Language Documentation and Description

Dâw (Brazil) – Language Contexts

ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

The Dâw people are a small hunting-gathering-oriented group of 142 individuals who inhabit the single Waruá community located at the right bank of the Rio Negro opposite the town of São Gabriel da Cachoeira (Amazonas State, Brazil). Dâw is a member of the small Naduhup family that is being actively transmitted across generations. Despite the language's vitality, the Dâw people have been facing drastic changes over the last decades, which impacts both their linguistic and cultural behavior. Here, we provide a description of the linguistic and ethnographic context of the Dâw people and their language, including topics such as genetic affiliation, sociolinguistic contexts, contact history, and social and political organization.

RESUMO

Os Dâw são um povo pequeno, de 142 pessoas, e habitam uma única comunidade chamada Waruá, localizada na margem direita do rio Negro e em frente à área urbana de São Gabriel da Cachoeira (AM), situada na margem oposta. A língua Dâw faz parte da pequena família linguística Naduhup e vem sendo ativamente transmitida entre as gerações. Apesar dessa vitalidade, os Dâw passaram por mudanças drásticas durante as últimas décadas, que impactaram tanto seus hábitos linguísticos como culturais. Nesse artigo oferecemos uma descrição do contexto linguístico e etnográfico do povo Dâw incluindo tópicos como, por exemplo, afiliação genética e situação sociolinguística bem como história do contato e organização sócio-politica.

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Language Name: Dâw

Dialects: None

Classification: Naduhup

ISO 639-3 Code: kwa

Glottolog Code: daww1239

Population: 142

Location: 0°09'18.6"S 67°04'09.5"W

Vitality rating: Endangered

1. INTRODUCTION

The 142 speakers of Dâw live in a single community on the right riverbank of the Rio Negro river close to the town of São Gabriel da Cachoeira (state of Amazonas, Brazil). Their primary modes of subsistence are hunting, fishing, and gathering, in addition to small-scale manioc farming. Traditionally, the Dâw people would move around frequently; however, this has changed due to their imposed settlement into one community (see Section 4.3), which has made their lives more sedentary. Together with Hup, Yuhup, and Nadëb, Dâw is part of the small Naduhup language family (formerly known as the Makú family: see Section 3.1; Epps & Bolaños 2017). All four languages are distributed along the Middle and Upper Rio Negro within Northwest Amazonia, a region well known for its linguistic and cultural diversity, as shown in Figure 1 (Epps & Stenzel 2013).

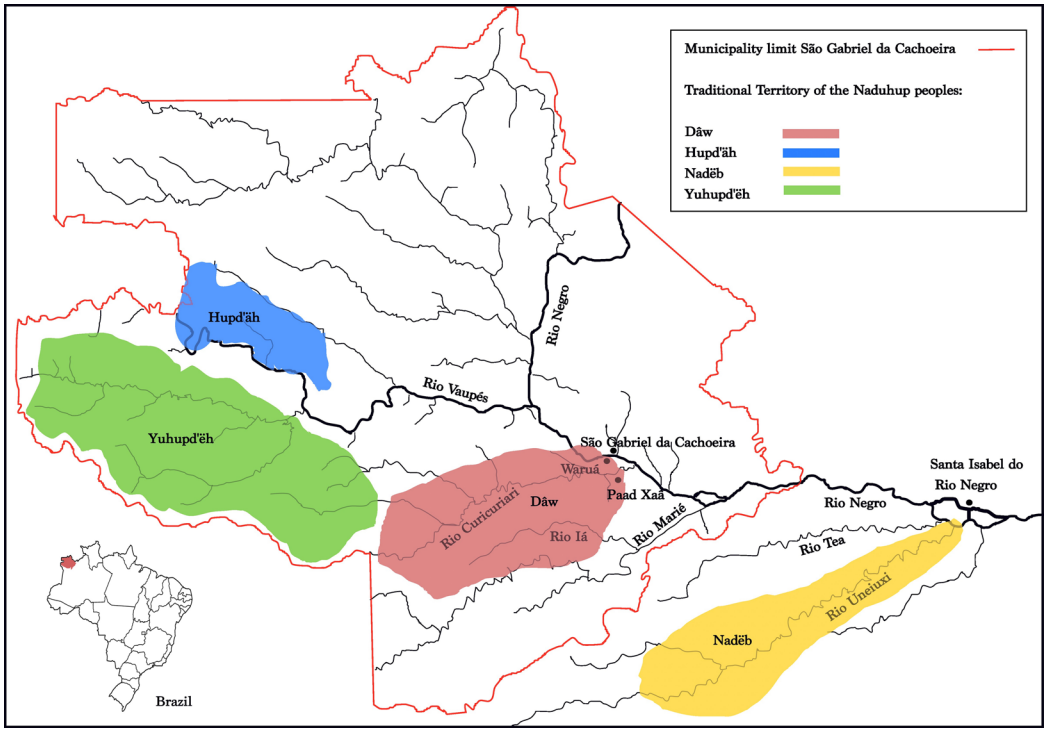

Figure 1 Contemporary distribution of the territories of the Naduhup peoples in the Middle and Upper Rio Negro region. Map by Karolin Obert.

