissemination and access to the materials by members of the community, and to archive the collected materials in a digital archive that guarantees preservation and ease of access in the long term.

This appendix merely outlines basic guidelines to serve as a jumping point for musical documentation in a context of linguistic fieldwork. For properly detailed guidelines of ethnomusicological field research, the following works are recommended:

Gilman, Lisa and John Fenn. 2019. *Handbook for folklore and ethnomusicology fieldwork*. Indiana University Press, 2019.

Post, Jennifer C., Mary Russell Bucknum and Laurel Sercombe. 2001. *A manual for documentation, fieldwork and preservation for ethnomusicologists*. Bloomington, IN: Society for Ethnomusicology, Indiana University.