In the anthropological literature, this region is known for linguistic exogamy, in which marriages are required to take place across language groups, while marriages within language groups are considered incestuous. Linguistic exogamy is mainly practiced by Tukanoan groups and is one of the catalysts for the region's widespread multilingualism (e.g., Epps 2017; Jackson 1984; Sorensen 1967; Stenzel 2005). None of the Naduhup groups actively participate in this system of linguistic exogamy. Another salient distinction is related to the people's traditional habitats: while the Naduhup have traditionally occupied the interfluvial zones between major rivers, Tukanoan and Arawakan people occupy the borders of these rivers. Based on their distinct territorial occupations and subsistence practices related to these habitats, scholars refer to these groups

as "Forest Indians" in opposition to "River Indians", respectively (e.g., Athias 1995; Ramos 2018; Reid 1979). Naduhup peoples play an integral role in the interactive regional networks that link them to each other and to their river-dwelling horticulturalist neighbors. The role of the Dâw people in the Upper Rio Negro region is potentially of historical significance, as they migrated into the area from the Middle Rio Negro (see Section 4.1). However, given their drastic decimation during the colonial period, interfluvial foragers like the Dâw are among the least well-understood of Indigenous Amazonians. Moreover, much of what we know about the Dâw people from the sparse historical records has been filtered through the perspective of their riverine neighbors, who describe them as inferior and "savage" individuals as a result of their unwillingness to settle and to engage in horticulture (see Ramos & Obert 2017). In recent collaborations with the Waruá community, we have tried to discover the Dâw people's perspective on their own history, bringing together accounts from Dâw elders and ethnohistorical and territorial documentation.

Our goal in this article is to introduce the Dâw people and their language by pointing to their intriguing position as interfluvial, foraging-focused people of the northwest Amazon region and by bringing together linguistic, ethnographic, and ethnohistoric data. Section 2 sets the stage, providing general information on their location, population, and auto-denomination. Section 3 focuses on the language by introducing Dâw within the Naduhup family, providing a brief description of the typological profile, assessing the status of description and documentation, and finally addressing the sociolinguistic context. In Section 4, we turn to the language's ethnographic context, including an overview of contact history, aspects of mobility, and the Dâw people's social and political organization. Finally, in Section 5, we briefly describe the contemporary situation of the Dâw people and point to future projects.

2. THE DÂW PEOPLE: LOCATION, POPULATION, AND NAME

2.1 LOCATION

The majority of the Dâw people inhabit a single community called Waruá, located at the right riverbank of the Rio Negro opposite the urban area of São Gabriel da Cachoeira. The Dâw are surrounded by many other communities and smaller sites of other ethnic groups such as Tukano and Baré, with whom they share the Rio Negro and its tributaries, as well as a vast forest area extending throughout the surroundings of the communities and the town (see Figure 1). While Hup and Yuhup peoples inhabit the Vaupés River basin, the Dâw occupy the Upper Rio Negro region, and the Nadëb dwell in the Middle Rio Negro region. The area marked in pink in Figure 1 shows the contemporary territorial distribution of the Dâw, i.e., the area they are currently accessing for subsistence and leisure.

Northwest Amazonia is known for its extensive hydrographic networks, flood forests, and mountainous elevations that emerge in the middle of the Amazon rainforest. The numerous rivers in the region draw their water from the middle and upper course of the Rio Negro, the largest river in the region and one of the main tributaries of the Amazon River. The rivers Curicuriari, Marié, Téa, and Uneiuxi, all tributaries at the right margin of the Middle Rio Negro, are important landmarks in Dâw history and cosmology, being intersected by paths and places that are referred to in narratives about the migrations of this small group before they settled in their current community, as well as their encounters with other Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups throughout their migration. In recent work, Epps & Obert (forthcoming) investigate the patterns of migration of the Dâw and Nadëb peoples based on both historical documents by European travelers and shared oral narratives, as these shed light on past interactions between the Dâw and Nadëb in the interfluvial zones of the Marié and Téa rivers. This region is also considered the place of emergence of the Dâw, who, according to the stories told by their elders, would have originated in the Wiç creek, a tributary of the Wení river (see Section 4.2).

2.2 NAME

Like the other three Naduhup groups (Yuhup, Hup, Nadëb), the term *dâw* /dəw/ means 'people'; more specifically, 'people of our group'. In turn, people who do not belong to this ethnic group are

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referred to in various ways, such as by the term *buuɣ* for 'non-Indigenous person', and other terms denoting people from other groups (e.g., *woor* 'Tukano people'; *tɯɯm êe'* 'Yanomami people'). The term *dâw* is also used to refer to the language itself, suggesting an intrinsic relationship between language and ethnic identity, reflecting the concept shared throughout the region that "we are what we speak".

However, outside of the community, Naduhupan groups are frequently referred to as *Makú*, a pejorative term which is increasingly contested. This term was often used to refer to the forest people or "savages", usually in opposition to the Arawakan and Tukanoan river people. *Makú* thus represents a social and linguistic category in this region that expresses existing asymmetries between the Naduhup and their river-dwelling neighbors. The term itself is of Arawakan origin and means 'people without speech' (Baniwa-Curripaco: *ma-aku* 'negative-speak', cf. Epps & Bolaños 2017: 470), demonstrating the negative attitudes of other Indigenous and non-Indigenous neighbors towards Naduhupan peoples. During their gradual integration into the city of São Gabriel da Cachoeira, the Dâw specifically have also been called *Kamã*. Similar to *Makú*, the term *Kamã* triggers negative memories for the Dâw people. As Ramirez (2001) points out, *Kamã* seems to also be of Arawakan origin and designates negative characteristics such as "bad smell", "disease", "demon", and "drunkenness". Recent efforts by linguists and anthropologists, including projects to document Dâw language, culture, and territory, have strengthened the Dâw people's ethnic identity and appreciation of their own culture. Nowadays, the ethnonym *Dâw* is employed to recognize the people as members of a distinct group and to increase their positive visibility in interactions with other groups and local institutions.

2.3 POPULATION

Currently, the Dâw community consists of 142 people (Roberto Sanches Dâw, personal communication, 2022-07). Although this number might seem small, it reflects a recent demographic recovery when compared to previous periods. In the 1980s, the Dâw were reported to have been reduced to only 56 people after successive population reductions throughout the 20th century (Meira 1993). The high mortality rate was caused by violence and disease during extractivist work by outsiders. According to an interview done with ten older Dâw women in 2001, Assis (2006) reports that about 80% of children born between the 1960s and 1980s died of illness and malnutrition before they turned 15. Assis also points to the high mortality rate among adult men in this period, which is reflected in the current profile of the elderly population of the community, which is mainly composed of women.

The settlement of the community in the mid 1980s, led by evangelical Christian missionaries from the *Missão ALEM* (*Associação Linguística Evangélica Missionária*), was a central turning point in the history of the Dâw people. On one hand, the settlement resulted in an important demographic recovery for the group. On the other hand, novel life in a settled community implied territorial, matrimonial, and social rearrangements. Among them was an increased incidence of exogamic marriages that, until settlement, had been atypical for the Dâw, who preferred endogamous marriage with people from other Dâw clan lineages. Even today, exogamic marriages still occasionally occur among the Dâw people, though patrilineality prevails and informs each person's clan (see Section 4.3).

3. LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

3.1 DÂW AND THE NADUHUP FAMILY

The change from employing the pejorative term *Makú* to subsume the Hup, Yuhup, Nadëb, and Dâw people, and instead employing *Naduhup*, is a fairly recent development. It is based on a novel genetic classification of the family by Epps (2008) and Epps & Bolaños (2017). These four languages were initially lumped together under the term *Makú* or *Makú-Puinave*, a group which also included the languages Kakua, Nukak, and Puinave (Martins & Martins 1999). This earlier classification derives from notes and wordlists collected by early European travelers at the beginning of the 20th century. By the time of their arrival in the region, the term *Makú* was apparently already

in use, as suggested by the fact that Koch-Grünberg (1906) refers to his predecessors' work as using this category to describe the more mobile peoples of the region (Coudreau 1887; Ehrenreich 1904; von Martius 1867; Stradelli 1890; Wallace 1853). Influenced by their impressions and by his Arawakan and Tukanoan hosts, Koch-Grünberg ([1906] 2017: 602) notes that "this collective name designates a number of hordes with very divergent languages" (our translation). Koch-Grünberg applies the term *Makú* to several other unrelated groups in the region, who maintained similar ways of living and who also spoke the, as he calls them, "ugly languages" (Koch-Grünberg 1906: 878 [our translation]). The indiscriminate use of this term influenced subsequent linguistic and ethnic classifications that did not carefully consider the particular characteristics of each group (Mahecha et al. 1996–1997: 87). Hence, it is not surprising that subsequent classifications of South American languages maintained the label to refer to a linguistic family called *Makú*, *Puinave,* or *Makú-Puinave* whose members inhabit Northwest Amazonia between Brazil and Colombia (see Kaufmann 1990; Martins 2005; Nimuendajú 1950; Rivet & Tastevin 1920).

Recent advances in the documentation and description of these languages have allowed linguists to revisit the existing classifications. Epps & Bolaños (2017: 477) confirm Koch-Grünberg's observations, and state that the languages *do* share phonological characteristics, such as a preference for monosyllabic roots with CVC structure, which differs noticeably from other languages in the region. However, as Epps and Bolaños also clearly demonstrate, a comparison of the basic vocabulary between the Naduhup and Kakua-Nukak languages provides no evidence to affirm a genetic relationship between them. The authors provide strong evidence for grouping Nadëb, Dâw, Hup, and Yuhup within a single family, and additionally show that Dâw, Hup, and Yuhup possibly form a subgroup based on similarities in their structure, phonology, and lexicon, whereas Nadëb presents a very distinct typological profile (Epps & Obert forthcoming). This diversification seems to have been driven by contact, suggesting that differences in interactional dynamics of the Naduhupan groups with their neighbors have resulted in different linguistic outcomes. The Dâw people play an interesting role in this history of networks due to their migration from the Middle Rio Negro region, where they shared an area with the Nadëb, and where they also had contact with Arawakan groups. According to the stories of the Dâw elders, they migrated to the northwest until they reached the headwaters of the Curicuriari River, where they came into contact with Tukanoan groups. This contact with both Arawakan and Tukanoan languages at different stages in the history of the Dâw is visible in both the lexicon and grammar, explaining at the same time some similarities between Dâw and Nadëb (e.g., a higher incidence of Arawakan loans in the lexicon than observed in Hup and Yuhup) (Epps 2017; Epps & Obert forthcoming; Epps et al. 2021). This also explains Dâw's intermediate position within the linguistic family (see Figure 2), as it shares similarities in grammar and lexicon with both Yuhup and Hup, probably through contact with Tukanoan, and with Nadëb via Arawakan and possibly Tupi-Guaranian influence.

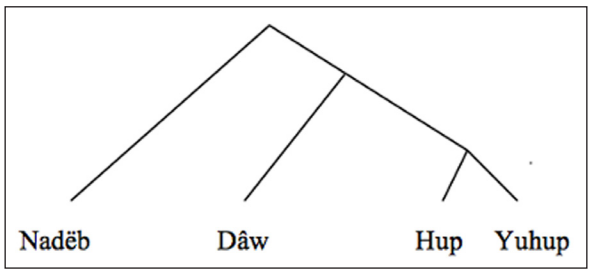

Figure 2 Naduhup family. Figure from Epps (2008: 3).

Finally, reanalysis of the former *Makú* family label corresponds to a political demand from these peoples that they have been misclassified as such in official documents, policies, and even in the scientific literature, undermining their linguistic and cultural self-determination. By establishing proximity between the languages of these four peoples who speak different but related languages, it was necessary to find a name that rejected the implication that they are "people without speech". For that reason, Epps & Bolaños (2017) suggest the name *Naduhup*, a term formed by the combination of the lexical items for 'people' and 'human' in each of the family's languages. Created in response to the demands of community leaders, the term *Naduhup* was first introduced by linguists and anthropologists in a workshop on Indigenous education held in 2016 in São Gabriel

da Cachoeira. On that occasion, teachers and community leaders explained their disapproval of earlier nomenclature, and suggested to workshop participants abolishing the term *Makú*, and substituting a term such as *Nadëhup, Nadëhupy, Naduhupy* or *Naduhup*. The coexistence of these variants reflects ongoing negotiations among the four Naduhup peoples.

3.2 DÂW'S TYPOLOGICAL PROFILE

Dâw presents an inventory of 25 consonants, consisting of voiced and voiceless stops (/p, b, t, d, c, ɟ, k, g, ʔ/), three fricatives (/ʃ, x, h/), four nasals (/m, n, ɲ, ŋ/), one lateral (/l/), and two approximants (/w, j/). Some nasals and approximants can be glottalized: /mʔ, nʔ, ɲʔ, lʔ, wʔ, jʔ/ (Martins 2004; Barboza 2017). There are nine contrastive vowels (/i, ɨ, u, e, ə, o, ɛ, ɔ, a/), of which six (apart from schwa /ə/, and mid-close /e/ and /o/) have nasal counterparts (/ĩ, ɨ̃, ũ, ɛ̃, ɔ̃, ã /) (Martins 2004). Dâw also has phonemic tone that coincides with vowel length, i.e., falling and rising tone occurs only on long vowels, whereas short vowels are atonal (Martins 2004: 79).

Basic constituent order in unmarked environments in Dâw is SVO but is reported to show a degree of flexibility depending on information structure considerations (Epps forthcoming; Obert 2021). Dâw shows a preference for dependent marking and is understood to have consistently nominative-accusative alignment; core non-subject arguments are marked through the object marking suffix *-ɨ̌ːjʲ* (Costa 2014; Martins 2004).[1] Dâw is an isolating analytic language with only a few processes of suffixation: the lexicon mainly consists of monosyllabic items. Dâw's grammatical elements are predominantly indicated through free words, frequently verb roots grammaticalized from complex predicates (Epps & Ananthanarayan 2021; Obert 2020).

Many typological features of Dâw are typical for Amazonian languages (Epps & Salanova 2013: 6), such as being a weakly-tensed language. Tense is encoded through optional affixes or provided through aspectual and temporal adverbs that establish temporal deixis (Epps & Salanova 2013). Optionality of tense-marking is balanced by a complex aspectual system which indicates how an event extends over time (Carvalho 2016; Obert et al. 2018). Evidentiality is another verbal category that is typically ascribed to Amazonian languages and is present in Dâw in the form of a reported evidential marker (Epps & Salanova 2013).

Focusing in on the languages of the Upper Rio Negro region, Dâw shares several sound-structural and grammatical features with genetically unrelated neighboring languages as a result of intense and long-term contact through different social interactions (see Aikhenvald 1999; Epps 2007; Stenzel 2013). These include tonal and laryngeal features, reliance on complex predicates for the expression of complex events, reduced number of lexical classes, and differential case marking (Stenzel 2013: 355).

3.3 STATUS OF DESCRIPTION AND DOCUMENTATION

As with the majority of languages in the Upper Rio Negro region, efforts to document and describe Dâw language and culture are fairly recent. The earliest work on Dâw, and the Naduhup languages more broadly, goes back to European travelers (see Section 3.1), such as the naturalist Natterer in the 19th century, followed by Koch-Grünberg (1906) and Rivet & Tastevin (1920) at the beginning of the 20th century. Work with the Dâw people was resumed almost 70 years later by missionaries from Brazilian institutions (*Missão ALEM*). More recent linguistic work on Dâw began with the description of prosody by V. Martins (1994), and an analysis of morphosyntactic features by S. Martins (1994). This was followed by S. Martins's typologically-informed 2004 reference grammar and a series of related articles. Nearly a decade later, a group of linguists and anthropologists resumed work on language documentation with the project *Documentation of Dâw, a Naduhup language of Brazil*, funded by the Endangered Language Documentation Programme (2013–2015) and coordinated by Patience Epps (UT Austin) and Luciana R. Storto (University of São Paulo). The project resulted in a collection of audio and video recordings documenting cultural practices,

1 Dâw examples are displayed in a practical orthography which mirrors the IPA, with the following exceptions: /ɟ/ is written <j>; /ʔ/ <'>; /ʃ/ <s>; /h/ <r>; /ŋ/ <nh>; /ŋ/ <gn>; /j/ <y>; /ɨ/ <ɯ>; /e/ <ê>; /ɛ/ <e>; /ə/ <â>; /o/ <ô>; and /ɔ/ <o>. Long vowels are marked by doubling. For a full grammatical description see Martins (2004); see Obert (2019) for a thorough description of the grammar of space.

traditional knowledge, and Dâw discourse; a partially annotated corpus; a lexical database in FLEx; and some community-facing materials. The corpus is archived in ELAR and AILLA and is mostly open access.[2] Four master's theses were written by students from the University of São Paulo who participated in the documentation project: Andrade (2014) on nasalization; Costa (2014) on argument structure; Carvalho (2016) on verbal aspect; and Barboza (2017) on glottalization.

More recently, there has been a sequence of interdisciplinary and collaborative documentation projects mainly addressing the topics of territory, landscape, and memory, funded by the Firebird Foundation, the Museu do Índio, and UNESCO. These projects resulted in a thorough documentation and collection of narratives, biographies (recorded *in situ*), and maps made during journeys with Dâw people through their ancestral territory. All this research significantly involved the community: while younger Dâw speakers engaged in recording, transcription, and translation tasks, Dâw elders were storytellers, sharing their knowledge on a variety of topics and volunteering to be recorded during everyday tasks in the community. Further work is on hold due to restrictions related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Ethnographic work with the Dâw people is restricted to Pozzobon (1983) and Meira (1993), which address the social organization and engagement in the debt-peonage system of the Naduhup people in general. Assis (2001, 2006) and more recently Santos (2015), who is currently working on an ethnography for his Ph.D, focus exclusively on the Dâw people. Interdisciplinary collaborations between Obert & Pissolati (in preparation) and Epps & Obert (forthcoming) describe the Dâw people's interactions with their territory and with the Nadëb and others in the Middle and Upper Rio Negro region. This work is informed by comparisons of linguistic material, reconstructed vocabulary that provides clues to concepts familiar to speakers in the past, wordlists in historical documents used to pinpoint earlier group locations, and collaborative documentation with speakers that generated ethnohistorical narratives in their own words.

3.4 SOCIO LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

While the Upper Rio Negro region is known for its linguistic and ethnic diversity, it is also known for language endangerment, mainly induced by increasing contact with Brazilian national society. The spread of the lingua franca Nheengatú along the Rio Negro during the 1700s led to a drastic shift among speakers of Arawakan languages, especially the Baré, who completely lost their language (see Cruz 2011; Epps & Stenzel 2013). The Vaupés region further west shows a similar picture; however, a strong shift to Tukano has been observed since the early 20th century there (see Aikhenvald 2003; Stenzel 2005). Additionally, in the urban centers where all these different ethnic groups come together to interact with each other and with national society, Portuguese and Spanish are spoken more and more (Shulist 2018).

The Dâw people and their sister groups occupy an interesting position in this context because they are not shifting to speaking neighboring languages. Dâw is vitally spoken by all members of the community and is being actively passed on to children, who first acquire Dâw and only later Portuguese. For the few cases of marriage between a Dâw person and a spouse from another ethnic group, we have observed that although the spouse does not speak Dâw, their children usually speak both Dâw and Portuguese if they grow up in the Waruá community. The oldest living generation of Dâw has passive knowledge of Portuguese and Nheengatú. This is a result of interactions with other groups and non-Indigenous patrons during their involvement in the extractivist system. Younger generations are active speakers of both Dâw and Portuguese but have a very limited knowledge of Nheengatú. This is a result of the fact that Dâw is being actively transmitted across generations. Interactions between elders, parents, and children happen exclusively in Dâw. Dâw is also the public language of the community, though due to the slowly growing number of outsider spouses, community meetings are frequently held in both Dâw and Portuguese.

Community members born in the early 1990s acquired literacy in both Dâw and Portuguese in the community school, where Dâw is taught in elementary school and where it has been the classroom language in the past. However, more recently, the Waruá school has received students from

2 These collections can be accessed at https://www.elararchive.org/dk0362 and https://bit.ly/3bBczx6.

neighboring Arawakan and Tukanoan communities, which has made the teaching of Dâw—and teaching in Dâw—nearly impossible. Moreover, instructional material in the language is sparse, and what does exist is the result of non-governmental initiatives by missionaries and linguists. As a step to counteract this, the Dâw people are currently working on developing an adapted school curriculum (*Projeto Político Pedagógico Indígena*) which allows them to regain the status of the Dâw language in their community school.

Dâw's status of endangerment has been described as merely "vulnerable" (Moseley 2010). However, increased contact with the national society in town, newly imposed ways of life through new media, and heavy emphasis on Portuguese in school threaten the transmission of traditional knowledge and speech genres. Furthermore, as a result of the conversion to evangelical Christianity during the last 30 years, genres like incantations and spells for curing and protection have been eclipsed. This "stylistic shrinkage" involving certain genres, registers, and styles is often a harbinger of language shift (Campbell & Muntzel 1989). In light of all this, our assessment of Dâw's vitality status is more in line with Campbell & Belew's (2018: 201) assessment describing Dâw as "endangered".

4. ETHNOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 HISTORY OF CONTACT

Scholars have speculated about how the Rio Negro region was populated in the past. Nimuendajú (1950) hypothesized that Naduhupan groups were likely to be the first inhabitants of this region and described them as being "of extremely rudimentary culture" (Nimuendajú 1950: 164) and having been later "acculturated" by Arawakan groups coming from the north (see Aikhenvald 1999; Vidal 2000; Heckenberger 2002) and subsequently by Tukanoan groups coming from the west (Zucchi 2002) during the pre-colonial period. The contact with non-Indigenous society initiated in the 17th century, according to Nimuendajú, would culminate in the stratum of "European civilization". Nimuendajú's hypothesis was guided by the evolutionary lens of his time and has been revised with the advances in archaeological and ethnological research in the region (see Neves 1998, 2011). On the other hand, Nimuendajú's claims overlap in important respects with Indigenous narratives that we recorded. According to these, the Naduhup peoples were already inhabiting the interfluvial regions between the major rivers at the time of European arrival, and the Indigenous groups maintained intense relationships among each other through regional trade networks and warfare. Multiethnic confederations existing in the Rio Negro region until the beginning of the colonial period exerted control over access to resources over extensive regions (Neves 2011; Wright 2005; Zucchi 2002).

The area between the tributaries of the middle course of the Rio Negro, where the Dâw people locate their ancestral territory, has been accessed by Europeans explorers since the 17th century. According to La Condamine (2000 [1745]: 78), the locations between the Jurubaxi, Japurá, and Negro rivers (traditional and current Nadëb territory) were already known by invaders around 1640, as they used to buy slaves there.

The first document mentioning the Dâw people's presence in the Middle Rio Negro region is by the Jesuit priest Ignácio Szentmartonyi, who noted the existence of several "nations" occupying the rivers between 1749 and 1755. Among them were "Makú nations", who occupied the interfluvial zones and banks of the Curicuriari, Marié, Iá, and Negro rivers in large numbers, alongside the Mallivena and Mepuri, now-extinct Arawakan groups. Almost a century later (1833), the Austrian traveler Natterer compiled a wordlist with the "Makú people of the Iá River" which reiterates Dâw narratives about the place of their ancestral origin in the Middle Rio Negro. Natterer's list was reassessed by the German ethnographer Koch-Grünberg (1906), who was the first to distinguish different "Makú" groups along the Curicuriari, Tiquié, and Papuri rivers (see Ramos & Obert 2017). Koch-Grünberg points out that the words collected with the "Makú do Curicuriary" are related to the words collected by Natterer at the Iá river (see Section 3.1).

From 1870 onwards, the Amazon region was drastically affected by the rubber boom and its consequences. The violence and exploitation of the debt-peonage system led by white patrons deeply impacted the Indigenous populations, among them the Dâw. The system was built on compulsory labor by Indigenous peoples for the extraction of forest products such as rubber, animal

skins, and *piaçava* (a species of palm, *leopoldinia piassaba*). This form of labor was consolidated between the beginning of the 19th century and the second half of the 20th century, with periods of intensification and retraction (Meira 2018). It is in the context of this system that the Dâw frame their story of contact with non-Indigenous people. The *piaçava* patrons and the processes of its extraction are recurrent elements in Dâw narratives: the long distance they needed to travel to the *piaçava* trees, the violence of patrons, food scarcity, disease, alcoholism, and fights with laborers from other groups are aspects that marked this period until the 1980s. Although the Dâw people are no longer involved in this system, they consider the period in which they were a significant milestone in their history and collective memory.

4.2 MOBILITY

Mobility and migration are central topics in Dâw narratives. Constant changes of place due to depredation start with the Dâw's story of emergence and expand through the time of their participation in the debt-peonage system, when they continued their movements fleeing their patrons. However, mobility is also deeply tied to subsistence practices and well-being (see Monteiro & McCallum 2013). This is why we devote a section on this concept and its significance for Dâw people.

Dâw narratives place their origins at the Wiç/Wení creek located in the interfluvial zones between the Téa and Marié rivers (see Figure 3). Dâw elders say that, at that time, the Dâw people were many and lived in scattered groups that frequently moved around, sustaining themselves exclusively through goods from the forest. They did not plant fields and thus did not eat manioc flour.

Figure 3 Ancient Dâw house site. Photo by Karolin Obert.

According to these stories, it was at that time that the Dâw suffered from depredation and encounters in the forest with jaguars, *curupiras* (evil forest spirits), and Nadëb groups invading their villages and abducting people. Because of the threats, the Dâw escaped to the northwest, leaving the Wiç Creek in the direction of the Marié River. Having left the Wiç Creek, the Dâw encountered a wooden canoe that they used to cross the Marié. However, when they tried to board the canoe, it turned out to be a *curupira* spirit trying to drown them. Only two individuals survived and crossed the Marié River. Once they arrived on the other side, the Dâw survivors moved through the interfluvial zones between the Marié, Iá, Curicuriari, and Negro rivers. Along this route they began to engage with Tukanoan groups, from whom they received manioc flour in exchange for goods from the forest, and started to live in their vicinity in the upper course of

the Curicuriari River.[3] The Dâw people's arrival at the Curicuriari River was also aligned with the beginning of their involvement in extractivist work in this region (see Section 4.1), which marked a second reduction in the Dâw population. Dâw elders remember this period as characterized by intense suffering. After the population was reduced to only 56 speakers in the 1970s due to death from diseases and food scarcity while working in the extraction of *piaçava,* the presence of evangelical Christian missionaries led to another migratory event in which the last Dâw speakers were agglomerated into the Waruá community.

Figure 4 Dâw people walking on ancestral paths. Photo by Karolin Obert.

Figure 5 Dâw men building a temporary shelter during a hunting trip. Photo by Karolin Obert.

3 Note that the Dâw people do not specifically mention contact with Arawakan groups. As Epps & Obert (forthcoming) discuss, Dâw shows several Arawakan loans in its lexicon, but it is unclear if these entered the language through direct contact or indirectly via contact with other languages.

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In addition to the story of emergence and migration in the interfluvial region of the Middle and Upper Rio Negro, Dâw elders narrate encounters and interactions with human and non-human entities during these intense circulations in the forest. Unlike genres related to shamanic discourse, i.e., blessings and ritual speech, these stories remain alive in the collective memory of the community and have not been suppressed by religious conversion. Despite currently residing in a single community, mobility is still a central element of Dâw culture. Especially among men, it is common to form groups for hunting and fishing expeditions, following paths to manioc gardens, hunting grounds, and fishing areas (see Figure 4). Older family members, women, and children oftentimes accompany the men on these expeditions, which can last up to several weeks. The traveling groups set up temporary settlements on the banks of the creeks and islands of the Rio Negro using tarpaulins, leaves, and materials from the surrounding forest (see Figure 5). Traditionally, Dâw ancestors used to live in temporary campsites like these.

These journeys are often described as periods of leisure. Walking along the paths of their ancestors, the Dâw recover their stories. It is also through the network of paths that they access their vast knowledge of flora and fauna and extract raw materials for the preparation of traditional medicine and cultural objects such as *aturás* (baskets carried on the forehead by means of a sling), benches, fishing poles, canoes, oars, crab and shrimp traps, housing structures, and other things.

Another motivation for Dâw mobility is the pan-regional *dabucuri* parties, which are celebrations involving offerings of food that has been harvested, hunted, or fished in abundance (see Figure 6). *Dabucuris* are traditionally accompanied by *caxiri* (fermented manioc beer) as well as dances, flutes, and body adornments; these events are also open to guests from neighboring Tukano and Arawak communities as well as other outside visitors. Dâw elders also speak of having participated in *dabucuris* hosted by their Tukanoan neighbors in the past, something which happens less frequently today. However, the *dabucuris* are still regarded by the Dâw as a significant event in which the entire community participates.

Figure 6 Smoked wild boar meat wrapped in açai palm leaf for Dabucuri offering. Photo by Karolin Obert.

Despite major changes for the Dâw during recent decades, mobility remains a central element of their activities and knowledge related to ancestry, subsistence, and well-being in the forest and along the many paths and rivers in the Upper Rio Negro region.

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4.3 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

In the 1980s, the Dâw were divided into three major local groups: two of them were located close to the town of São Gabriel da Cachoeira (one on each side of the river), and one was close to the mouth of the Curicuriari River (Pozzobon 1983: 126). Some also lived dispersed along creeks and the interfluvial zones of the Rio Negro, or in communities and sites of other ethnic groups in exchange for their labor in the fields or for hunting game. Other Dâw continued working on the extraction of *piaçava* for their non-Indigenous patrons.

As a result of the arrival of evangelical missionaries from ALEM around that time, the Dâw people began to slowly disengage from the patronage system. In 1985, ALEM missionaries purchased land on the right margin of the Rio Negro, opposite São Gabriel da Cachoeira, with the goal of bringing the Dâw people together. From this time on, the Waruá community began to function as an agglomeration of the several local Dâw groups, leading to the single Dâw group that one finds currently.

The Waruá community is now divided into three neighborhoods. Each consists of three to twelve domestic groups, which are formed by a couple (or a widow/widower) and their children and adult unmarried daughters. A domestic group usually lives in one or two houses, which can be shared with family members related to the couple. Kinship relations between the domestic groups vary: while in some neighborhoods cognatic kinship predominates (having brothers-in-law living in the same local group), other neighborhoods are predominantly agnatic, consisting of men, brothers, and parents who are related by patrilineal descent—i.e., clans.

The Dâw divide themselves into seven clans: *'yãm xʉ'* 'jaguar', *'yãm* 'dog', *reer* 'snake', *'yoó'* 'wasp', *sow* 'curupira [evil forest spirit]', *pâad* 'cunuri fruit', and *yeé'* 'feces'. Besides having territories that belong to a specific clan, the local neighborhoods are multi-clanic, a result of clanic exogamy and linguistic endogamy that underscore the matrimonial rules of the group. Residential patterns after a marriage can be either matrilocal or patrilocal, which again results in cognatic, multi-clanic, and nowadays multi-ethnic spaces. As mentioned earlier, marriages with people from other indigenous groups are becoming more frequent, especially among the younger generations. Spouses from other groups usually move to the Waruá community and are integrated into the local groups. It is uncommon for a Dâw person to leave Waruá to live in the community of a spouse or in town.

Since a Dâw person has an extended network of relatives across the community, visits between neighborhoods occur frequently. Despite this, community members maintain privacy in their homes and neighborhoods. For example, community meetings and other related activities are always held in public spaces such as the community center, the community school, or the soccer field. Everyday life, on the other hand, happens in the domestic environment of the neighborhoods.

The political organization of the Waruá community consists of different levels. At the community level, the positions of leader, president of the Indigenous association, teacher, nurse, pastor, and sports leader are occupied by adult Dâw men and women, or by members of other ethnic groups (mainly teachers). The leader and their team are responsible for mobilizing collective activities and representing the community in governmental and local institutions. However, they do not exert power or command over others, so that domestic groups are quite autonomous in carrying out their activities. This is a pattern of sociopolitical organization the Dâw share with other Naduhupan groups (Reid 1979). Daily activities, on the other hand, such as trips to São Gabriel or hunting and fishing trips, are carried out in smaller groups, usually composed of brothers-in-law, fathers, children, nephews, and other close relatives, and are headed by an experienced Dâw man. Trips to the manioc gardens are usually organized by women and often include sisters, sisters-in-law, mothers, and children.

5. CURRENT SITUATION AND FINAL REMARKS

The Dâw people's history is marked by large- and small-scale migrations that have ended with their settlement in the current Waruá community. This very drastic spatial change has caused numerous challenges for the community that are becoming more serious over time. A major factor is the proximity to the city and the growing communities around Waruá, which leads to a lack of space for planting, gathering, hunting, and fishing, which results in food scarcity and, thus, an increased

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dependency on industrialized goods, which are not affordable due to São Gabriel's remote location. Living close to São Gabriel da Cachoeira is also challenging because it makes the community more easily reachable by outsiders such as missionaries, researchers, and students from neighboring communities. Students from other ethnic groups have begun to attend the community school, which in turn has interrupted the transmission of Dâw by shifting to Portuguese as the classroom language.

At the same time, community members like living closer to town, as it affords them easier access to healthcare and facilitates their management of social benefits, marketing, and engagement in a variety of projects. That is, despite this very drastic change in the Dâw's traditional lifestyle, positive developments can be observed. Some remarkable aspects of this are population recovery and the community's growing interest in documenting and preserving their language and culture, as well as the Dâw's growing agency in such projects. The documentation of territory in particular (as described in Section 3.3) seems to have raised awareness among the Dâw of the importance of reoccupying their ancestral land in order to strengthen the bond between the younger generations and traditional territory and to serve as a more abundant place for subsistence. As community leader Roberto Carlos Sanches points out, "We want to continue this work because it is for the good of our community, for our well-being, demarcating our land, where our ancestors used to live. And this place really belongs to us, it is for us" (Sanches, personal communication, 2020-07, our translation). Sanches refers to the recently awarded project by *Fundo Casa Amazônia* for the construction of houses on an ancestral site along the Curicuriari river, a site we had visited during prior documentation projects. Furthermore, the Waruá community has gotten involved in the PNAE project (*Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar*) that guarantees that school meals are provided by community members themselves and therefore that the menu is in line with the traditional diet. These efforts have not only contributed to an increased well-being of community members but have also helped to reconnect the community with their traditional knowledge.

One recent change we have detected is an increased self-esteem among community members when engaging with local authorities and their Indigenous neighbors. As we noted above, the Dâw still suffer prejudice, especially from their horticulturist neighbors for, e.g., not engaging in linguistic exogamy, or for their reliance on hunting and gathering. However, as their history and narratives tell us, these should be better understood as choices and exploitations of ecological niches rather than an "inability", as often described by other non-Naduhupan groups from the region (Epps & Obert forthcoming). One gets the sense that, despite the Dâw people's asymmetric role within the Upper Rio Negro region, they are aware of the more symbiotic character of the relationship with their neighbors and of the exchanges they have had with them over time. This illustrates their role in the larger multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic network.

Finally, the Dâw's trajectory underscores the central role of these interfluvial foragers in understanding Amazonian regional networks. Recognizing the Dâw's role and agency not only highlights their right to maintain and reclaim their ancestral land, but also ensures their right to decide their own future. The Dâw case is also a remarkable example of resistance at a time in which their specificities, their traditions, and their language are highly threatened by the current political climate in Brazil.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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